# Attendance Policy

## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- 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.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 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 Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 3.2 The Head of School

The Head of School 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.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*, the Head of School is accountable for ensuring registers are taken twice daily. DfE guidance confirms this duty may be delegated to any trained and competent staff member. There is no legal requirement that only teachers must take registers.

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school including monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7).
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data and providing regular attendance reports to school staff.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The Head of School may delegate register-taking responsibilities to any trained and competent staff member assigned to a class, including Teaching and Learning Assistants and allied health professionals, ensuring compliance with statutory guidance and safeguarding expectations.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Karen Oliver (Deputy Head) and can be contacted via karen.oliver@theriseschool.com.

### 3.4 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 by 9.05am and 1.20pm.

### 3.6 Office staff

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the senior leader in charge of attendance 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 9.20am on the day of the absence and each following day of absence, 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 or sixth form college 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 appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- 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 8.45am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken before 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.20am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on 0208 099 0640.

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/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment via email or phone call to the school office or class team.

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/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A 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.

The Rise takes a proportionate and sensitive approach to punctuality to support our pupils with SEND and prioritise attendance as the most important aspect.

### 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 the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, and

the school believes this to be out of character or concerning then the school may use other methods such as a home visits or contacting social care or the police.

- 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 via the termly reports that are sent home in December, April and July. There will be more frequent communication for any children with attendance below the 95% or 90% threshold.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of School 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 Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as reasons/events which are clearly in the best interest of the child to attend, including their social progress.

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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office (see Appendix 2). The Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of 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.
- 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.

### 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 Head of School, 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.

More information can be found in Appendix 5.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Rise takes a sensitive and nuanced approach to promoting attendance as we are aware that our pupils may have a fragile relationship with education and/or other medical conditions that may affect their attendance. Therefore, the senior leader in charge of attendance takes a case-by-case approach in the use of rewards. The Rise uses approaches such:

- Weekly stickers for both 100% and improvement in attendance displayed in classrooms.
- ½ termly attendance postcards.
- Celebration in assembly and termly certificates for both 100% and improvement in attendance.
- Termly vouchers.

See Appendix 3 and 4 for more information.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

Every half term attendance data is analysed. Pupils with an attendance below 95% is scrutinized to ascertain the reasons for their absence. The data analysis is shared with the school SLT and WLT every half term.

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The Rise will:

- Rigorously 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 Rise 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.

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The Rise 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.
- When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen and to understand barriers to attendance and agree how we can work together to resolve them.

## 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.

**Reducing Absence below 90%**

- 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.
- Barriers will be discussed and wherever possible work to remove these barriers.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Office staff make daily phone calls to parents/carers.
- SLT member responsible for behaviour meet with parents make regular phone calls home.
- Close monitoring of individual pupils attendance and reasons for absences record on spreadsheet.
- Target will be set to improve attendance and these will be confirmed in writing and agreed by Parent/ carer, school and pupil. This will be monitored over a 4 week period.
- Reasons for no improvement in attendance will be discussed and further targets will be set over a 4 week period.
- Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with and attendance does not improve in the 4 week period, the EWO will be notified.
- A Child and family Assessment/Notification (CFAN) and submitted.
- EWO will offer indicated possible additional support from outside agencies.
- A penalty notice will be discussed with LA.
- A penalty notice may be issued but only as a last results when all other avenues of support have been exhausted and only when it is believed this is the appropriate action.

Pupils with long history of poor attendance prior to joining the The Rise are offered additional support

- Part time timetables.
- Personalised timetables.
- Staggered reintegration back into school.
- Individual identification of barriers plans are then put inplace in attempt to mitigate these e.g. pupils finding particular lessons a challenge, particularly times of the day, particular days of the week.
- Suspension of homework.
- 1:1 learning spaces.
- Classwork sent home or access to VLE (whichever is more appropriate).

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, yearly by the senior leader in charge of attendance. 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 and Procedure
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Policy and Procedure
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **E** | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| **H** | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| **I** | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y** | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| **Z** | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |

## Appendix 2

**THE RISE SCHOOL**

**APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

**DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Taking your child out of school during term time can be detrimental to their educational progress. **There is no legal entitlement** for leave of absence.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 prohibits head teachers granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance (at least 6 weeks before) by the Parent/Carer with whom the pupil normally resides and that the Head of School considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

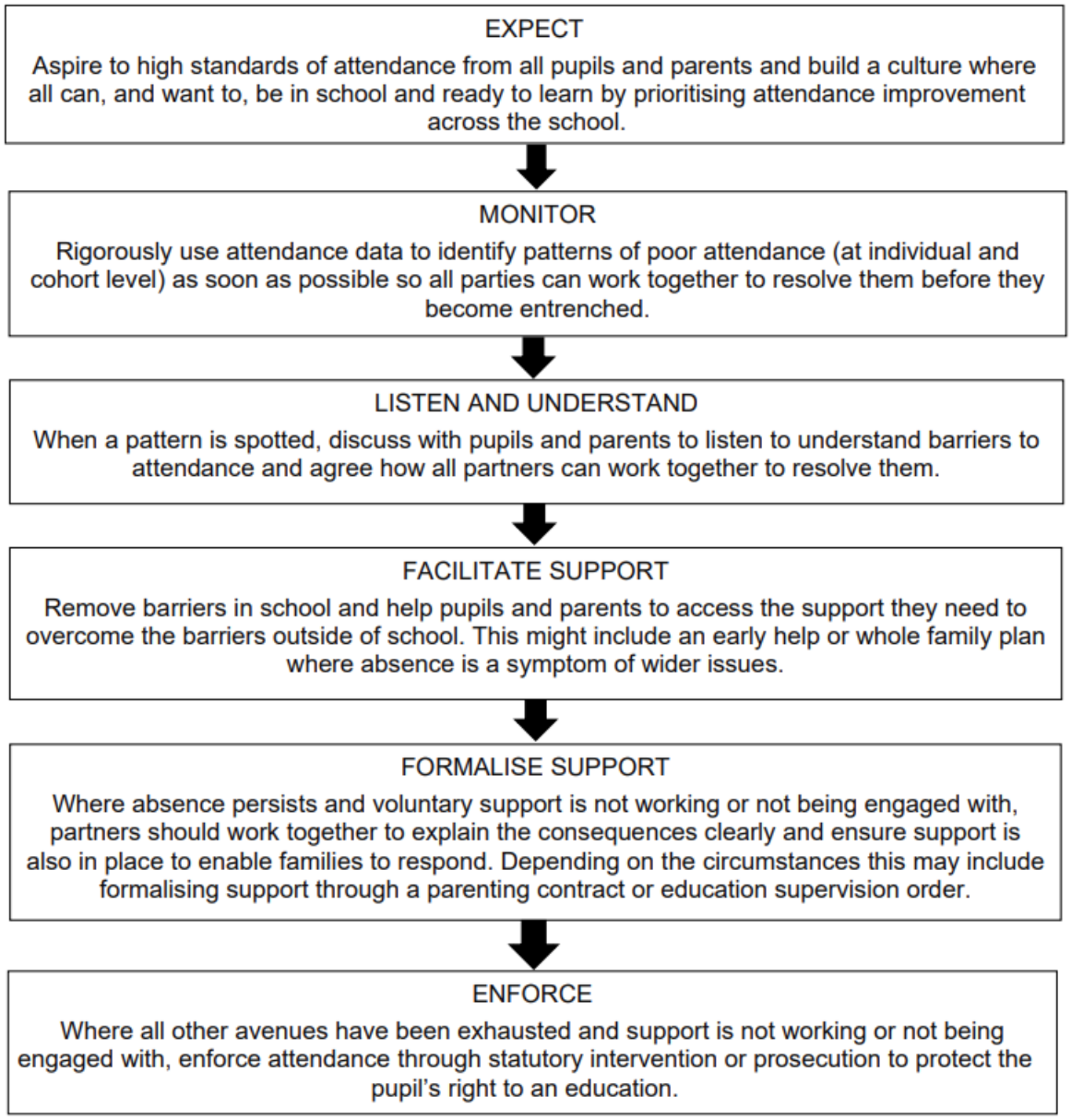
If absence is not authorised and the time is still taken, the case may be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child.

Please complete this form and return to the School Office. Please allow 10 working days for your request to be processed.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name of Child:** | **Class:** |
| **Date of first day of absence from school:** | |
| **Date of return to school:** | **No of Days:** |
| **Please give full details of the exceptional circumstances that necessitate a term time absence:** | |
| **I have read and understand the information regarding leave of absence during term time.**<br><br>**Parent/Carer signature:** **Date:** | |
| **Head of School signature:** **Date:** | |

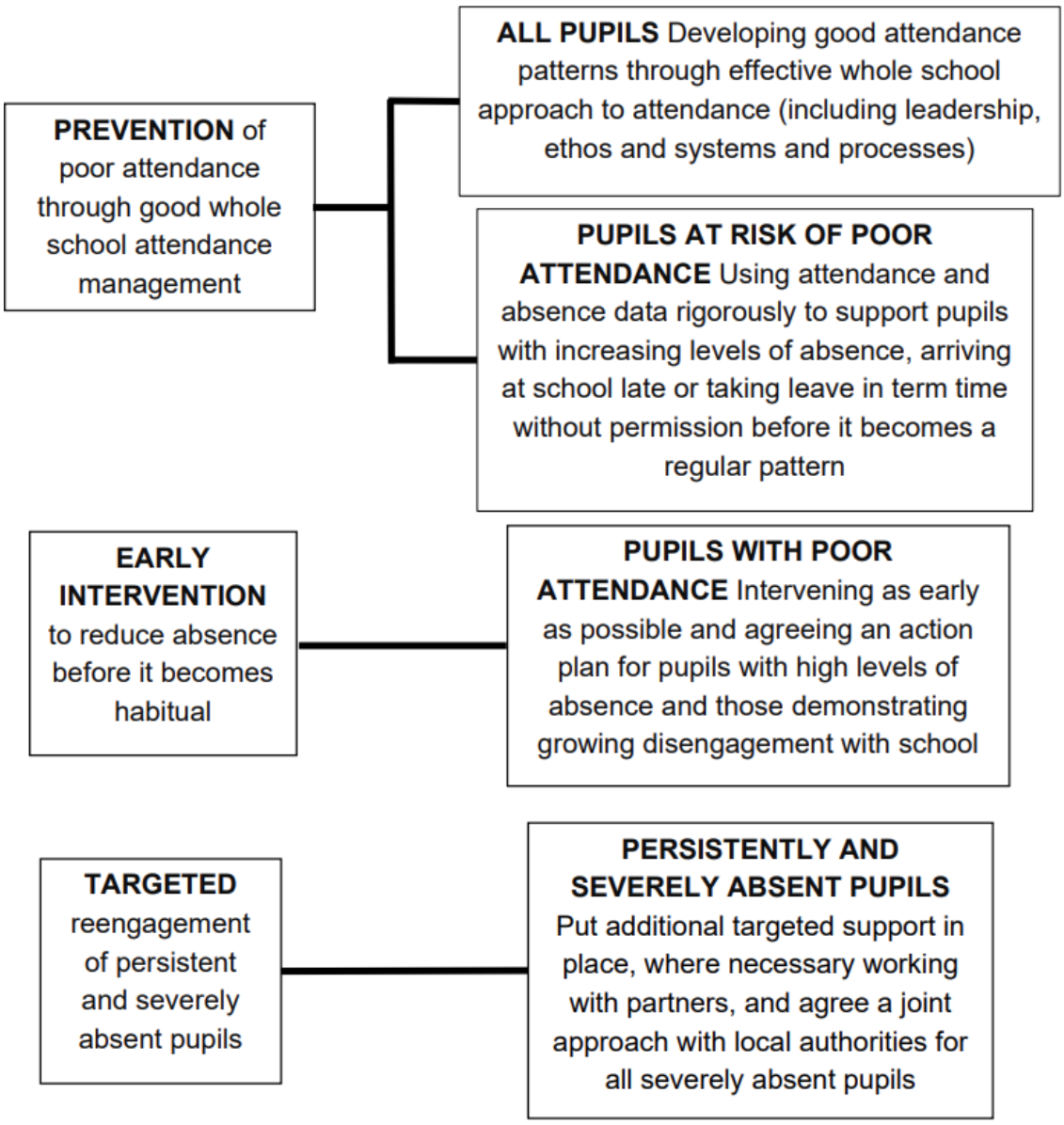
## Appendix 3

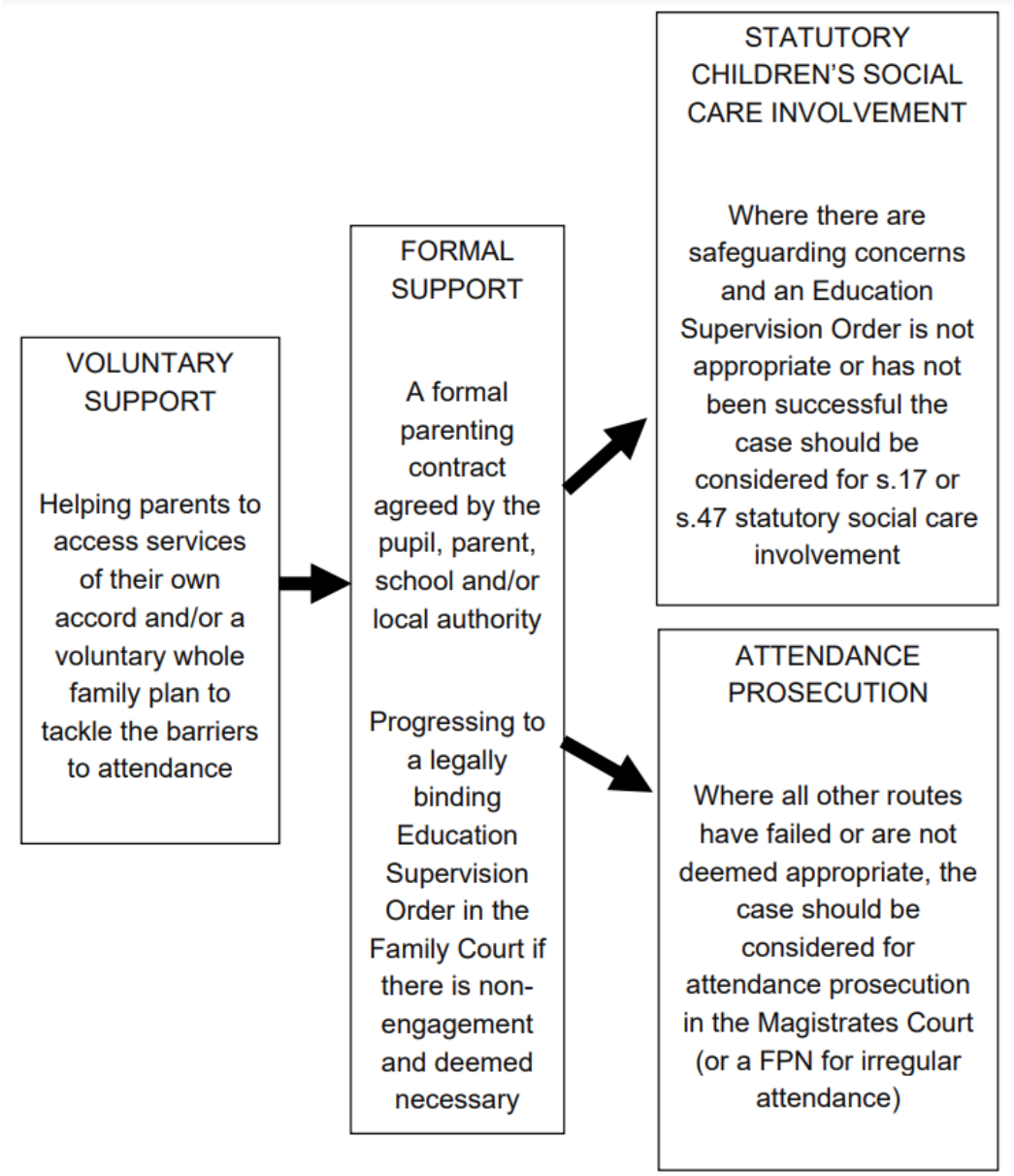
Guidance from page 8 of 'Working together to improve school attendance' September 2022



## Appendix 4

Guidance from page 33 of 'Working together to improve school attendance' September 2022 – Effective school attendance improvement and management



## Appendix 5

Guidance from page 34 of 'Working together to improve school attendance' September 2022 – Legal Intervention