



# Attendance and Truancy Policy

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# 1 Statement of intent

John Ruskin School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of governors Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2016) School Attendance Advice

1.2. All staff must ensure they adhere to and implement the requirements of any equality legislation.

## 2. Definitions

2.1. John Ruskin School defines “absence” as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

2.2. John Ruskin School defines an “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

2.3. John Ruskin School defines an “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

2.4. John Ruskin School defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 15 per cent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

### 3. Key roles and responsibilities

- 3.1. The governing board has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of John Ruskin School.
- 3.2. The governing board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 3.3. The governing board has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 3.4. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of John Ruskin School.
- 3.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 3.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 3.7. Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session.
- 3.8. The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- 3.9. The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:
  - Are being educated from home.
  - No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
  - Have an authorised medical note.
  - Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
  - Have been permanently excluded.
- 3.10. John Ruskin School will inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has an unauthorised absence for a period of 10 days or more during the academic year.
- 3.11. Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children during term-time.

- 3.12. Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure that pupils attend school every day.
- 3.13. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.
- 3.14. All pupils are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

#### **4. Training of staff**

- 4.1. At John Ruskin School, we recognise that early intervention can prevent bad behaviour. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Secondary Attendance and Truancy Policy as part of their new starter induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

#### **5. Pupil expectations**

- 5.1. Pupils will be expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year.
- 5.2. John Ruskin expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually.
- 5.3. Pupils will be expected to report any absence immediately to the relevant member of staff.

#### **6. Absence procedures**

- 6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence.
- 6.2. Parents are required to send a note on the first day their child returns with a signed explanation as to why they were absent. This must be done even if we have already received a phone call.
- 6.3. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- 6.4. A phone call/text message/email will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 6.5. The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
  - Ascertain the reason for the absence.
  - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.

- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
  - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the School Census System.
- 6.6. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the pastoral lead (JF)
- 6.7. If pupil attendance drops below 90 per cent, the local attendance officer will be informed.
- 6.8. John Ruskin School will inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

## 7. Contact information

- 7.1. Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 7.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

## 8. Attendance register

- 8.1. The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether the pupil is:
- Present.
  - Absent.
  - Attending an approved educational visit.
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 8.2. John Ruskin School will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:
- / = Present in the morning
  - \ = Present in the afternoon
  - L = Late arrival before the register has closed
  - C = Authorised absence
  - E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
  - H = Authorised holiday
  - I = Illness

- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site educational activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- S = Study leave
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- W = Work experience
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- D – Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z – Pupil not on admission register

8.3. When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, for example: induction days.

8.4. All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment, and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

8.5. Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## 9. Attendance officer

9.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the local attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.

- 9.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the local attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

## **10. Lateness**

- 10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 10.2. The school day starts at 9.05am; pupils should be in school by this time.
- 10.3. Registers are marked by 9.20am; pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in school by this time.
- 10.4. The register closes at 9:25am; pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 10.5. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

## **11. Truancy**

- 11.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 11.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 11.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes or assembly by 9.10am and 1:50pm, where the teacher will record the attendance either electronically or on a paper copy.
- 11.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return.
- 11.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.
- 11.6. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, who will contact the child's parents, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 11.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
  - In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
  - If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.

- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

## 12. Missing children

12.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the headteacher.

12.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the school day:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.

12.3. The following areas will be systematically searched:

- All classrooms
- All toilets
- Changing rooms
- The library
- Any outbuildings
- The school grounds

12.4. Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

12.5. If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.

12.6. If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.

12.7. The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

- 12.8. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any special educational needs and/or disabilities, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 12.9. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 12.10. The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 12.11. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 12.12. The headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 12.13. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

### **13. Term-time leave**

- 13.1. At John Ruskin School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 13.2. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness.
- 13.3. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 13.4. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
  - During Year 7 when a pupil is settling into the school
  - Immediately before and during assessment periods
  - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
  - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- 13.5. If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

### **14. Religious observances**

- 14.1. John Ruskin School will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
- 14.2. Parents must inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

- 14.3. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

## **15. Appointments**

- 15.1. As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 15.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school.
- 15.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out by a parent.
- 15.4. Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **16. Young carers**

- 16.1. John Ruskin School understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school.
- 16.2. John Ruskin School takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **17. Exceptional circumstances**

- 17.1. When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register.
- 17.2. Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:
- The school is fully or partially closed.
  - Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
  - There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
  - The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.
- 17.3. The use of the 'Y' code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

## **18. Rewarding good attendance**

- 18.1. John Ruskin School acknowledges 100 percent attendance in the following ways:
- Certificates, either bronze, silver or gold awarded every term

18.2. Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Postcards/texts home
- Form group prizes given in assembly every week

18.3. School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90 percent, these privileges may be taken away.

18.4. Attendance at the Year 11 prom requires 90 percent attendance.

## **19. Monitoring and review**

19.1. John Ruskin School monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

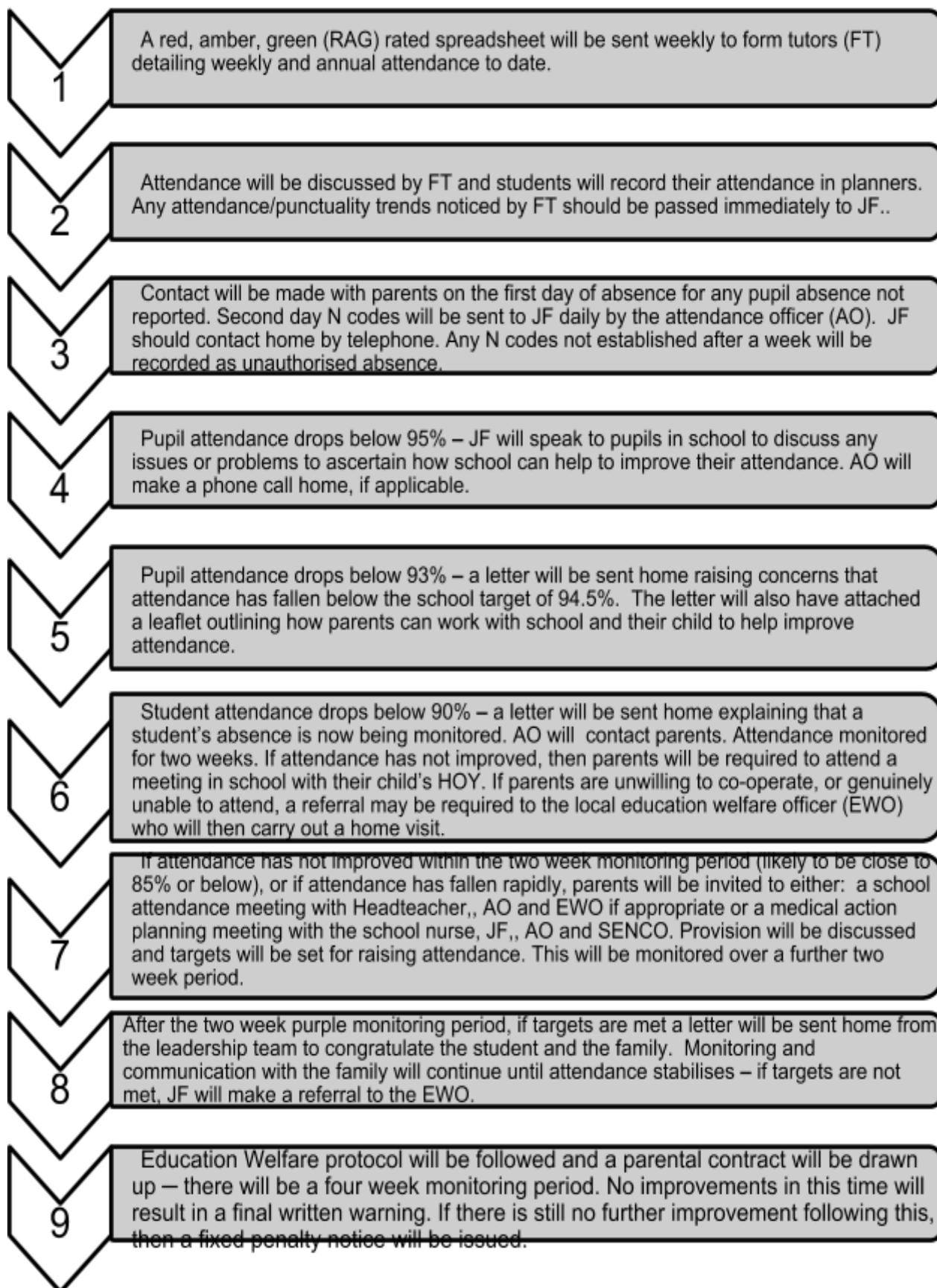
19.2. John Ruskin School's attendance target is 95 percent each year.

19.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website/on the notice board/upon request from the office.

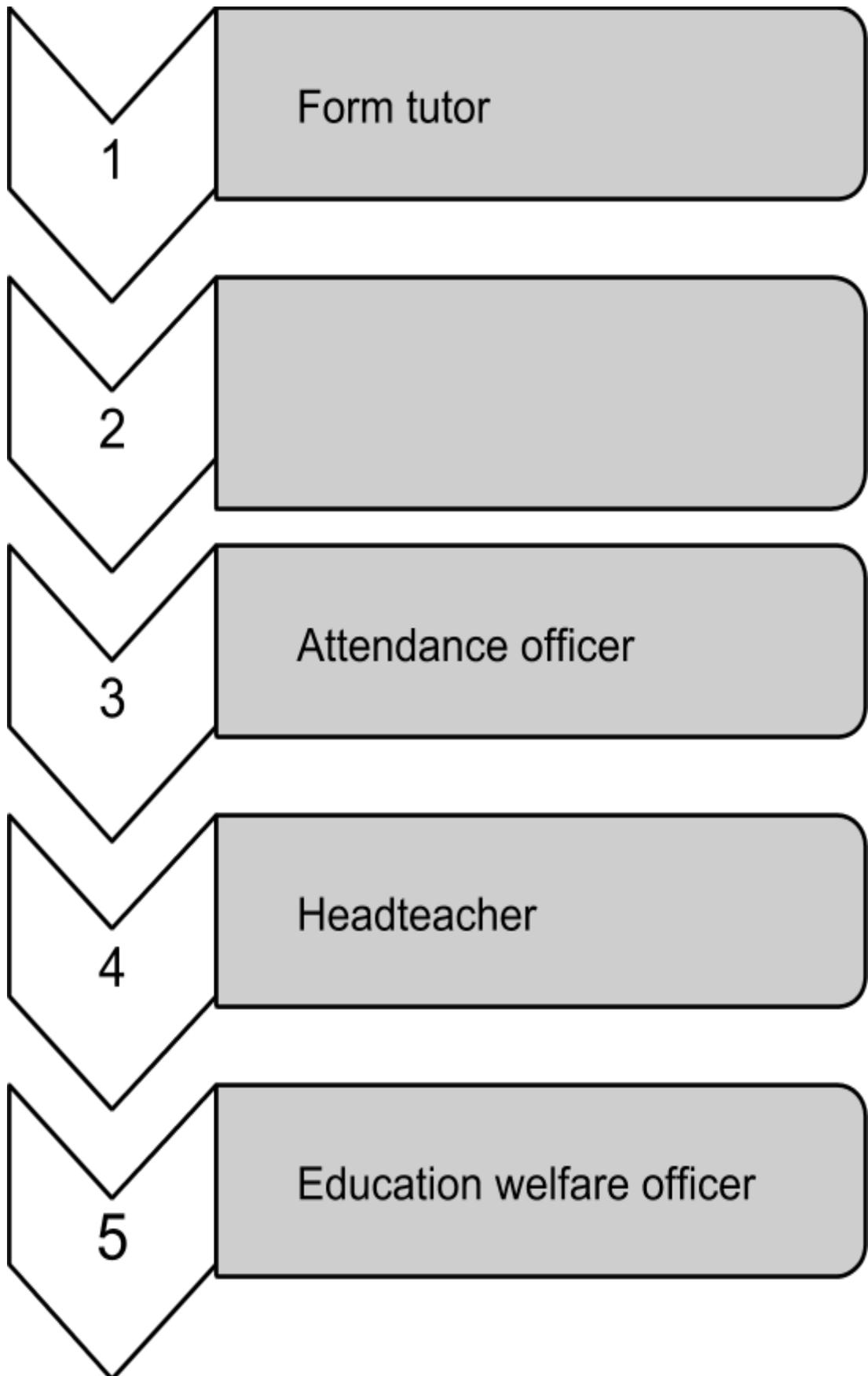
19.4. This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher and the attendance officer.

19.5. Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

## Appendix 1 – Attendance Monitoring Procedures



## Appendix 2 – Attendance Reporting Structure



## Appendix 3 – Attendance Agreement Forms

### Student Attendance Agreement

I, **name of pupil**, agree to attend school and understand the consequences I may face if my attendance drops below 100 percent. I will ensure that John Ruskin School is made immediately aware of when I will not reasonably be able to attend, and will give the school full details of my absence.

As a pupil of John Ruskin School, I am dedicated to:

- Being in attendance every day.
- Always being punctual to school and lessons.
- Informing the school of the reason for any absence.
- Not missing school for trivial reasons.



|                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| Pupil name:      | Date: |
| Form tutor name: | Date: |

### Parental Attendance Agreement

I, **name of parent**, understand that it is my responsibility to send my child to school. I agree to send **name of pupil** to school every day and understand the consequences if I fail to do so. When **name of pupil** is absent from school due to exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

|                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| Parent name:     | Date: |
| Form tutor name: | Date: |