



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY – FULL VERSION STAFF & GOVERNORS

Mount St Joseph Document Control Table			
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Document History		
Version	Date	Notes on Revisions
1.0	Sept 2017	
1.1	Sept 2019	Reviewed and updated by P Draper – minor amendments
1.2	Sept 2020	Reviewed and updated by P Draper – minor amendments
1.3	Sept 2023	Reviewed and updated by P Draper – minor amendments and addition of children absent for more than 15 days and children not in education.

Rationale

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all students at Mount St Joseph to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided throughout their education. For this, it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Excellent school attendance is necessary to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their full potential. The DfE guidelines on *Improving Attendance at School* state that "students who have over 95% attendance achieve five or more good GCSEs at grades 9 to 5". Excellent attendance also shows potential colleges and employers that young people are reliable and resilient.

Students with poor attendance who miss out on lessons are vulnerable to falling behind. Research indicates that children who frequently miss school, attending less than 90%, often underperform in exams compared to students who have good attendance records. At Mount St Joseph, every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. School attendance is subject to education law which is monitored by the School and the Local Authority, not only to support attainment but also to safeguard young people. We appreciate the support of all our parents/carers in encouraging their child to attend school regularly.

The table below is a guideline for attendance; it is based on percentage attendance for a **whole school year**. It gives an indication as to whether attendance is currently impacting on your child's potential attainment and future achievement.

100% Attendance	No absence from School all year	<u>Outstanding Attendance!</u> These students will most certainly achieve their full potential
Above 97% Attendance	Absent from School for less than 6 days	<u>Excellent Attendance!</u> These students are highly likely to achieve their full potential
95-97% Attendance	Absent from School for less than 10 days	<u>Good Attendance</u> Students have a good chance of achieving their target grades but absence from School will jeopardise this
Between 95 and 90% Attendance	Absent for up to 20 School days	<u>Attendance is a cause for concern</u> Attendance will be monitored by School and this amount of absence will make it difficult to achieve their full potential
Between 90 and 80% Attendance	Absent between 20 and 40 days from School	<u>Attendance is a major cause for concern</u> Missing so much time from School means that studies cannot be completed and it is very unlikely that students will achieve their target grades. Fines may occur for parents/carers as a consequence of this level of attendance.
Below 80% Attendance	Absent for more than 40 days in a School year	<u>Attendance is now a serious concern for the School and the Education Authority</u> Underachievement is likely to occur in all of the student's studies. Fines may occur for parents/carers as a consequence of this level of attendance.

Overall Aims of the Policy

- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated within school, including parents, Students, staff and governors.

- To provide an environment in which students feel safe, secure and valued and to ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the School's attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and attitudes to ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents/carers, students and staff receive regular communication about the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance data to inform action planning.
- To have policies and procedures that are in place to monitor the causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of students and to address them.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and School so that parents/carers work in partnership with the School by attending meetings, liaising where appropriate and being informed of absence procedures.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.
- To issue sanctions, including legal action from the LA where deemed necessary for persistent absenteeism and persistent lateness.

Expectations

Parents/Carers

- To ensure and encourage children to attend regularly and punctually, and be in School before or no later than 8:30am every morning.
- To telephone the School on the first morning of your child's absence, and provide explanations for any subsequent absences.
- To endeavour not to take children out of School in term time for leave or medical appointments; if medical appointments have to be made in school time, evidence must be provided (letter/ appointment card).
- To attend meetings in school and work in partnership with the School to ensure their children understand the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality and comply with the systems and procedures established to achieve positive patterns of attendance and punctuality.
- To send children to School with the correct uniform and equipment.
- To participate in Attendance Contracts and cooperate in supporting interventions offered by school or other agencies.
- Ensure holidays are not requested during term time.

Students

- To arrive on or before 8.30am for Registration each morning; and be on time for all lessons.
- If late, sign in at Student Reception and be aware of the sanction system for continuous lateness to School.
- To acknowledge behaviour needed outside of school, e.g. early bedtime, to promote good attendance.
- To attend School/Registration punctually and prepared ready to learn.
- To speak to parents/carers and teachers if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance or punctuality.
- If there is a need to leave early, and there has been prior parental/carer consent, sign out at the Student Reception and to speak to Form Tutors and Pastoral Care Officers about any problems with your attendance or punctuality.

- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by School or other agencies to promote good attendance and punctuality.

Designated Staff

Attendance Officers

- Contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided.
- Input and update the attendance registers and the administration of SIMS.
- Alert parents via the text message system if their child is missing from School.
- Regularly collate attendance data to identify and monitor groups of Students, classes and whole school attendance patterns.
- Issue letters home on attendance/punctuality.
- Produce attendance/punctuality data for whole school groups.
- To manage all administrative elements within the attendance/punctuality remit.
- To work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance.

Pastoral Team

- Keep parents informed via phone calls/ letters or meetings of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised.
- Liaise with staff at off site provisions to ensure procedures for absence are followed.
- Provide regular attendance information to the Attendance Office.
- Work with colleagues to identify causes of non-attendance and to take actions to address this.
- Arrange parental meetings and attendance panels and carry out home visits where needed.
- To be aware of the safeguarding procedures for reporting students that are missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.
- Ensure accurate and up to date attendance records are kept and discussed on a weekly basis.

All Other Staff

- To provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment with an appropriate and responsive curriculum that all learners can achieve in.
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance and act upon those where appropriate.
- To see Students' attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff.
- To participate in training regarding school systems and procedures with regards to attendance and punctuality.
- Regularly communicate Student attendance and punctuality levels to parents.
- To work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance.

Personal Development Time Tutors and teachers are to be a good role models for students and give attendance a high profile through maintaining registers and praising students who arrive on time and taking prompt action when students are late or absent without explanation through informing the Pastoral Year Lead of any concerns regarding non-attendance; and to adhere to school safeguarding procedures in the event of students missing from form/lessons.

Safeguarding and Registrations

Taking the register is a legal requirement and also ensures the safeguarding of all Students at Mount St. Joseph. It is therefore expected that all registers, including both AM and PM, as well as

individual class registers, off site visits or any other register is formally taken to account for the whereabouts of Students under the supervision of staff both within the School and for off-site visits.

Form time registration is expected to be taken no later than 8:40am. Class registers are expected to be taken no later than 20 minutes in to the lesson – this includes Lesson 5 which acts as the PM registration for that day.

Incomplete or missing registers must be rectified with the Attendance Office in the first instance and is the responsibility of that member of staff who is responsible for that particular registration.

Headteacher and School Attendance Lead

- To take the lead in ensuring good attendance and punctuality has a high profile within the School through the effective implementation of an Attendance Policy and Action Plan.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for managing and leading on attendance and punctuality matters including monitoring and evaluating the Attendance Policy/Action Plan termly/annually.
- Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the School conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.
- To aim for whole school attendance targets through specific strategies and to monitor and evaluate all working practices with relation to attendance and punctuality matters including a system of rewards and sanctions.
- Consider each request for leave against the School's criteria, decide whether some or all of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision.
- Where there may be ambiguity regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence or to request further evidence to support the decision making process – this may result in legal action and involvement from the LA if persistent absenteeism/lateness is not resolved.
- Track attendance records on SIMS to identify patterns and trends to inform action planning.
- Report concerns and issues around non-attendance to the Governing Board
- Continually review pastoral systems in school to prevent and respond to nonattendance issues.

The Governing Board

- Ensure the Governing Board understands the Attendance Policy, Ofsted requirements and any national agendas and review regularly.
- To monitor the consistent implementation of the Attendance Policy/Action Plans.
- Receive regular reports on any incidents of non-attendance, attendance data and analysis with subsequent action plans.
- Help to promote and develop positive attitudes towards School and learning with the aims of improving whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work with the Headteacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent.

Understanding types of absence from School

Every half-day absence from School has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED and is a legal requirement. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences that cannot be properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher

Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence may be authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, appointment card or other official documentation.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our Attendance Team and PA students and their parents are subject to intervention and action plans to ensure attendance is above the 90% threshold. Note: **Where there are continued unauthorised absences parents may face legal action from the Local Authority, in line with Bolton LA Penalty Notice Procedure.**

Prior to considering a prosecution Mount St Joseph Catholic School will ensure that:

The Attendance Policy (adopted in line with Department for Education expectations) has been followed.

- Appropriate and proportionate efforts have been made to support the student.
- Meetings are held with parents/carers with clear plans agreed. These plans should clearly state what is expected from parents/carers; be reasonable and achievable; and include what additional support will be provided by the school and, where appropriate, other agencies.
- Letters including a "final warning letter" are sent to parents/carers advising that they have failed to co-operate and that the school intends to request prosecution by the Local Authority.
- The School has given consideration of the issues that may impact on attendance. This is by no means an exhaustive list but could include:
 - Parents/carers having mental health issues or being elderly or infirm.
 - The student being beyond the parents/carers control.
 - Any special educational needs the student may have.
 - If a student has significant anxiety issues regarding school attendance which indicates a mental health problem.
 - Child safeguarding concerns.
 - Poverty.

External Agencies who maybe engaged to support improving attendance for students where significant barriers maybe present include:

- Local Authority AWO
- School Nurse Service
- Mental and Emotional Health - CAMHS, School Counsellor
- Social Care
- Family Support
- Targeted Services
- Safer Schools Officer
- Early Intervention Team

Children not in education

For children who are not accessing education ensure that home visits are undertaken and the Early Intervention Team (EIT) are informed. The situation needs to be monitored and updates provided on at least a weekly basis.

Children absent from education for 15 or more days.

For children who are absent from school for 15 or more days ensure that the Local Authority(LA) are informed so that Alternative Provision can be provided.

Leave in Term Time

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. **There is no automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.** All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent/carer of residence using the 'Request for leave of absence' form from the school office. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered to be exceptional. **Students should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. Mock Exams, GCSE's or any other public examinations.**

Religious Absence

The school will authorise a one day 'leave' (i.e. the day set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss assemblies, form time and lessons. Late arriving Students also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

The school day starts at 8.30 a.m. and we expect your child to be in either assembly or form at that time. Registers are marked by 8.40 a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9.00am the AM registers will be closed, this is in accordance with the statutory regulations and School policy. If your child arrives after that time they will receive a late mark to indicate they are not in School, this may result in an unauthorised absence being recorded. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance and or Pastoral Team to explore the reasons for such lateness and to resolve the problem.

Returning to school after a long term absence

Students who are returning after a long term absence will be supported through a variety of strategies/interventions which may include the following: Parental Contracts, part-time timetables, home tuition, Health Care Plans, joint working with external agencies. A meeting will be held involving a representative from the school and parents/carers to decide on the level of support which will be required.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance

Assemblies – The school will use assemblies/notice boards to publically recognise, celebrate and reward students with excellent attendance.

School/Staff Newsletters - Newsletters will highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. In particular, it will include initiatives to promote, reward and recognise excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

Staff Briefings – Attendance including best form, best year and best house will be celebrated in staff briefing weekly.

Rewards – Presented to individual student's/form groups and Houses on a regular basis. These will be reviewed at least on an annual basis for their impact on promoting good levels of attendance and/or punctuality.

MSJ Breakfast Club - This supports parents/carers by allowing them to drop their children off before the start of the day, ensuring they are on time and giving our most vulnerable students a good start to their day with a breakfast and time to prepare for lessons.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers and support staff regularly promote good attendance and punctuality with their classes/tutor groups/Houses. Good levels of class attendance and punctuality is attributed to good teaching and learning and high levels of engagement in subjects.

Key Staff

Deputy Headteacher Pastoral Care– **Lead role for improving whole School Attendance** – responsible for overseeing all attendance matters at Mount St Joseph.

Attendance Officer – Ensure attendance of all students is accurately recorded after the first day response and actively take a lead on contributing to improved whole school attendance.

Pastoral Care Officers – Deal with day to day attendance matters within their house. Where appropriate engage with parents/carers through meetings and/or parental contracts.

Personal Development Time Tutor /Class Teacher – Ensure attendance is recorded and that good attendance and punctuality is promoted.

Designated Safeguarding Leads/Head of Pastoral: oversee attendance matters for Looked After Children (LAC) and other vulnerable children decided by the school (likely to be at Section 17 and 47). Where appropriate engage with parents/carers through meetings and/or parental contracts.

SENCO - Oversee attendance matters for those children with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Need. Where appropriate engage with parents/carers through meetings and/or parental contracts.

Parent/Carer-Teacher consultation evenings/Parents Evenings - This provides an opportunity for school staff to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where appropriate these evenings can be used to meet with parents/carers where there maybe issues around attendance.

APPENDIX 1

Attendance Routines

<u>Daily Procedures</u>	<u>By Whom</u>	<u>Outcomes/Actions</u>
Ensure that students arrive at School on time every day	Parents/ Carers	Students are punctual and have good attendance
Personal Development Time registration taken no later than 8:40am	Personal Development teachers	All Students are registered and accounted for the start of the day.
Informed by School by 9.20am if their Child is absent from School via text message/phone calls	Attendance Office Pastoral Care Officers	Attendance Office update SIMS and registration codes.
Students arriving late to School are registered via Inventry or marked in late by classroom teachers	Attendance Office/ Teaching Staff	Absence marks on SIMS are amended and updated to late marks
Teachers record attendance and take the registers for teaching groups no later than 10 minutes into the lesson	Teaching Staff	All students are accounted for and safeguarded. Teaching staff take responsibility for informing the Attendance Office of any concerns.
First day of absence: phone calls/text messages are made home to enquire about a child unauthorised absence. Pastoral Care Officers are made aware of key students who are absent and contact is made home.	Attendance Office Pastoral Care Officers EIT are informed for any vulnerable Students	Attendance codes are updated on SIMS. All students' whereabouts are accounted for.
Home Visits take place for key students on the Pastoral Care Officer list.	Pastoral Care Officers/ Attendance Team/Head of Pastoral	Students are encouraged to attend School. The safeguarding of vulnerable students is effectively implemented.
Missing register lists are produced for On-Call staff for each lesson	Attendance Office On-Call staff	Register reminders result in all classes being marked in correctly.
An AM/PM missing register e-mail is sent out to remind staff to complete any missing marks. Lesson 2 and 4.	Attendance Office	Staff input missing marks and all students are accounted for. Senior management team can challenge and rectify any attendance issues with the process of taking the register
Daily Attendance is recorded for the whole School and year groups on the reference drive	Attendance Office	Data is used to identify any patterns or anomalies to inform action planning
Paper Registers are produced for assembly in	Attendance Office	Back up paper registers can be used if the I-pods do not respond.

advance and I-phones are charged.		
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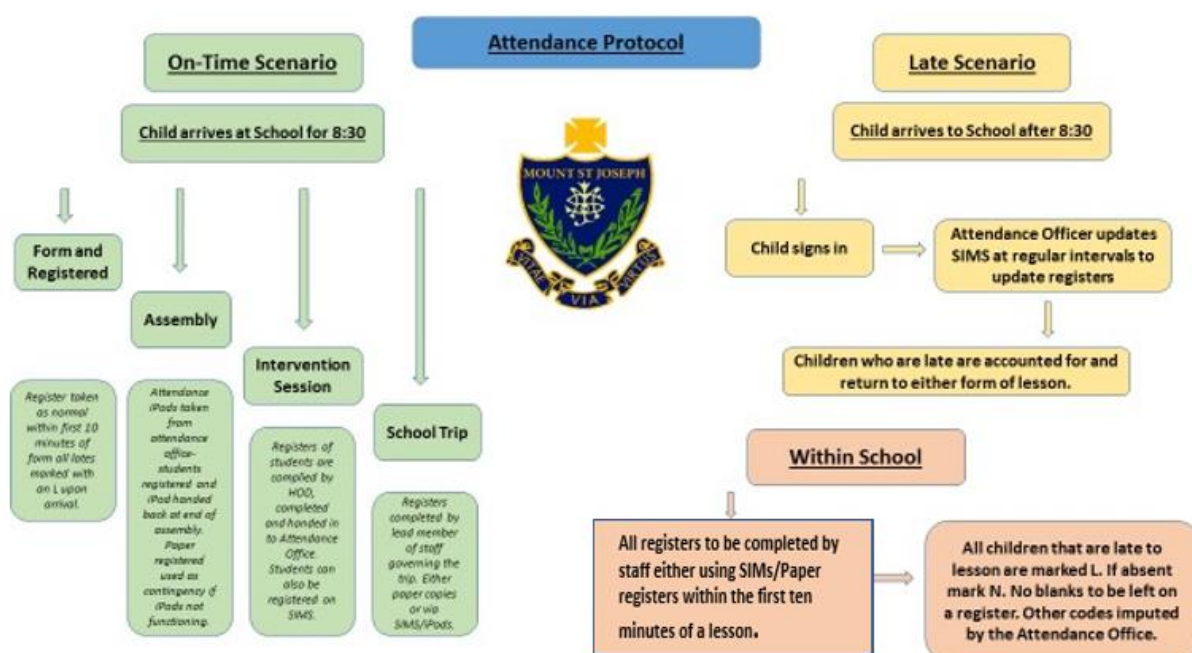
<u>Weekly Procedures</u>	<u>By Whom</u>	<u>Outcomes/Actions</u>
Attendance/punctuality data is produced for form/year/house group's and distributed to the appropriate staff to use.	Attendance Office	Attendance data is used effectively to improve attendance at all levels
Attendance statistics produced for the staff news Letter and weekly briefing notes	Attendance office Senior staff responsible for attendance	Staff are aware of whole School attendance figures on a weekly basis
Attendance codes for Students are updated on SIMS to show reasons for absence	Attendance Office	Marks are updates on SIMS to give an accurate pictures of whole School attendance
Requests of leave from parents/carers are reviewed	Attendance Office Senior staff responsible for attendance	Minimal to no permission given for leave out of term time
Attendance Panel meetings to discuss all attendance concerns and initiatives	Head of Pastoral Pastoral Care Officers Attendance Office	TO ensure that commination and effective implementing of all attendance protocols and initiatives are coordinated effectively
Personal Development tutor to conduct an attendance form time once per week	Personal Developm ent tutors HOY Pastoral SLT	That all pupils know and understand their level of attendance and can address and concerns.

<u>Half-Termly and Termly Procedures</u>	<u>By Whom</u>	<u>Outcomes/Actions</u>
Analysis of attendance/punctuality data on a half-termly basis	Attendance Office Data Analyst Senior lead on attendance	Data is analysed to inform half-termly and termly action plans and interventions to improve whole School attendance
Assemblies to promote good attendance and punctuality	HOH/HOY	Allow students to understand the importance of attending School and to make attendance high profile amongst the students
Attendance Action Plan meeting – to review individual cases and new concerns	Attendance Office Head of Pastoral Pastoral Care Officers Senior lead for Attendance	Strategies produced to deal with attendance concerns and to evaluate any interventions/protocols tacking place. Including the mentoring programme.
Letters sent out to parents to students who are of a concern	Attendance Office	To encourage better attendance for all groups of students at all attendance thresholds

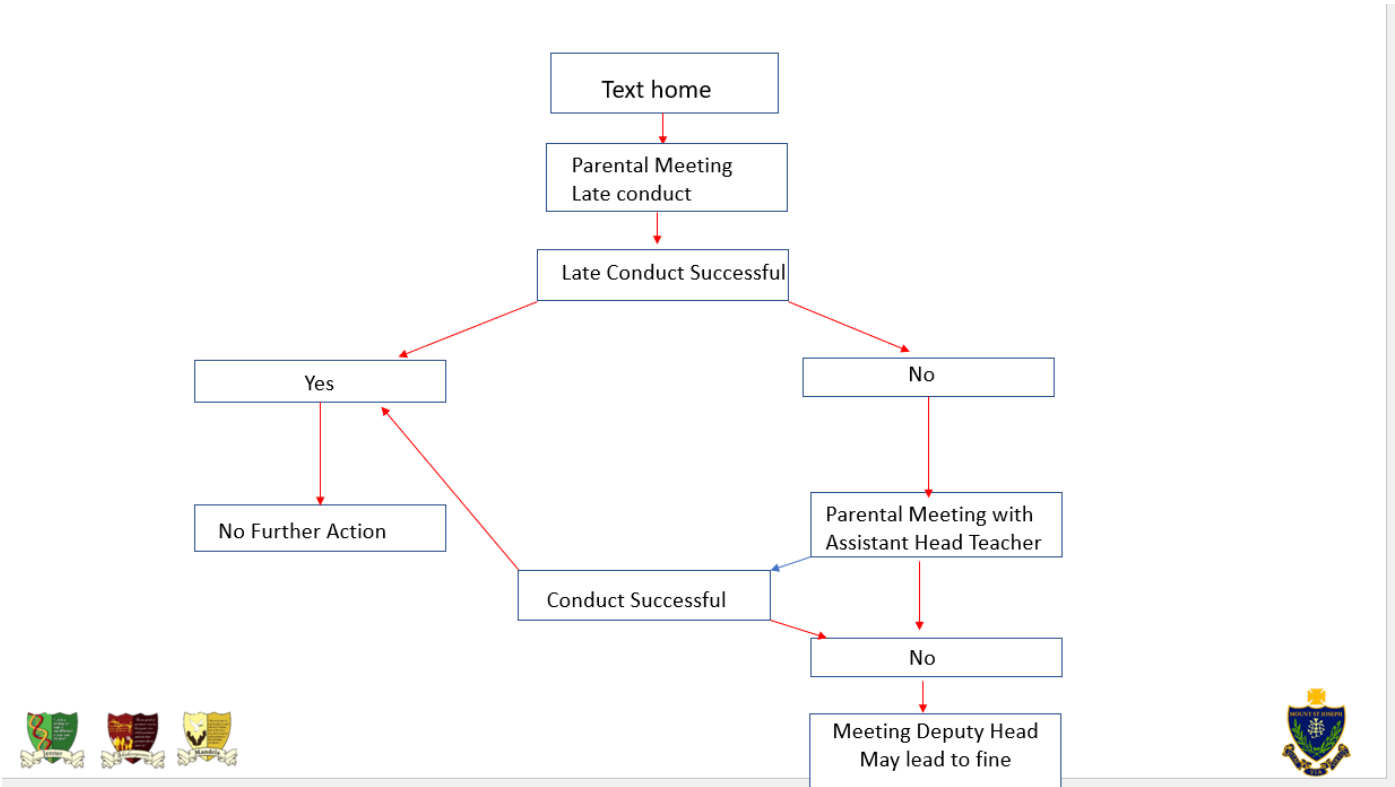
Review the success and impact of any attendance intervention strategies	Head of Pastoral Senior Lead for Attendance	To audit, evaluate to make improvements to attendance strategies as to
		aid in increasing whole School attendance

Annual Procedures	By Whom	Outcomes/Actions
To review and evaluate/produce attendance action plan for each academic year	Senior Lead for Attendance	To have an effective attendance plan to implement whole School
To report to Governors on attendance and all related issues	Senior Lead for Attendance	To coordinate all attendance related issues with Governors
To review the attendance policy and all current working practices	Senior Lead for Attendance	To have an effective attendance policy for all staff and external audiences to understand

APPENDIX 2 – THE REGISTRATION PROTOCOL



Lateness Process



Appendix 4 – Attendance Support

