Stone CE Combined School Attendance policy

Date ratified by governors: Autumn 2022

To be reviewed: Autumn 2023

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1. Aims

Our School Vision:

'Love one another as I have loved you… helping each other to reach for the stars'

Means that we aim for every child to reach their full potential. This can only be achieved through good attendance.

We are therefore committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school **on at least a termly basis**. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance lead

The attendance lead

- Monitors and analysing attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Works with Pastoral Lead to improve attendance
- Works with County Attendance Team to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 The Pastoral Lead

The pastoral lead is responsible for:

- Submit referrals to county attendance team as directed by the Attendance Lead
- Working with the County Attendance Team to tackle persistent absence
- Each half term monitor and address concerns regarding regular lateness with parents (L codes)

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School admin/office staff

School administration staff are expected to:

- Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

- Identify any unexplained absences for each session and contact parents (and social worker it involved) to understand why and when the pupil will return and follow up unexplained absence as per see section 4.5
- Ensure that correct codes are used.
- Providing regular attendance reports and reporting concerns about attendance to the attendance lead and the headteacher
- Submit term-time absence requests to HT and send response letter to parents (see Appendix 2). Monitor if the absence is taken and follow the procedure set out in Appendix 4.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 am (8:45am from Feb 20th 2023) on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am (8:45am from Feb 20th 2023) and will be kept open until 9:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

When reporting an absence parents will need to advise us of the child's name, class and detailed reason for absence. This can be done in one of two ways:

1. Calling the school absence line - 01296 748340 Option 1
2. Emailing the school – stoneadmin@stone.bucks.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

This can be done in one of two ways:

1. Emailing the school - stoneadmin@stone.bucks.sch.uk
2. Send a note via your child and the class teacher

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Following internal monitoring where a pupil is identified as persistently late communication will be made with the parent/carer to discuss barriers to attending school on time.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting the parent/carer on a daily basis until an explanation is given

- If we are unable to contact a parent, the additional contacts provided will be used to contact parents to notify them of their child's absence and to receive an explanation
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may do any or all of the following:

Within First 5 Days

- Check with all members of staff who the child may have had contact with.
- Check with the pupil's friends
- Telephone calls made to any numbers held in the school records
- Attempt telephone contact with all known emergency numbers
- Send emails to all known email addresses
- Speak to other agencies that have been working with the family
- Check with any schools known to have siblings or relatives on their roll
- Conduct a home visit if you have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.

Within days 5-10

- Write to address of emergency contact (if known)
- Speak to the County School Attendance Officer for advice: countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Inform the parent/ carer of the child in writing that we are concerned about their unexplained absence from school and that a referral to the Children Missing Education Team may be required if no response is provided
- Repeat a home visit if we have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.

- **Day 10**
  - Complete online Child Missing in Education referral form /contact CME Officer: Refer a child not receiving a formal education to us | Buckinghamshire Council

In the event that absence from school raises a potential safeguarding risk and/or where there are immediate concerns for a child's welfare we will make an immediate referral to social care or the police.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

We report children's attendance record annually to parents/carers as part of the end-of-year report. Parents/carers may be notified of their child's attendance at any point should it be cause for concern.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four school weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

5.2 Penalty Notice/Legal sanctions (See Appendix 4: Term-time leave of absence flowchart)

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Daily monitoring of registers and contact parents/carers
- Communications with parents regarding importance of school attendance
- Education on importance of attendance
- The '100% Attendance Club' – offering rewards and incentives to pupils achieving 100% attendance across a whole term

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The attendance lead will review pupil attendance below 90% and identify where support may be required and will:

- Organise/send a letter to parents inviting them to a support meeting
- At the meeting a plan of support will be agreed (if required) and a target for attendance for the next 3 weeks set.
- If there is no improvement after a 3 week monitoring period (or a parent does not attend the support meeting) a letter will be sent explaining that further absences may not be authorised without supporting evidence and that if the child's attendance remains irregular the matter may be referred to the County Attendance Team who may consider issuing a penalty notice as an appropriate course of action.
- The pupil's attendance is monitored for a further 3 weeks and if no improvement is made we will contact the County Attendance Team.
- This may result in parenting contracts or penalty notices being issued.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Children can fall into the persistently absent category for many different reasons. Investigating what these are and addressing them as soon as possible is an important part of our attendance policy

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- We may use some of the following early intervention strategies:
    - Meetings with parents and pupils when concerns first emerge to discuss concerns and agree actions to improve attendance
    - Documented conversations with parents and pupils which agree actions
    - Support from our pastoral worker
    - Referrals to external professionals
    - Closer monitoring
    - Communicating with parents when agreed plans to improve attendance

In more complex and longer-term cases of poor attendance and persistence absence, interventions may include:

- Multi-agency meetings and action plans
- Requesting medical information or information from other services
- Use of local authority enforcement processes and procedures
- Home visits
- Direct work with children and parents to address root causes of absence
- Engaging specialist
- Consideration for an education, health and care plan
- Considering options for an alternative form of educational provision

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the attendance lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to

		exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2

The John Colet Liaison Group

Local Schools Working In Partnership for mutual benefit

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

(This must be submitted at least four school weeks before the proposed absence)

I request permission from the School's Governing Board for my child

Name:	Class:

To be granted Leave of Absence for the dates below:

From:	To:

The reason for the request is (please complete the appropriate section):

☐ **Funeral of a close relative (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt/uncle, great grandparent) or dependent**

Please give details

☐ **Exceptional Circumstances**

Please give details/attach supporting evidence as to why it is an exceptional circumstance

☐ **Holiday is due to unavoidable parental work/military commitments**

Please provide a supporting letter from employer or an assignment order

I can confirm that the information that I have given above is correct and has no factual omissions. I understand that any authorised absence may be unauthorised at a later date if it is found that I provided inaccurate information; this may jeopardise any future Leave of Absence requests.

Signature of parent/carer:	Date:

The John Colet Liaison Group

Local Schools Working In Partnership for mutual benefit

STONE CE COMBINED SCHOOL

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

RESPONSE FORM

Name:	Class:

To be granted Leave of Absence for the dates below:

From:	To:

☐ **This absence request has been accepted**

OR

☐ **This absence has been refused because:**

- ☐ Absence is at the beginning of a school term
- ☐ Your child has already had one leave of absence request this school year
- ☐ The request covers all/part of an internal/external assessment period
- ☐ Insufficient notice has been given (four school weeks)
- ☐ Attendance is less than 95%
- ☐ There are lateness issues
- ☐ Your child has unauthorised absences on their record
- ☐ The reason is not exceptional
- ☐ Insufficient reasons provided for the absence request
- ☐ The holiday is not due to unavoidable parental work commitments or no supporting evidence was provided

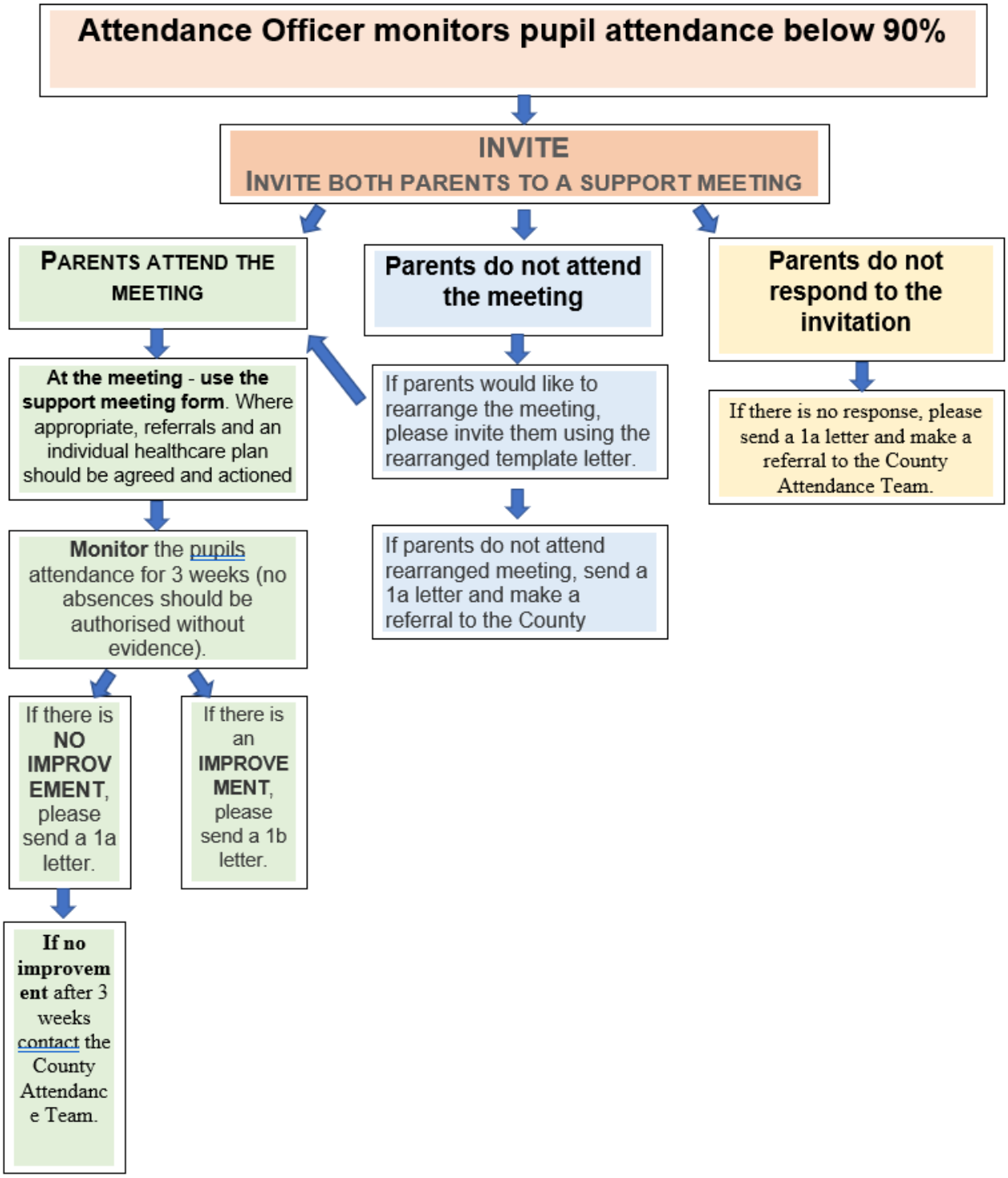
Signed:	Date:

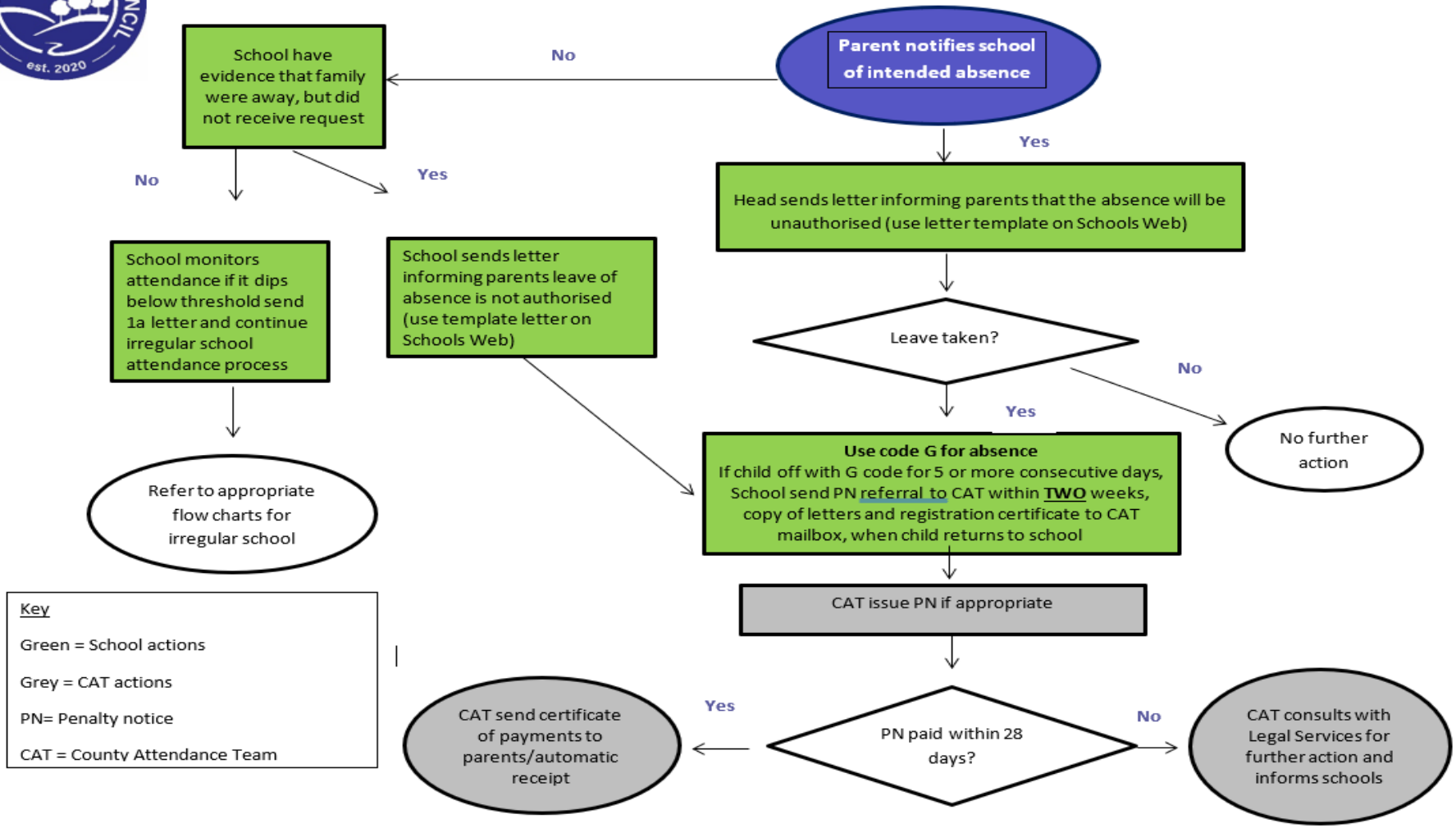
For office use only:

Current academic year attendance:	Previous academic year attendance:

Appendix 3

Stone School Attendance Monitoring Procedure



Appendix 4

TERM-TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE – Flow chart February 2022