



# Attendance Policy

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Policy Area:	SAFEGUARDING

## 1. Aims and Ethos

At All Saints CE Primary School & Nursery it is our aim to raise standards by promoting a school ethos that is underpinned by core Christian values. Our Christian values support all areas of learning and can contribute to pupils' motivation to learn. It is recognised that this will be most successful when the values and attitudes promoted by the staff provide a model of behaviour for the children. All our policies and decision making are formed through the lenses of these Christian values to ensure that our school lives them out in all aspects of its collective life.

Our Attendance Policy aims to support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality. This will ensure all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer, and enable pupils to progress smoothly and confidently, with continuity through the school.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure our pupils succeed. All Saints CE Primary School expects and encourages all children to attend every day while they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

We aim to do this by:

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

All Saints CE Primary School aims to maintain an overall whole school attendance above 95%. Each pupil's attendance can be summarised as below:

<b>Above 95%</b>	Good attendance which will help all aspects of pupil's progress and life in school.
<b>90% - 94%</b>	Attendance requires improvement. Depending on the reason(s) resulting in these attendance figures, the School may contact parents/ carers in order to improve the situation (Letter 1, Appendix 2)
<b>Below 90%</b>	Attendance which is causing serious concern and has a serious negative impact on pupil's attainment and progress. The School will work with parents/ carers and the Attendance Improvement Officer to improve the pupil's attendance. (Letter 2, Appendix 3)

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

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

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

#### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Analysing attendance data (in liaison with the Attendance Officer)
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Philip Asher and can be contacted via 01279 836006 or email [dsl@allsaints.herts.sch.uk](mailto:dsl@allsaints.herts.sch.uk)

#### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Rowena Perryman and can be contacted via 01279 836006 and email [finance@allsaints.herts.sch.uk](mailto:finance@allsaints.herts.sch.uk)

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day through the school MIS (currently Arbor).

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls and messages (emails/texts) from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Chase absence where no reasons have been provided by parents by 9.30am on the day of absence.
- Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher as appropriate in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence (unless reason provided requires a fixed period of absence, which will be confirmed by the school office), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

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

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

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry

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

See the DfE Document '[Working Together to Improve Attendance, 2022](#)' section 8, for details of the Attendance Codes to be used.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.50am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and 1.15pm (for Infants and Juniors respectively) and kept open until 1.20pm.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by emailing or calling the school office on [finance@allsaints.herts.sch.uk](mailto:finance@allsaints.herts.sch.uk) or 01279 836006 (see also section 7).

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

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

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

## 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school **in advance** of the appointment. This should be by email or letter. Telephone notification must be followed by written confirmation from parents (this will be asked for at the time of the call).

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

The pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 5 of this policy details which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Regardless of whether the absence will be authorised or not, parents must still inform the school of any planned absence in order that the registers can be kept accurately, and safeguarding procedures followed.

Parents should use the Leave of Absence Request form, available in Appendix 1 of this policy and separately on the website.

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

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

Parents of pupils who are frequently late will be contacted to offer support and discuss the reasons for ongoing lateness. Any actions or support offered will be confirmed in writing and an Attendance/Lateness support plan may be developed. If there is no improvement, or parents are unwilling to engage with support offered, the Headteacher / DSL will consider a referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer for advice, guidance and support.

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason if no reason is provided by 9.30am. If the school cannot reach the pupil's parent/carer, we will contact the Emergency Contacts as provided for the pupil. If the school is unable to successfully contact parent/carer or emergency contacts, then the school will follow safeguarding procedures to consider an appropriate action to take, such as contacting the police to conduct a welfare check, making a Contact Referral to the Local Authority Children's Services hub, or seeking advice from the Attendance Improvement Officer.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. It is reported annually in the end of year report, and at least termly for parents of pupils with attendance levels below the school's expectation (95%) using the following letter templates:

- Attendance under 95%: Letter 1 (appendix 2)
- Attendance under 90%: Letter 2 (appendix 3)

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- A one off (never to be repeated); and
- Cannot be avoided on a school day because of unique circumstances beyond your control.

The precise interpretation of 'exceptional circumstances' will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it is important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about any individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, **at least two weeks** before the absence, and submitted in writing on the Leave of Absence Request Form (Appendix 1, and available on the school website separately to this policy). The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence, and may contact parents/carers to discuss the absence.

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 pupil’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. A Leave of Absence Request Form will be required.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Service personnel required to take leave at a specific time in the year (supported by a letter or other suitable evidence from a relevant authority).
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided, from qualified professionals, such as a doctor, and may be verified by the school contacting that professional.
- Flexi-schooling requests – this is where parents of compulsory school age children choose to home-educate for part of each week and their child attends school for the rest of the week. Whilst legal, there is no right to flexi-schooling and it remains at the Headteacher’s discretion to allow a flexi-schooling arrangement. All proposals will be considered individually. Parents should contact the Headteacher in the first instance to informally discuss their reasons. They will then be required to put their request in writing. This proposal must outline the specific benefits (educational and pastoral) for their child and provide examples of the curriculum provision parents are proposing on days away from school. All Saints School will expect a minimum attendance in school of three full days, and a formal Flexi-schooling contract will be used if the arrangement is approved. Flexi-schooling cannot be used as a mechanism for withdrawing a child from specific curriculum elements. Parents must still follow normal admission rules and their child will be considered to have a full-time place in our school. Flexi-schooling contracts can be withdrawn at any time by the Headteacher should they have significant concerns about the pupil’s academic progress, wellbeing or safeguarding. There is no right to appeal a decision to decline a request for Flexi-schooling, or a withdrawal of an agreement. For further information, please contact the Headteacher.

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

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

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

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

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

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

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

All Saints School follows the Hertfordshire County Council code of conduct for issuing fines, including providing warning letters (posted first class, deemed received at the point of posting) to each parent.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

All Saints CE Primary School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school’s ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.

The following strategies may be used, supplemented by other schemes as advised by the Attendance Improvement Officer from time to time:

- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs
- Families struggling to provide appropriate equipment may be eligible for financial support (such as uniform, breakfast, Free School Meals, educational visit subsidies, subsidies for music and peripatetic tuition)
- Support from the Local School's Partnership – Aspects (via self-referral or school referral)
- Parents will be regularly reminded (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc) of the importance of good attendance
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause of concern will be set targets for improvement
- The Headteacher will report to the school's governing body on attendance figures in their termly Headteacher's report to Governors.
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies - Educational Psychology Service, Social Care, Attendance Improvement Officer, Family Support worker or Child and Family Guidance, etc - when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties
- The Headteacher will have regular meetings/phone calls with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

#### **6.1 Why attendance matters:**

##### **Across one school year:**

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance, this means they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns where possible



### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Add anything else that is part of your strategy

Explain any other procedures your school has for targeting unauthorised absence. For example – meetings, letters, closer monitoring.

## 8. Children Missing from Education

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Team.

Reasonable steps to be taken by the school include:

- Telephone calls to known contacts (parents/carers home, mobile and work numbers, and all emergency contacts as provided by parents/carers – a minimum of two are requested)
- Letters home (included recorded delivery/signed for)
- Contact with other schools/settings where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other service/agency known to be involved with the pupil/family

All contacts will be logged on the school system for recording Safeguarding Concerns (CPOMS).

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

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

### 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and Positive Relationships policy



## Appendix 1



# All Saints CE Primary School & Nursery Leave of Absence Request Form

This form is to be used for all absences other than sickness or medical/dental appointments. After completing the form, please return it to the school office no less than **2 weeks** before the start of the absence period. Failure to do this may mean the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

*Current legislation makes it clear that the headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. At All Saints CE Primary School we are fully bound by this legislation and will be unable to authorise absences unless we believe that the occasion is exceptional i.e.:*

- A one off (never to be repeated); and
- Cannot be avoided on a school day because of unique circumstances beyond your control.

The Headteacher will consider each case individually on receipt of this form. Please complete Section 1 fully to enable the full reasons for this exceptional absence to be understood:

Section 1: Parent/Carer to complete this section:				
Full Name of Child			Class	
Dates requested:	<b>From</b> (First day absent from school)	<b>To</b> (The last school day that will be missed)	<b>Duration</b> (school days):	
Reason for absence:				
Please explain why this leave cannot take place outside of normal school time:	Please attach a letter if you need further space to explain.			
Signature:				Parent/Guardian
Relationship to Child:			Date:	
Section 2: Headteacher to complete this section:				
Current Attendance:		We expect all pupils' attendance to be above 95%. Absence is unlikely to be approved if current attendance is below that figure.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Your request is <b>approved</b> and the absence as set out above is authorised.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Your request is <b>not approved</b> . If the pupil is absent as proposed above, it will be recorded as <b>unauthorised</b> for the following reason:				
Reason:				
Signed:				Date:

## **Appendix 2: Letter 1 (less than 95% attendance rate)**



# **All Saints CE Primary School & Nursery**

*Nurturing, Resilience and Achievement for all!*

Headteacher: Mr Philip Asher, BMus(Hons), PGCE, ARCO, NPQSL

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents/carers

**RE: Attendance and Absence for \_\_\_\_\_**

As you may be aware, we are required to closely monitor all the children's attendance. We are eager, as I'm sure you are, that children do not miss any opportunity to learn.

We are requested by the Local Authority to send this letter to all parents of children whose attendance drops below 95%, since this represents a potential cause for concern with regards to attendance. Unfortunately, your child's attendance has now dropped below this level. As a worked example over a year, a 90% rate is equivalent to a half day absent each week, or four full school weeks in total.

Lateness can also often account for unauthorised absence, and so it is important children arrive punctually. At All Saints the register is taken at 8.50am. Children arriving after this time are entered on the register as 'Late' but present. The registers close at 9.10am, and children arriving after this time are entered on the register as 'Late' but this will count as an unauthorised absence in accordance with the Attendance Codes regulations set out by the government. Lessons start promptly at 9.00am, and any late arrival disrupts not only your own child's learning, but that of others in the class.

There are often legitimate reasons for absence – illness is one. However, it is important to note that it still counts as absence and parents are legally responsible for their child's attendance at school. We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and if there is no improvement, may need to arrange a meeting to discuss the matter. Persistent absence or lateness may result in us needing to take further action, especially where absence is unexplained or unauthorised; this could include a referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

Therefore I would urge all parents who receive this letter to ensure that if your child is away from school it is an unavoidable absence, and that you ensure a written confirmation (note/email) is provided as well as making a phone call. The school's attendance policy is also available on the school website for your reference.

A print out of your child's attendance certificate is available on request. As ever, if you wish to discuss your child's attendance further, please get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Asher,  
*Headteacher*

*Attendance Letter 1*

## Appendix 3: Letter 2 (less than 90% attendance rate)



# All Saints CE Primary School & Nursery

*Nurturing, Resilience and Achievement for all!*

Headteacher: Mr Philip Asher, BMus(Hons), PGCE, ARCO, NPQSL

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents/carers

**RE: Attendance and Absence for** \_\_\_\_\_

As you may be aware, we are required to closely monitor all the children's attendance. We are eager, as I'm sure you are, that children do not miss any opportunity to learn.

We are requested by the Local Authority to send this letter to all parents of children whose attendance drops **below 90%**, since this represents a significant cause for concern with regards to attendance. Unfortunately this is now the case for your child (named above). A 90% rate is equivalent to a half day absent each week, or four school weeks in total out of an academic year. A rate of 80% is approximately equivalent to a full day absent each week for a full school year (39 days).

There are often legitimate reasons for absence – illness is one. However, it is important to note that it still counts as absence and parents are legally responsible for their child's attendance at school. I need to advise you that for children with attendance below 90%, I am unable to authorise any further absence without suitable evidence being provided by parents:

- A dated and signed letter or email from the parent to explain absence – this will only be appropriate for a single day's absence. Longer periods of absence will require more formal evidence (see below).
- A medical appointment card/text/email – this should be in the child's name. Ask for this at the appointment – experience has shown your GP surgery may charge if you have to ask later!
- A prescription in the name of the child written out on the day of absence and covering the full period (though this does not always mean a child should be absent from school).
- A letter/note from the GP, hospital or other medical professional (on letterhead notepaper) advising that absence is required due to the condition, and the recommended period of absence. We appreciate not all GPs will provide this.

This will ensure that absences are explained fully. It also means queries from the Local Authority can be answered by the school. Please ensure routine appointments (eye tests, dental check-ups) are made outside of school time.

Lateness can often account for significant amounts of unauthorised absence, particularly if a child is late after registers have closed (9.10am). In this situation, lateness counts as unauthorised absence in accordance with the Attendance Codes rules set by the government). Please therefore ensure your child arrives on time every day to avoid late marks.

It is our school policy (available on the [website](#)) to proactively work with parents to ensure good attendance and we aim to support families as far as we can. We may therefore need to arrange a meeting to discuss your child's attendance, depending on the circumstances of the period(s) of absence.

If you feel you would like support in improving your child's attendance, please get in touch and we'd be happy to help. In cases where there is no improvement or positive engagement with the school on this matter, we may need to refer to the Attendance Improvement Officer, or take legal action (in line with guidance and the school policy). This can include Penalty Charge Notices (fines) or Court Action.

Therefore I would urge you to ensure that if your child is away from school for any reason, it is unavoidable and fully explained with supporting evidence as outlined above.

A copy of your child's attendance certificate is available on request. As ever, if you wish to discuss your child's attendance further, I will be pleased to meet with you.

Yours sincerely

Philip Asher,  
*Headteacher*

*Attendance Letter 2*

## Appendix 4: Attendance Monitoring Escalation Flowchart

