KINGS HILL SCHOOL
PRIMARY & NURSERY

Kings Hill School Primary and Nursery

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy: November 2025

Date of Review: November 2026

Kings Hill School Primary and Nursery

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance (also known as, School Attendance Champion) Please contact me if you have any concerns about your child's attendance or require support.	Mrs S. McCarville	s.mccarville@kings-hill.kent.sch.uk	01732842739

Statement of Intent

Children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and we are committed to encouraging all pupils to attend regularly so that they can thrive from the opportunities available to them. One of our main principles is to develop positive attitudes towards attendance and ensure our school is a happy, calm, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Kings Hill School and Nursery adheres to the principles and guidance as set out in the DfE publication, "Working together to improve school attendance." August 2024. The Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is the Assistant Head alongside the Headteacher.

The school is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils but understand that there are some circumstances in which parents and pupils may require extra support to achieve this.

Leaders at Kings Hill School recognise that there are many factors that can affect non-attendance and will ensure a holistic approach is taken whereby families are supported via any appropriate external referrals and/or partnerships where necessary, for example through additional support from Early Help. A targeted and joint approach with external services is taken in the cases of persistent and severe absence. Building strong relationships with families is paramount and listening to and understanding the barriers to attendance.

Good attendance is vital because:

- It improves children's mental health and wellbeing
- Children learn more and enjoy their learning
- It helps children to make and maintain friendships
- Children are less likely to be at risk of underachievement
- Children do not miss out on enrichment opportunities that are vital to their development
- Children thrive on routines

The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets. There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with the Assistant Headteacher as part of the monitoring and review process.

School staff are responsible to ensure they promote the school's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

Encouraging and promoting good attendance

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to com. That the school is a place; where the children are treated with respect and feel valued, where their needs are recognised and are addressed, where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the school and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending. Each child's attendance is shared with the parents three times a year.

All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance -
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sally McCarville and can be contacted via email s.mccarville@Kings-hill.kent.sch.uk

There will be visible displays and/or communication with parents that demonstrate the benefits of good attendance. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class or individual level.

Parental Responsibility

The responsibility for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents. To this end, it is desirable that parents should be the first line of contact whenever the child is absent from school.

The purpose of this policy is to inform parents/carers of the following;

- How the school encourages and enables good attendance
- How the school monitors and reviews attendance
- How the school monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school whenever the child is absent and on the first day of absence.

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8.55am. All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office, where the reason for lateness is recorded.

Parents can help us by:

- telephoning the school on 01732 842739 or emailing the office at office@kings-hill.kent.sch.uk , every morning your child is absent before 9am with the reason.
- arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- discuss with the Headteacher any planned absences well in advance and only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- keep us informed of changes in their child's behaviour or any worries they may be experiencing at school in order that we can offer support to avoid absence. If a parent has any concerns about attendance, they should contact the senior leader responsible for attendance, details above.

Why attendance and punctuality 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 that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some pupils may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil. There is the same attendance ambition for all pupils.

Kings Hill school is committed to ensuring good support for all pupils. This may include making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.

The SENDCo will ensure that there are strategies in place to remove any in-school barriers including support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.

A joined up pastoral approach will be put in place where needed, for example the SENDCo will

consider whether a time limited phased return would be appropriate.

While we seek to apply the school's policy fairly and consistently, the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance will be considered, along with the schools' obligations under the: Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) & the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Monitoring and reviewing attendance

The school will regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils that require support and put effective strategies in place. Analysis of attendance data includes analysing patterns and trends and benchmarking attendance data.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to use attendance codes (Appendix 1) in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the school may request additional information or evidence, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The attendance registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by administrative staff.

All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes the administrative staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

Attendance data is held electronically on SIMS/FFT, accessible by the Senior Leadership Team, and administrative staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

The Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Officer monitor the attendance of pupils weekly. In particular any patterns of persistent and severe absence will be a focus of monitoring to enable identification of any pupils that may require targeted support as quickly as possible.

Returns of school data are made daily to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

Monitoring and improving low attendance

The school acknowledges that there is no one standard response that is appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what support to offer. The minimum attendance expectation is 95% and the school has an attendance target of 96%. To ensure a rigorous, consistent and fair approach the steps followed in monitoring and improving low attendance are detailed in Appendix 2

At all stages of improving attendance work will be undertaken to remove barriers, build strong relationships with parents and carers, work collaboratively to provide the right support at the right time. Kings Hill school follows the DfE approach of 'Prevention, Early Intervention and Targeted support.' To facilitate this. See Appendix 3.

Certificates will be used to congratulate children on significantly improved attendance following a period of intervention and review.

- In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parent's keep the school informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance. In the first instance pupils and parents will be supported to address any in school barriers to attendance.
- **90-95% attendance -** monitored by the Assistant Headteacher and the Attendance Officer. Pupils may be at risk of poor attendance and so will be monitored weekly. The Assistant Headteacher will use attendance and absence data rigorously to support pupils with increasing levels of absence, arriving at school late or taking leave in term time without permission before it becomes a regular pattern.
- **Below 90%** - Where absence escalates to pupils missing 10% or more, the school will ensure targeted support this may include weekly emails to parents/carers about attendance and/or meetings to discuss barriers to attendance and how the school can help the family to improve attendance.
- If attendance does not improve the school will support the family by completing an attendance audit to identify any barriers to attendance. An Individual Attendance Plan will be drawn up with the family to support attendance.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may suggest an Early Help referral to support the family or seek other support from external services including a referral to Kent PRU and attendance service (KPAS)
- **For pupils with severe absence (those missing 50% or more of school)**, there will be a joint targeted approach where all relevant services will support the pupil and help address any barriers to attendance. A parenting contract may be drawn up with KPAS where voluntary support has not been effective. In some cases, an Education Supervision Order may be appropriate if an Early Help Plan or parenting contract has not been successful in the case of severely absent pupils.

Punctuality and lateness

The Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Officer monitor lateness of pupils as being punctual for school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The gates/doors open at 8.40 a.m. for all year groups. This is when children are expected to arrive at school, gates/doors close at 8.55 a.m.

The register is taken at 8.55 a.m. and between 1.00 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. (depending on the year group) for all year group. Pupils who arrive after these times will be recorded as late to school (L code). The registers close at 9.15 a.m and 1.35 p.m. and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code).

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer.

In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to KPAS and frequent

lateness after he register closes could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed (Lateness code U) during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.

The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence

(Lateness Code U) is to be recorded. If unauthorised absence (Lateness Code U) is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)

Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance, and it is a requirement for the Headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Headteacher.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised Absence
An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent emails or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Unauthorised Absence
An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation has been given. Unauthorised absences can be liable to legal action or a fixed penalty fine. The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will **not** be authorised:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences that have not been properly explained
- travel during term-time, including family holidays, that have not been agreed
- repeated or persistent non-specific illness, for example, 'poorly/unwell'
- absence of other siblings if one child is ill
- absence because a parent is ill (alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school)
- oversleeping
- confusion over school term and holiday dates
- medical and/or dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reason
- child's and/or family birthdays

The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance, and it is a requirement for the Headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Headteacher.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Poor Attendance (Please refer to: Kent County Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for school absence 2024)

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling (10 week period) – these do not need to be consecutive.

A penalty notice will be issued per parent , per child eg 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.

After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KPAS will issue a notice to improve setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded, If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child).

Notice to improve (Please refer to: Kent County Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for school absence 2024)

A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked. Kent schools will issue a notice to improve for parentally-condoned absence and

unauthorised absence. It is not be necessary to issue a notice to improve for term time holidays or leave of absence.

At the end of an unsatisfactory monitoring period, schools may request a penalty notice to be issued if this is considered the best course of action to improve attendance.

Holidays & Leave of absence in term time

The Government issued regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Headteachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.
- Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- The Headteacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Holidays & Leave of Absence and all Penalty Notices must be issued in line with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notice code of conduct (PDF, 184.8 KB) (19 August 2024).

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Leave during SATs:
Under no circumstances will the school authorise an absence during the Y6 SATs week in May. Absence during this period will result in lack of attainment and progress data for your child. Year 6 tests are statutory and pupils must attend them.

Fixed Penalty Notices

All Penalty Notices are issued in line with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notice code of conduct (PDF, 184.8 KB) (19 August 2024).

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days,reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.
Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

First Offence
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be; £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance within a 3 year period the amount will be; £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years)
Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.'

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the
- parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a
- parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:
with leave (the school has given permission)

- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

Leavers and Children Missing in Education

The school has a responsibility to safeguard pupils from harm. This includes knowing and taking reasonable steps to check the destinations of leavers. If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, parents are asked to:

Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school 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 Kent County Council via https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-attendance/children-missing-education

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two)
- Telephone calls to emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

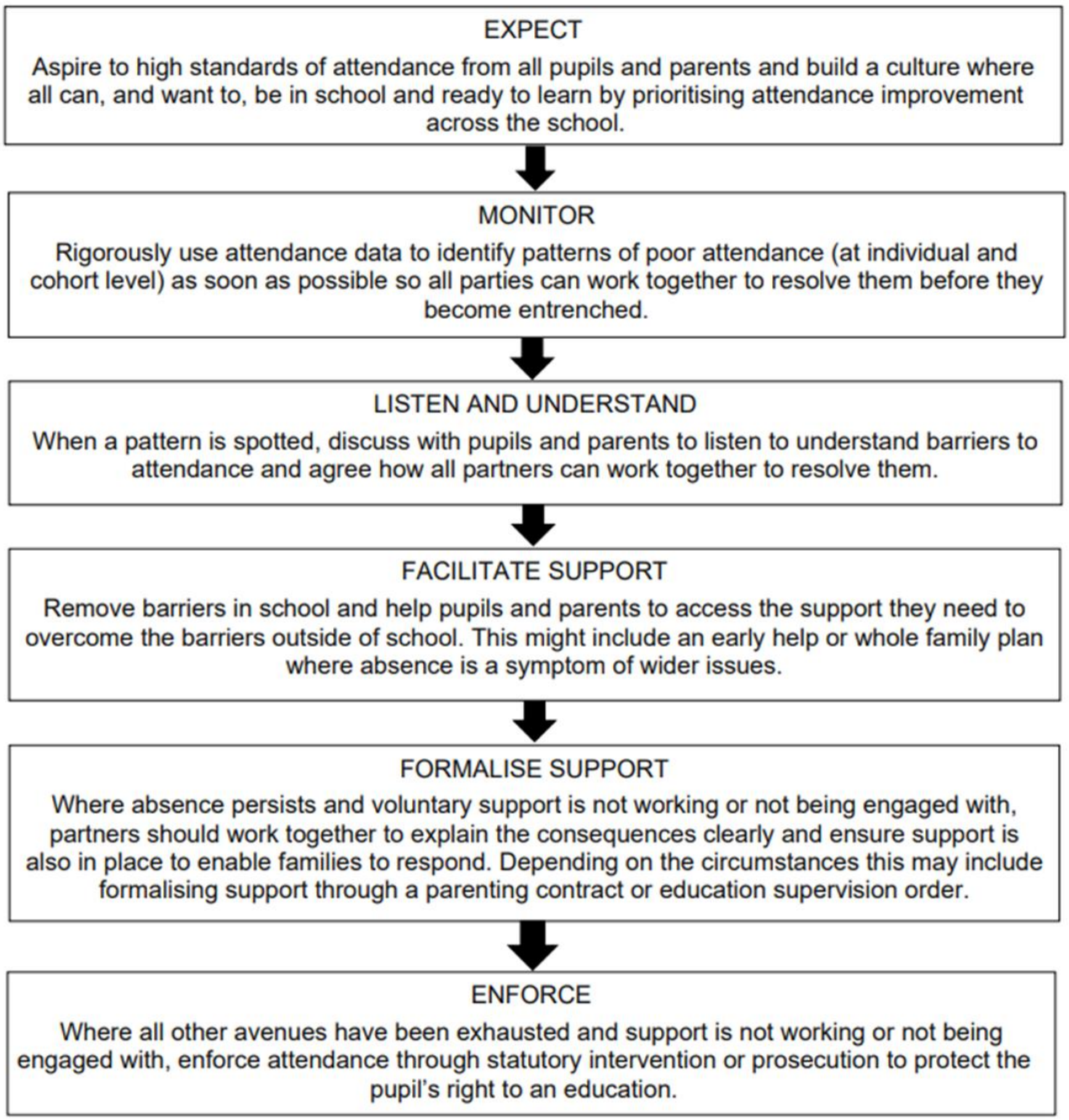
All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

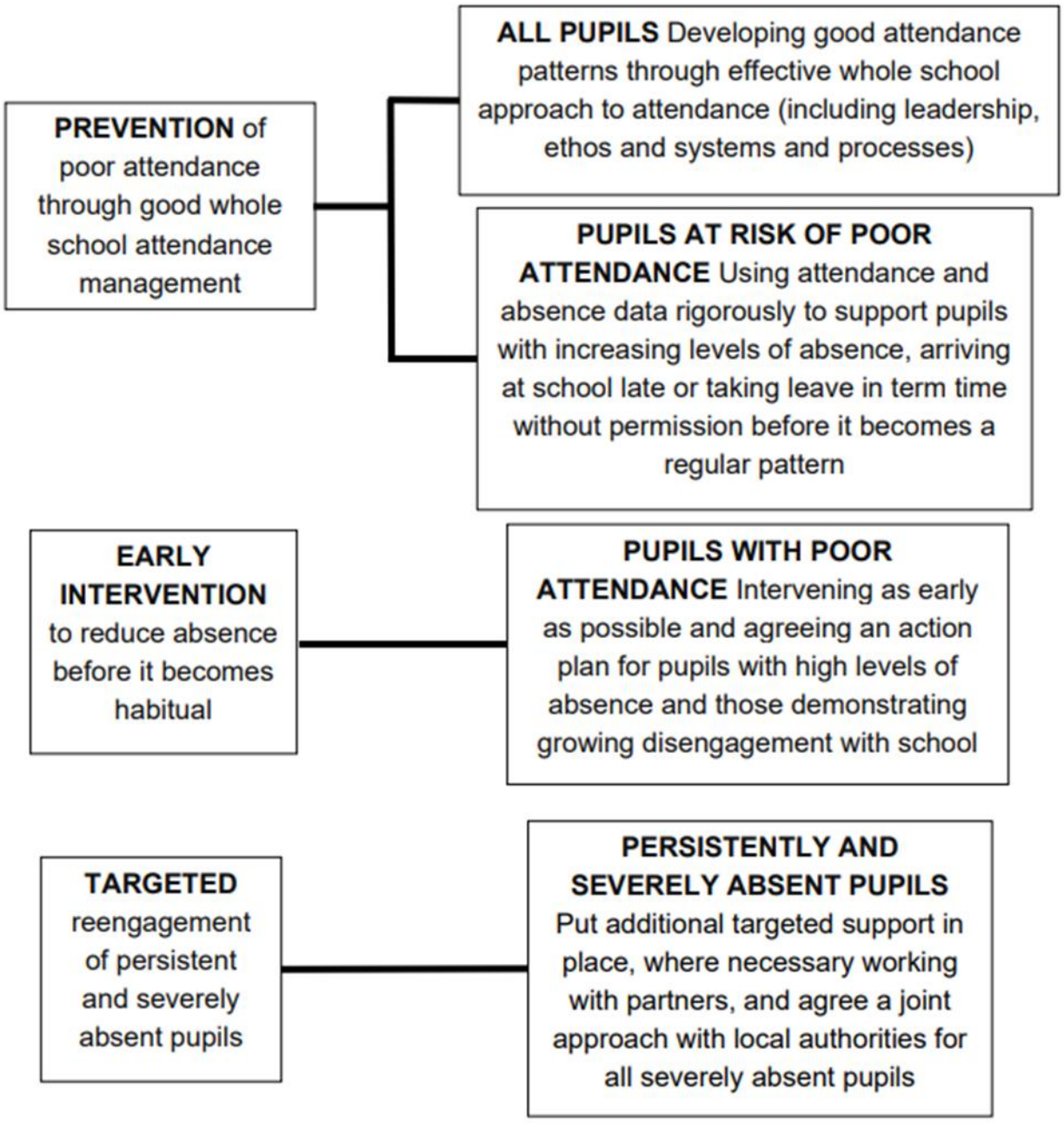
Appendix 1

School Attendance Code

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)

Appendix 2
Our approach to working together to improve attendance



Appendix 3

Effective school attendance, improvement and management
'Prevention, Early Intervention, Targeted'.