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| Name of Policy | **Attendance Policy** |
| School Lead | Assistant Head Pastoral – Bev Lee  Assistant Pastoral Manager – Mel Findon |
| Governor Lead | Sue Morrison |
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| Links to other policies | Child Protection policy  Behaviour policy  Supporting pupils with a medical condition policy  SEND policy |
| Chair of Governors signature: |  |

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# POLICY STATEMENT

* Pilgrim School is committed to providing as full an education as possible for all of our pupils, both holistically and academically.
* Pupils receiving education through our provision are not attending their mainstream school due to a diagnosed medical illness which prevents them from doing so.The majority of pupils joining Pilgrim have a baseline attendance of 0% at mainstream over a sustained period of time.
* For many of our pupils, this provision offers a much needed second chance to engage in education.
* Pupils may be receiving education at The Pilgrim School following support and intervention through the Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) pathway. These pupils are supported through a multi-agency approach to support and enable them to reintegrate into a mainstream provision.
* The Pilgrim School also supports some pupils with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).
* The school endeavours to provide alternative provision in the home to those pupils unable to access a base due to the nature of their medical condition.
* The Pilgrim School believes that the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.
* It is our policy that pupils should attend for as much time as possible within the constraints of their condition. Statutory Guidance from the Department of Education (2022) has highlighted the need for all students to have access to 25 hours education per week.
* This policy follows guidance set out by the Department for Education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=efc14339-2f45-4fff-98b6-95753f662fbd&utm_content=daily>

* Working together to improve school attendance refers to effective school improvement and management which sets out guidance for prevention, early intervention, and a targeted approach. As pupils are referred to Pilgrim following a sustained period of absence the prevention and early intervention stage is has already occurred and been unsuccessful, at Pilgrim we therefore focus on a targeted approach to re-engage a pupil back into a form of education.

# AIMS

* Where possible, pupils should attend a base unless their illness prevents them from doing so. In this instance, 1-1 tuition in the home, or at an alternative venue, may be put in place. This is generally only implemented on the recommendation of health professionals.
* The Pilgrim school recognises that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.
* The Pilgrim school recognises that good school attendance is an important protective factor, and the best way to identify and support pupils’ individual needs. This is more paramount for vulnerable pupils as research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms.
* To acknowledge the difficult, individual circumstances of our pupils and to ensure that no pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their need and personal development.
* To strive to do all we can to ensure that all learners achieve maximum **possible** attendance within the constraints of their medical condition, and that any problems affecting attendance are dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
* Teaching bases provide a welcoming environment for pupils and parents, enabling them to access a positive experience of education and develop positive relationships with staff and other learners.
* Extensive pastoral support and close family contact are available to ensure all pupils attend well and provision is appropriate to medical need.
* For pupils to transition to appropriate education settings if the medical professional(s) involved feel their health has improved sufficiently and Pilgrim involvement is no longer the appropriate setting.
* To work in partnership with families, referring schools and health professionals to review and adapt provision in response to a pupil’s emerging needs. This may result in onward transition to a more appropriate setting.

**MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH**

The Pilgrim school believes that in order to treat the root cause of school absence and remove barriers to attendance all professionals need to work collaboratively with the family and pupil and not against them.

The Multi-agency approach would support with setting realistic and achievable expectations, monitor attendance data, and set achievable targets. We would focus on pupil's voice to form positive trusting relationships which will enable discussions around possible barriers and a culture of openness and otivation to work towards removing the barriers. All plans of support should be formalised in the form of either review minutes, my concern logs or for persistent absences a transition plan. Where absence continues please see ‘persistent absences’ process below.

We recognise the links between attendance and safeguarding. All pupils have a pastoral plan which considers concerns/risks alongside protective factors and strengths. Where possible this is completed as part a multi-agency response. All plans include a realistic ‘next step’ regarding attendance.

Due to the complexity of need, it is unusual for pupils to receive fulltime provision. However, all have access to 25 hours if able. Provision is agreed in liaison with partner agencies.

Singly registered pupils not accessing fulltime education are reported to the Local Authority via the Reduced Timetable survey. Mainstream schools should report this for dually registered pupils.

# EXPECTATIONS

**Base taught pupils are expected to:**

* Attend regularly according to their provision offer
* Be ready for transport in order to arrive at school in a timely manner
* Engage in pastoral support to address any attendance/engagement issues
* Work towards increasing attendance as health allows

**Pupils taught on a 1:1 basis are expected to:**

* Attend regularly
* Be ready to learn when the teacher arrives
* Inform their teacher or support staff of any problem that may prevent them from engaging
* Work towards increasing attendance as health allows

**Parents are expected to:**

* Fulfil their responsibility in ensuring that their child attends regularly
* Keep contact details up to date so that they can be contacted
* Make appointments outside of school times wherever possible
* Contact the teaching centre (base taught) or school office (1:1) on the first and each subsequent day that their child is unable to attend. Notify the school on every day of absence.
* Ensure that their child arrives and is ready on time and is well prepared for learning
* Ensure that wherever possible holidays are not taken during term time, and particularly not in examination periods. Any requests for holidays during term time must be made in writing in advance to the Head teacher
* Work closely with the school to resolve any problems that may impact pupil attendance and attend reviews
* Support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

**The Assistant Head Pastoral and Assistant Pastoral Manager will:**

* Develop and monitor procedures for the engagement and transition of long term absentees
* Report on attendance to governors at regular intervals
* Report on attendance to the referring school, where requested or appropriate. This can include granting access to electronic registration system on request.
* Monitor attendance data at regular intervals throughout each term, including comparison of key groups
* Monitor weekly safeguarding attendance to ensure pupils who have not been seen are safeguarded through completing either a Pilgrim safe and well check or by requesting this through the pupil’s mainstream school.
* Attend LA training/workshops as appropriate
* Oversee the rewards system

**The whole school team will:**

* Work together to deliver a quality education
* Respond promptly and discreetly to any relevant problem notified
* Encourage and celebrate good attendance
* Endeavour to reintegrate pupils who attend after a period of absence, sensitively and positively.
* Work collaboratively with parents, all agencies and professionals involved to encourage good attendance.
* Build strong and trusting relationships with pupils and families in order to remove barriers for attendance.
* Implement a multi-agency approach to put the right support in place which promotes positive attendance. This can be achieved using The Pilgrim review process / TAC / CIN / CP meetings.

**Key admin staff will:**

* Record attendance regularly, efficiently and accurately
* Contact parents on the same day when a pupil fails to attend a planned session without providing good reason
* Liaise with Assistant Head Pastoral/Assistant Pastoral Manager/PSWS if unable to ascertain reason for absence
* Ensure LA records are up to date and report daily to DfE as and when required.
* Attend LA training/workshops as appropriate

# PROCEDURES FOR ATTENDANCE

***Base taught pupils:***

* Registration will open at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
* Pupils should be in attendance at the start of each registration period and named staff should be there to greet them.
* Pupils scheduled to arrive at non-registration times will remain ‘open’ until 20 minutes after their expected arrival time.
* Teachers should take a register for every lesson and for safeguarding purposes notify the office if an expected pupil does not arrive (walkie talkies are available in classrooms)
* Key staff will insert a mark **for every pupil**, whether it is a present or an absent mark. In the event of absence where no reason has been received, procedures are in place. (Appendix 1).
* Electronic registers will be completed at the end of each registration period (09 30 am and 1 30 pm respectively).
* If pupils arrive late / leave early for any reason they should report to a member of office staff to ensure they are marked in / out.
* Parents will be notified of attendance on progress reports and within review meetings.
* If attendance becomes a concern a review meeting will be held to discuss the prolonged absence, the barriers to attendance, and the next steps for improved attendance.
* Pupils working towards base provision at the start of their Pilgrim journey or following prolonged absence may have a transition plan in place. They will receive a present mark if they meet the objective on that plan.

***Home taught pupils:***

* The Pilgrim School is funded to provide home tuition for those pupils unable to access a base due to their health needs.
* Safe and well contacts are made daily by admin staff or mainstream if lessons are not timetabled.
* This may be virtual or face to face dependent on pupil need.
* In addition, we allocate pastoral staff to conduct regular home visits.
* Wherever possible, pastoral and/or teaching sessions will take place at the same time each week
* Time allocation sheets will be completed on the same day as planned sessions
* If attendance becomes a concern a review meeting will be held to discuss the prolonged absence, the barriers to attendance, and the next steps for improved attendance.
* Unexplained absence is followed up in the same way as base taught pupils.
* An email will be sent to [home.attendance@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](http://home.attendance@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk) following the completion of a home visit or to indicate that a session has been cancelled and the reason for cancellation. This email will be completed no later that 1pm for a morning session and 4pm for an afternoon session.
* If a pupil is ‘not education ready’ and not receiving formal teaching, pastoral support will be provided as an alternative. Such pupils are monitored using the ‘Readiness to Engage’ scale. They will receive a present mark if the session has met expectation; this means that if the starting point is to relationship build with family rather than directly with pupil due to level of need, they will be marked present should this happen. Full details of objectives and engagement will be recorded on time allocation sheets. In this rare circumstance, there will be close liaison with other agencies to ensure the child has been seen by professionals. Communication and Participation progress for these pupils is monitored closely by the Senior Leadership team. When sufficient progress has been made they will move on to a transition plan or teaching provision.

**Safeguarding is a priority and in the event of continued restricted access to pupils, child protection policy procedures will be followed.**

**Where pupils are dually registered:**

* Attendance and safeguarding are joint responsibilities
* Mainstream schools are asked to make contact with pupils on any day that they are not scheduled to attend Pilgrim School
* Mainstream schools should make regular contact with the school to monitor attendance
* In the event of unexplained absence, we may request safe and well checks be completed by the mainstream setting
* See appendix 2

# REWARDS

* Individual postcards, phone calls home and verbal praise will be used throughout the school year as appropriate.
* Three times a year, regular attendees will be rewarded with a certificate and pupils will be entered into a draw for a voucher.The school will also acknowledge those pupils with the most improved attendance.
* Those students with genuine authorised absence, either through medical or religious observance reasons, will not be penalised in this process.

# PERSISTENT ABSENCE

* The school recognises that some students will not achieve consistent regular attendance due to their medical condition. Attendance is considered on an individual basis and every effort is made to continue academic progress during periods of absence.
* Pastoral plans outline barriers to attendance, how the child is supported and ensure consistent visibility from a safeguarding perspective.
* Regular review meetings will take place to monitor attendance and implement new strategies for support (see appendix 3)
* Due to the nature of the cohort, it is unusual for poor attendance to receive a punitive response. Legal proceedings are not routinely actioned and advice would always be sought in the first instance from the LA Inclusion and Attendance team
* Pupils making no pastoral or academic progress over a sustained period of time, and where absence is not supported by medical evidence, may be at risk of Pilgrim withdrawing. (Appendix 4).

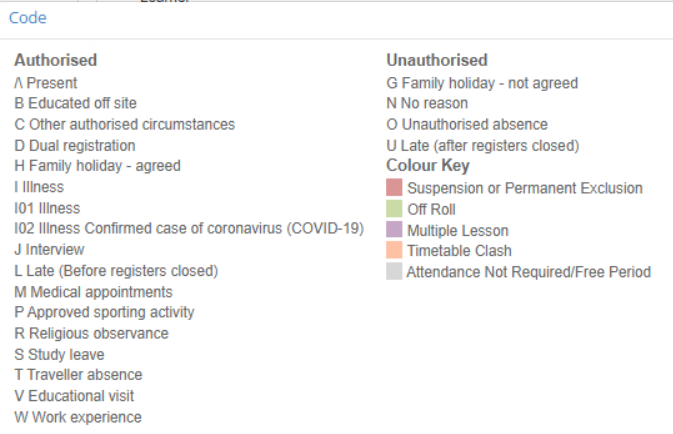
# REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

* If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are required to write to the Headteacher. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason by letter. In these instances, any absence will then be marked as unauthorised. Leave of absence will **not** be offered to pupils for family holidays except under exceptional circumstances.

**STRATEGIES**

* The Pilgrim School works closely with pupils, parents and external agencies to facilitate good attendance in line with pupil health needs
* The Pilgrim School has a strong ethos of unconditional positive regard and Hope and there is a strong sense of community within the bases
* Whilst attendance is everyone’s responsibility, each pupil has an allocated pastoral worker who becomes the key contact in relation to attendance, safeguarding and wellbeing.
* A range of strategies are utilised ranging from: tiny step transition plans, home visits, transport support, lesson support, individual rewards, virtual tours, familiarisation visits, creative teaching spaces, timetable adjustments, relationship building, website information, relaxed environment (teachers on first name terms, individual clothing allowed).
* Pupil voice is considered an essential component of good attendance and staff are flexible in their approach to respond to this
* Pupils are involved in the setting of their attendance targets on pastoral plans
* Personal development is valued and promoted at The Pilgrim School and no pupils are excluded from trips/events. In fact poor attenders are encouraged to access as this may improve ‘buy in’ from the pupils
* Given the nature of the cohort, all staff work hard to communicate with pupils and families the importance of good attendance for safeguarding and outcomes whilst applying minimal pressure and working in partnership to address barriers to accessing education
* All base taught pupils have a fulltime timetable which is colour coded to highlight next steps. This shows the high expectation school have for attendance even if a pupil is currently unable to access.
* Home taught pupils are taught over a period of sessions over the week in order to maintain visibility and routine. When health allows, they are supported to transition back to mainstream school (see addendum) or to move to base provision

ATTENDANCES CODES ON CLOUD SCHOOL



**Addendum: Reintegration of pupils**

The Pilgrim School is a Community Special School (Hospital School). We act on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council to fulfil their duties under Section 19 of the 1996 Education Act. We also provide education to pupils who are not able to access their mainstream school due to illness, physical or mental.

As such, pupils attend with a variety of needs, ranging from short-term post-operative care to long-term ongoing mental health conditions.

The Pilgrim School is an interim provision and aims to transition pupils back to mainstream, alternative provision or post 16 providers depending on individual need and health status.

In exceptional circumstances, pupils are placed at the school via an Education, Health and Care plan.

School leaders meet on a regular basis with representatives from the LA Inclusion team to discuss individual pupils and any factors impacting reintegration on a strategic level.

The Pilgrim School has a clear criteria by which to reintegrate pupils back to their mainstream school/alternative provision or post 16 destination.

Pupils are admitted to the school via a multi-agency medical support panel, citing either emotional based school avoidance or physical health need. Regardless of condition, all receive a review at 6, 12 and 18 weeks from start date

These reviews involve mainstream school, family and any supporting external agencies. Readiness for reintegration/transition is routinely discussed and recorded.

If it is felt a pupil is still not able to return after 18 weeks, reviews are held in accordance with SEND pathway and level of need. Should pupil/family/health voice ever be that pupil is able to return, a reintegration meeting will be called immediately so that plans can be made.

In addition, pupil readiness for reintegration is considered at termly progress and intervention meetings. All pastoral and academic data is analysed. If a pupil is attending well, making academic progress and developing personally the PSWS and Academic Link will be asked to facilitate conversation with pupil, family, health and any supporting agencies. This then determines if a transition should be considered or whether it may have detrimental impact on current progress and longer-term outcomes.

It is unusual (but still possible) for pupils in Keystage 4 to reintegrate after 18 weeks as the transition focus turns to successful post 16 engagement.

When all involved stakeholders deem that a pupil is reintegration ready, a comprehensive transition plan is created with pupil need at its centre.

Reintegration methods are varied. Some pupils choose to attend fulltime with no Pilgrim support whilst others transition over an extended time period with ongoing support from allocated PSWS. Pilgrim staff work closely with mainstream settings to build trusting relationships with key individuals in order to ‘handover’ pupil care.

Pilgrim support, whether that be direct or indirect involvement, is not ended until such time as:

* Pupil is attending more hours at alternative setting than Pilgrim
* Transition is considered successful and secure

This will be different for each individual child and a provisional date is agreed at initial reintegration planning. It is usual practice for an ‘end of placement’ review to take place to agree complete withdrawal of Pilgrim provision.

Pupils who stay at The Pilgrim School until the end of their key stage 4 education are supported by PSWS and mainstream schools to secure post 16 placements.

Information about support offered and level of need are shared as appropriate.

Where requested, pupils are supported at the beginning of year 12 to access their new placements.

**Appendix 1: First day absence procedure (pupil not in school when register closes and no message received)**

1. Named member of staff (person completing register) in each base to contact parent to ascertain a reason (parentmail/text/email/call)
2. Log reason for absence on e-portal and where necessary inform Academic Link/PSWS. If it is a safeguarding related reason, add to MyConcern.
3. If there is no response, leave a message asking parent to contact school as soon as possible (eg. “I am informing you that your child is absent from school today. Please could you contact the school office, as soon as possible, to advise why. If we do not hear from you, we may conduct an unplanned home visit or request a safe and well check by the police as this may be a safeguarding concern”.
4. If no timely response, contact second named adult
5. If there is still no response discuss with the allocated PSWS who may contact the pupil directly and will contact other agencies working with the pupil to share concerns and ascertain if they have had any communication
6. The PSWS will liaise with the Assistant Head Pastoral regarding the appropriateness of a safe and well check (determined by level of need on My Concern and contextual information).

***Home taught pupils:***

* All staff due to see a pupil in the home should inform admin via the [home.attendance@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](http://home.attendance@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk) email address as soon as possible following notification of a cancellation, attended sessions, or no show session.
* If a pupil misses sessions with no reason given, the named staff completing registration should inform the allocated academic Link, PSWS and 1:1 Manager so that the above procedure can be followed from point 5.

**If there is no response from family within three days, pupil remains absent and other agencies have received no contact, a home visit must be actioned regardless of level of need. This may be requested from supporting agencies/police where appropriate.**

**Appendix 2: Letter of comfort**

**Letter of comfort**

**Safeguarding and Attendance arrangements for dually registered pupils at The Pilgrim School (September 2022)**

Responsibility for safeguarding dually registered pupils remains the responsibility of both schools. As such, I wish to outline the arrangements we have in place and clarify expectations.

This communication confirms that all staff employed at The Pilgrim School, either working in a base, in the home or an alternative venue, have undergone the following:

* Appropriate DBS and Safeguarding checks
* Received appropriate safeguarding training
* Have been recruited and inducted in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2022

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school is as follows:**

Mrs Bev Lee (Assistant Headteacher)

[Bev.Lee@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:Bev.Lee@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk)

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are:**

Mr Steve Barnes (Headteacher)

[Steve.Barnes@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:Steve.Barnes@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk)

Mrs Mel Findon, (Assistant Pastoral Manager/DDSL)

[mel.findon@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:mel.findon@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk)

***All pupils***

Where pupils are subject to a multi-agency team, we would expect mainstream schools to be Lead Professional, unless there is a parental request otherwise.

We log concerns using the MyConcern database and will share significant events with you (for example, referrals to Children’s Services).

We follow up on absence daily when pupils do not attend as expected.

We use the ‘C’ code to identify when pupils are not expected to attend as per their current timetable.

We track attendance in two ways; percentage of provision offered and percentage of full-time.

Mainstream schools should contact us regularly to confirm attendance at expected sessions and therefore current ‘visibility’ of their pupils.

If a pupil is not expected to attend our provision fulltime, the safeguarding responsibility for non-contact days lies with the mainstream school.

***Pupils taught in our base provision (Lincoln/Amber Hill/Baumber)***

Pupils travel to school by Local Authority transport unless they live less than 3 miles from the setting.

In periods of prolonged absence for health purposes, pupils are risk assessed from a safeguarding perspective and, from there, a desired frequency of visits is determined. Wherever possible, this is agreed as part of a multi-agency process.

If health related absence persists, we use absence management plans to formalise how we will stay in touch with the pupil in terms of safe and well checks and academic aspects. These will be compiled in partnership with mainstream schools.

***Pupils taught in the home or 1:1 at an alternative venue***

We receive funding from the LA for this provision. This is a tailored personalised provision depending on the needs of the student. Across the week, lessons take the form of core subjects and ICT; face to face or virtual sessions usually lasting 1 to 2 hours.

We also assign a pastoral member of staff who aims to visit the pupil at home on a weekly basis, again depending on the needs of the student. Most visits are face to face and include personal development and PSHE sessions as well as wellbeing pastoral support.

If pupils are deemed ‘not education ready,’ provision will consist of pastoral support with the intention to work towards re-engagement with education. This also varies in hours offered according to needs and will be face to face as far as possible.

***Communication***

We routinely keep schools informed of pupil progress and engagement. This takes the form of twice yearly progress reports and updated timetables whenever provision is amended (either venue or timings).

At referral point we ask for a key school contact to be identified. This should be someone that the pupil has a positive and trustful relationship with. It does not need to be a School Leader but there should be regular internal dialogue with the leadership team.

At The Pilgrim School, all pupils are assigned a Pastoral Support & Welfare Specialist (pastoral) and Academic Link person (teaching) who will have oversight of that pupil’s progress in their respective field. The mainstream ‘key adult’ will be the point of contact for these staff regarding academic and pastoral matters.

Good practice would be for regular communication between the mainstream ‘key adult’ and Pilgrim team (with the pupil where possible) so that the pupil continues to feel well supported by their mainstream setting. At the very least, this staff member should be the one to attend any review meetings to discuss progress and next steps.

Reviews for new pupils will be held at 6, 12 and 18 week points from start date and then according to need (usually annually unless there is an intent to reintegrate or concerns regarding engagement).

Should school leaders require a more general overview of all pupils attending our setting, they can request this from the respective base leads as follows (these normally occur once per year):

Steve Lingard (Assistant Head, Lincoln)

Sharon Smith (Assistant Head, Amber Hill and home tuition)

Jon Stevenson (Assistant Head, Baumber)

**Appendix 3: Absence management**

* Monitor closely
* Ensure pupil is ‘visible’ to professionals at least weekly and in line with their level of need category on My Concern (PSWS)
* Liaise with other professionals eg, Health/Social care/SEN (PSWS)
* Inform referring school (Academic Link)
* Review provision. If currently ‘not education ready’ provide pastoral support as an interim measure
* Use the review to update attendance targets on the pastoral plan

(1)Pupil does not engage during 6 week induction period **or** attendance is less than 70% of provision offered **or** there has been a sudden decline in attendance

**1**

(2)Check Cloudschool and My Concern entries.

Can absence be explained by illness/family circumstance?

Eg severe

**Yes (2a)**

**3**

**If attendance fails to improve or transition steps are not met:**

**See appendix 4**

Arrange a meeting with pupil, parents, health and mainstream school.

At meeting:

Review provision – is the timetable reflective of pupil need? Is Pilgrim the most appropriate provision?

Inform mainstream school of problems with attendance.

Amend provision if appropriate.

Review the Pastoral Plan. Set time limited achievable attendance targets appropriate to pupil. For example, a clear health plan, engagement in pastoral support, parents communicating regarding absence, engagement in remote learning

Involve other agencies: Health, Social Care, EP, SEN

**No (2b)**

Appendix 4: Withdrawal of provision

* If both absence management reviews have been unsuccessful and neither pastoral nor academic targets have been met.
* Pupil place is effectively at risk
* Hold an internal professionals meeting
  + Are there safeguarding concerns?
  + What are barriers to attendance?
  + Have all strategies been exhausted?
* Liaise with health/other agencies;
  + Is pupil able to access any education?
  + Is education the current priority?
  + Is Pilgrim the appropriate provision?
* Call review with family (involve all agencies wherever possible)
  + What are their wishes?
  + Can any additional support be offered?
  + Plan next steps/discuss education options/role of Pilgrim
  + Set targets for engagement/attendance over a 4 week period (term time)
  + Inform all parties that place is at risk
* Meeting with 4 weeks
  + Review targets
    - Return to absence management if met
    - If not met confirm Pilgrim withdrawal.
      * Provision will remain in place for 2 week period to allow arrangements to be made
      * Ensure all parties are aware (SEND/PRT/CS/mainstream/health)