

# Torquay Girls Grammar School Attendance Policy

Policy Information	
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Approving Committee	Headteacher
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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) 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.

- [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The board of trustees

The board of trustees 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 trustees
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- › Authorising requests to the LA for fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 SLT Attendance Lead

The SLT Attendance Lead:

- › Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- › Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- › Works with the Attendance Officer/HoYs/Pastoral Deputy/DSL and local authority to tackle persistent absence
- › Advises the headteacher when to issue requests for fixed-penalty notices
- › Leads Student Absence Review Meetings and advise the regular student panel meetings on decisions made

### 3.4 Link SLT

SLT linked to particular year groups will:

- › Lead Student Absence Review Meetings and advise the regular student panel meetings on decisions made
- › Support HoY where appropriate

### 3.5 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- › Monitor attendance data for their year group and at an individual student level
- › Reports concerns about attendance to the SLT Attendance Lead/Pastoral Deputy, DSL and Heads of Year as appropriate
- › Works with the local authority to tackle persistent absence
- › Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Advises the SLT Attendance Lead when to issue requests for fixed-penalty notices

### 3.6 The Heads of Year

The Heads of Year:

- › Monitor attendance data for their year group and at an individual student level
- › Reports concerns about attendance to the Attendance Officer/SLT Attendance Lead/Pastoral Deputy and DSL as appropriate
- › Works with the local authority to tackle persistent absence
- › Works with the Attendance Officer to arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Works with the Attendance Officer to advise the SLT Attendance Lead when to issue requests for fixed penalty notices
- › Monitor punctuality and apply sanctions where appropriate
- › Lead Student Absence Review meetings

### 3.7 Class teachers/form tutors

- › Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to SIMS (or the school admin team if necessary).
- › Tutors will receive a weekly summary of attendance and have conversations over early concerns. They will monitor punctuality and assign sanctions where appropriate.

### 3.8 School admin team

- School admin team are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system if Attendance Officer/Heads of Year unavailable.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and then in the 1<sup>st</sup> ten minutes of each lesson. P4 attendance will be used for the PM session attendance. It will mark whether every student 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 See appendix 1 for the DfE

attendance codes.

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

Students must arrive in school and be in their form room by 8.45am on each school day.

Students in Year 7-11 arriving before 8.15 must register using the iPads at reception and will be supervised in the Study Centre.

Sixth Form students arriving before 8.15 must register using the iPads at reception and will go to the 6<sup>th</sup> form Café or Common Rooms.

The register for the first session will be taken between 8.45am and 9.05am. Students arriving after 8.45am must sign in via the iPads at reception.

The register for the afternoon session will be taken during the 1<sup>st</sup> ten minutes of period 4.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school every day of any unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). Parents should use Studybugs to inform the school of absence. For students in Y7-11, they may also use the absence line: 01803 653 750. For 6<sup>th</sup> Form students, they may also use the absence line: 01803 653 761.

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 student'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 student's parent/carer notifies the school 48 hours in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers should use the dedicated email address: [attendance@tggsacademy.org](mailto:attendance@tggsacademy.org) or contact the Attendance Officer or child's Head of Year to inform them of any planned absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, e.g. at the beginning or end of the school day.

The student'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 student 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
- Will receive a late warning on ClassCharts which will alert HoY to persistent lateness.

Tutors receive a weekly update on session punctuality and will review ClassCharts regularly to discuss support needed if a pattern is emerging or students are persistently late. Tutors will discuss this with HoYs who will review support necessary and whether sanctions are needed.

Parents will be informed of any lateness via ClassCharts and where there is persistent lateness or a pattern of lateness HoY will contact parents/carers and strategies and support to ensure punctuality will be set out and agreed. This may be via a phone meeting or a face-to-face pastoral support meeting.

Cases will be looked at individually and actions could include after school detentions or being placed on report monitored by HoY. See Appendix 4.

#### **4.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephone on the first day of the absence and then via email
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary – this will include Home Visits if a student remains persistently absent or we do not hear from parents after a reasonable time
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

Attendance is reported on twice a year to parents/carers as part of a student's Grade Sheet.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

Exceptional circumstances could include:

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 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.
5. Participating in sporting events representing a club, region or nation.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 5 above, the Headteacher may consult with the pastoral team before a decision is made.

Please note: Evidence would be required in each case.

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

1. The first half term of any academic year (applies to all students)
2. Year nine options time (for students in year nine)
3. At any time during years 10 to 13 (for all students in these year groups)
4. At any time specified by the school (this will be communicated to parents).

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 (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- > Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- > Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision
- > Study leave
- > Work Experience
- > 6<sup>th</sup> Form/University open days (2 per student)
- > 6<sup>th</sup> Form/University offer holder days (2 per student)
- > 6<sup>th</sup> Form/University Interviews
- > Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday

### 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

#### Year 7-11

During the 1<sup>st</sup> half-term a letter will be issued to communicate our procedures regarding attendance and remind parents of the importance of having high expectations regarding attendance. This will include the general warning letter from the Torbay Attendance Improvement Service.

After the first half-term, where attendance dips below threshold rates the following actions will be taken:

Threshold 1: 96% - Attendance Officer/Head of Year will meet with the student and the parent/carer will be contacted. Individual students will be highlighted in weekly Student Panel meeting and pastoral support discussed.

Threshold 2: 92% - Level 1 intervention Letter will be issued to parent/carer. Attendance Officer contacts home to discuss reasons for absence and review support needed. Could lead to a pastoral support meeting if necessary. Individual students will be highlighted in weekly Student Panel meeting and pastoral support discussed.

Threshold 3: 90% - Level 2 intervention Letter will be issued to parent/carer. Attendance Officer contacts home to discuss reasons for absence and review support needed. Could lead to a pastoral support meeting if necessary. Individual students will be highlighted in weekly Student Panel meeting and pastoral support discussed.

Threshold 4: Below 90% without improvement for 2 weeks - persistent absence – Level 3 intervention Letter will be issued to parent/carer.

Or since the start of the academic year, there have been 4 spells of absence totalling at least 10 sessions

Or since the start of the academic year, a consistent pattern of absence has been noted

Or some other reason whereby the school/parent considers it necessary. (This could be a review meeting if attendance has not been improving)

HoY/Attendance officer and SEND team (where appropriate) will call for a pastoral support meeting with the student, parent/carer. The attendance officer will ask for medical evidence of any previous absences if not already provided. A review date will be set at this meeting and a target for improvement will be made.

Threshold 5: Below 90% and target for improvement not met by review date. Cases will be looked at individually but if attendance does not improve, another meeting between HoY, student, parent/carer and link SLT will take place where support will be reviewed, and attendance targets will be agreed.

The intervention letters used have taken on board the views from Student Voice.

### **Year 12-13**

During the 1st half-term a letter will be issued to communicate our procedures regarding attendance and remind parents of the importance of having high expectations regarding attendance.

After the first half-term, where attendance dips below threshold rates the following actions will be taken:

Stage 1: Attendance below 90% - Head of Year will meet with the student and phone the parent/carer. Strategies will be suggested to help improve attendance.

Stage 2: Where there is no improvement in attendance following Stage 1 intervention, the Head of Sixth Form will meet with the student and Head of Year to address why the strategies suggested at Stage 1 are not working. Parents will be issued with a Stage 2 letter. Attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis by the form tutor and sixth form team.

Stage 3: Persistent absence below 75% and / or no significant improvement following Stage 2. A meeting between the Head of Year, Head of Sixth Form, Parent / Carer and the student will take place where an attendance contract will be agreed. Students will be placed on an attendance report. Failure to adhere to this policy could result in the 'Fitness to Study' Policy being applied or the student being asked to pay for their own exam entries.

### 5.3 Legal sanctions

The school can request for the local authority to 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 requested by the headteacher to be issued by the 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 student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- In situations where a child accumulates 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences (one school day is made up of two sessions) within any six-month period, parents/carers will make themselves liable to receiving a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child
- If a child does not reside with one of the parents – each parent is liable to receive a proportion of the fine

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

After taking the views of Student Voice into account attendance will be regularly monitored by the Attendance Officer:

For every week a student achieves 100% attendance, they will receive 1 housepoint.

The tutor group in each year group with the best progress in attendance each fortnight will receive 30 housepoints. These will regularly be celebrated by HoY in assemblies.

Students who achieve attendance above 96% over a term will receive a congratulatory message that is sent home by the HoY.

Each term, HoY will congratulate students who have the most improved attendance.

The housepoints will feed into the reward system as described in the behaviour policy.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The SLT Lead for attendance at our school monitors attendance on a weekly basis. Each week, this feeds into a Student Panel meeting where concerns over individual students are discussed and actions decided upon. Heads of Year a regularly invited to these meetings and concerns raised are discussed with them weekly.

The SLT Lead for attendance monitors whole school attendance and reports this to the Headteacher every half-term or more frequently if there is a concern. These reports are taken to Whole Board Trustee meetings as they occur. Every other week, issues around attendance of individuals are discussed with form tutors as part of the HoY briefing.

A student's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health with an expected date of return (see section 4.2). Parents/carers are expected to contact school on every subsequent day of the illness.

If a student's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

If a vulnerable student's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-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 shares this with the board of trustees.



Attendance data is collected and stored via SIMS, our MIS. Regularly generated reports are used for the following purposes:

- Track the attendance of individual students
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern or cause for celebration
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention, support or celebration

## **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 SLT member overseeing Attendance. At every annual review, the policy will be approved by the full board of trustees.

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

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

<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student 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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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 student is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: example intervention letter

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to inform you that Name's attendance is below 90%. As you know, a high attendance correlates with increased academic progress. It helps students to achieve the best academic outcomes and helps us to support them to develop character skills and self-esteem. Attendance that falls below 90% is termed as persistent absence. It equates to 18 days of missed school over an academic year.

Overall, Name's attendance is XX%

Type of absence	Authorised	Unauthorised	Unexplained
Number of sessions	XX	XX	XX

A session counts as either a morning or an afternoon. Authorised absence could be an agreed absence or illness. Unauthorised absences are those that haven't been agreed. Unexplained absences are those for which we haven't had a reason, if there are any unexplained absences, please get in touch with our attendance officer.

We take a whole school approach to maintain excellent attendance. It is a [joint](#) responsibility of parents, students and staff. You can read the full policy on our website.

If students are absent, parents/carers should let us know via [Studybugs](#). If they cannot do this, they should phone 01803 653 750 and leave a message.

Medical and dental appointments should be made out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, e.g. at the beginning or end of the school day.

We understand there are many reasons students may be absent and if students need support there are different ways this can be accessed.

Students that have concerns over particular lessons or subjects should speak to their teacher or the Head of Department. A full list of staff can be found [here](#).

They can also ask for assistance via the Hub, our peer led support coordinated by Miss Hudson, Maddie Da Costa and year 12 students - [here](#).

If students have pastoral or wellbeing concerns, then they should speak to their Tutor in the first instance or Head of Year. If they feel that they want to raise a concern that but they aren't able to talk to anybody face-to-face, they can do so [here](#). Students can also self-refer to our in-school counselling by following this [link](#).

If students have a learning difficulty or disability and want to talk to somebody about this, then they should contact our [SEND Team](#).

In situations where a child accumulates 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences (one school day is made up of two sessions) within any six-month period, parents/carers will make themselves liable to receiving a Penalty Notice per parent/carers, per child. If a Penalty Notice is issued it carries a penalty of £60 if paid in full within 21 days or £120 if paid in full after this time but within 28 days. Part or late payments cannot be accepted and there is no legal right to appeal the Penalty Notice once it has been issued. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid, this is likely to result in Court proceedings being instigated for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance contrary to section 444 Education Act 1996. Upon conviction of such an offence the maximum fine of £2500, or a maximum 3 months imprisonment, can be imposed.

Only one Penalty Notice will be issued in any two year period. This means that if a Penalty Notice is paid, and the child accumulates a further 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within the following two years, this will result in the parent/carers receiving a summons to Court for an offence contrary to s444 Education Act.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

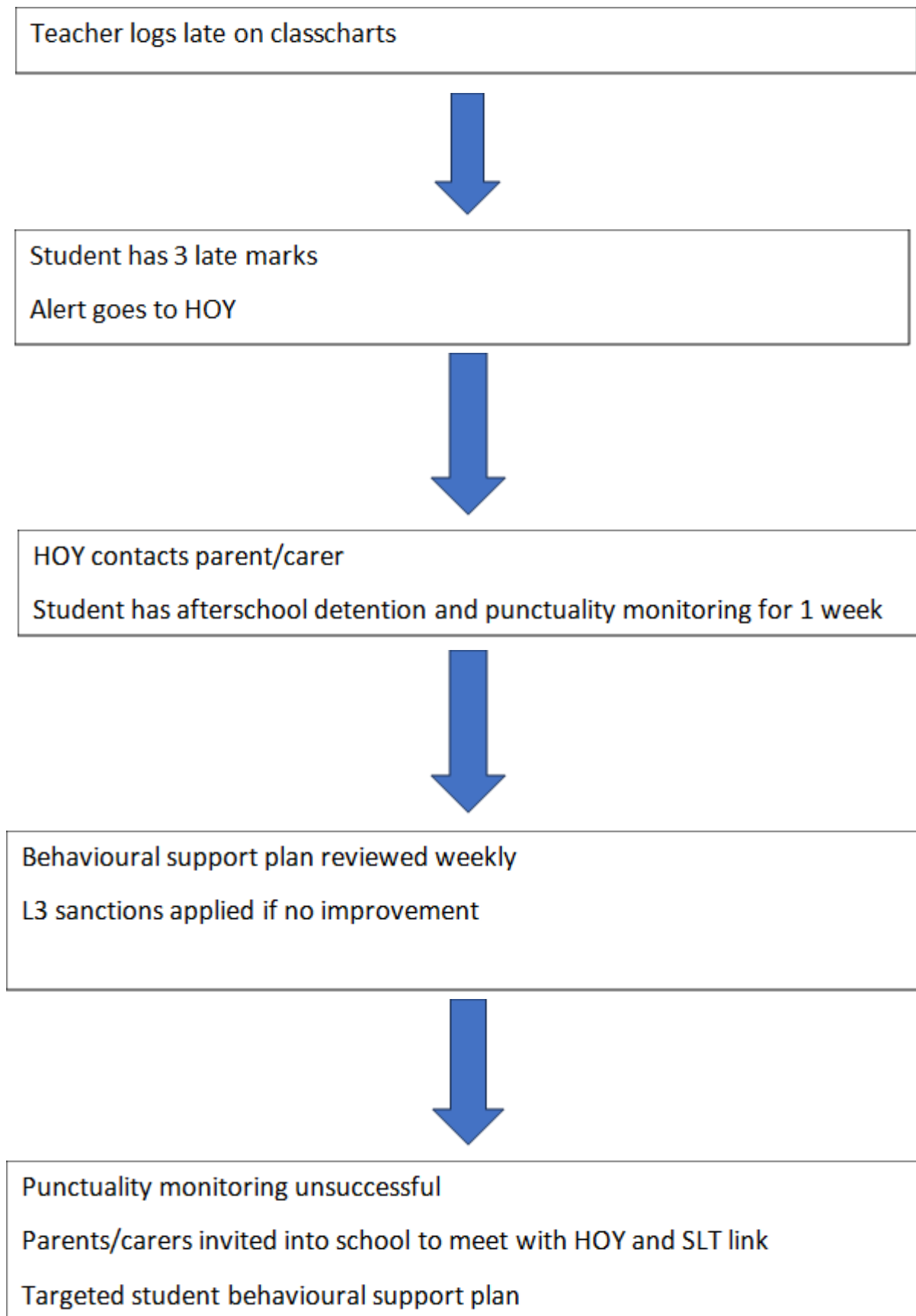
Please note that this is an automated letter that has been generated and sent out to all parents depending on the attendance rate – please do get in touch with your child's Head of Year, or Ms Dunne, our attendance officer, if there are ongoing reasons for future absence but don't feel that you have to respond to this letter where there is already regular contact being made between yourself and one of our attendance/pastoral team.

Yours faithfully

Bob Baker

Assistant Headteacher (Attendance Lead)

### Appendix 3: Punctuality Flow Chart



#### Appendix 4: Version Control Amendments

Version No	Date	Summary of changes