



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. This guidance became statutory from 19 August 2024 and must be followed by all schools:

- 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- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) This is now superseded by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

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.

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- 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

A separate Senior Attendance Champion must be appointed to provide strategic oversight of attendance across the school:

- 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 Laura Greenshields (Head of School) and can be contacted via lgreenshields@springschool.org.uk

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3.4 Class teachers

The Senior Attendance Champion role is held by Laura Greenshield (Head of School), with strategic responsibility for attendance and improvement. The Head of School retains overall accountability for attendance registers in accordance with the *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*.

Registers must be taken twice daily by a trained and authorised member of the class team. This may include the class teacher, Teaching and Learning Assistants (TLAs), allied health professionals, or other staff assigned to the class/session at the time.

All staff must use the correct DfE attendance codes and submit registers via Arbor within the required timeframes:

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring that their class is recording attendance daily, using the correct codes.

SSK:

- Morning Register: Taken at 9:00am (kept open until 9:30am)
- Afternoon Register: Taken at 1:20pm (kept open until 1:25pm)

3.6 Office staff

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence and follow up unexplained 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 8.45am 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.

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Registers must be maintained electronically using Arbor or an equivalent secure MIS system.

We will take our attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once after the lunchtime break. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending a place other than the school.
- Absent.

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.

We will also record, using the DfE attendance codes (see Appendix 1):

- 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 because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with the 2024 regulations, entries must now be retained for 6 years.

Pupils must arrive at school ready for registration at 9am each school day, Morning Register: Taken at 9:00am (kept open until 9:30am)

- Afternoon Register: Taken at 1:20pm (kept open until 1:25pm)

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 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on 0208 099 0644.

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 with 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.

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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.

Spring School 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 home visits or contacting social care or the police.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised 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.

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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, considering 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.

A penalty notice must be considered after 10 unauthorised sessions in 10 school weeks. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days (or £60 and £120 respectively in the case of a pupil present in a public place during a period of exclusion. 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 to issue a penalty notice may consider whether continued support, or a notice to improve, if that support is not working, is more appropriate.

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 3.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Spring School 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

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may affect their attendance. Therefore, the senior leader in charge of attendance takes a case-by-case approach.

See Appendix 4 and 5 for more information.

7. Attendance monitoring

Every half-term attendance data is analysed. Pupils with an attendance below 90% are scrutinised 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

Spring School will:

- Rigorously monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether 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

Daily attendance data is shared with the DfE and local authority as part of the national attendance data set.

Spring 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.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

Spring 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.
- 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.

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Reducing Absence below 88%

- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services
- If the issue persists, take an active part in multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners, including early help assessment
- Hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention
- Intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings. Persistent absence may indicate safeguarding concerns including neglect, exploitation, or mental health issues. Attendance data must be triangulated with safeguarding records.

Pupils with long history of poor attendance prior to joining the Spring School are offered additional support, such as:

- Part time timetables.
- Personalised timetables.
- Staggered reintegration back into school.
- Individual identification of barriers with plans 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 Procedures
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Procedure
- Behaviour Policy

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Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Attending the school		
/	Present	Pupil is present for morning registration
\	Present	Pupil is present for afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register is closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place other than the school where they are registered, for educational provision arranged by a local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is attendance a place other than the school where they are registered, for an educational visit or trip arranged by the school and supervised by a member of school staff
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is attending a sporting activity approved by the school and supervised by a person considered appropriate by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is attending work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of their education
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an educational activity (but not a sporting activity or work experience) approved/arranged by the school eg a transition day at another school or a college course
Absent – leave of absence (authorised)		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaken regulated employment abroad	Pupil is participating in a performance licensed by the local authority
M	Attending a medical or dental appointment	Pupil is attending a medical or dental appointment which has been agreed in advance
J1	Attending an interview	Pupil is attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Study leave	Pupil is studying for a public examination and leave has been granted by the school
X	Not a possible attendance	Pupil is not of compulsory school age
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is subject to a temporary part time timetable agreed by the school and parents to meet their individual needs
D	Dual registration	Pupil is absent with leave to attend another school at which they are registered
C	Exceptional circumstance	Pupil has been granted leave by the school for an exceptional circumstance requested in advance (generally a need for a holiday would not constitute an exceptional circumstance)

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Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a mobile child (with no fixed abode) and their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business
R	Religious observance	Pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to
I	Illness	Pupil is unable to attend due to physical or mental health related illness
E	Exclusion	Pupil is suspended or permanently excluded on disciplinary grounds
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause – not a possible attendance		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home-to-school travel and has not done so
Y1	Transport normally provided not being available	Pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within normal walking distance of their home and the transport that is normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency

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Appendix 2

SPRING 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 £160 (or £80 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child.

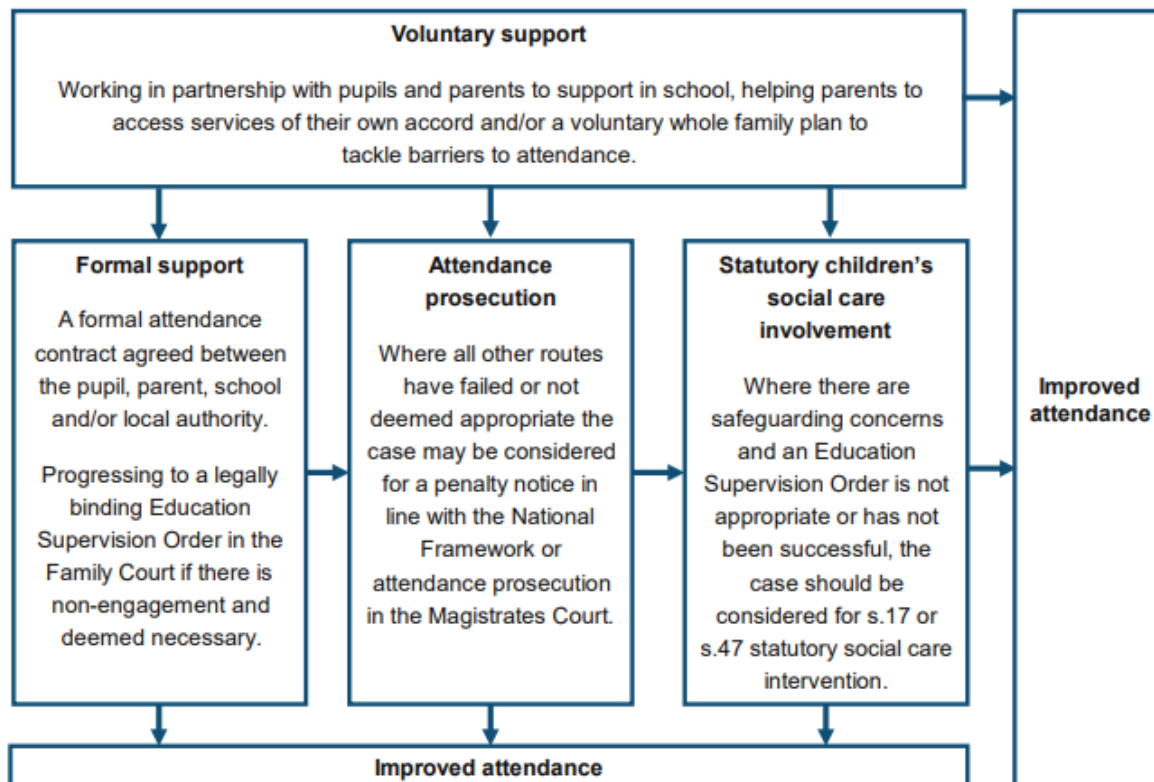
Please complete this form and return it to the School Office. Please allow 10 working days for your request to be processed.

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.	
Parent/Carer signature:	Date:
Head of School signature:	Date:

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Appendix 3: Providing support first before attendance legal intervention

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



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Appendix 4

Guidance from page 10 of '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' August 2024

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

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

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

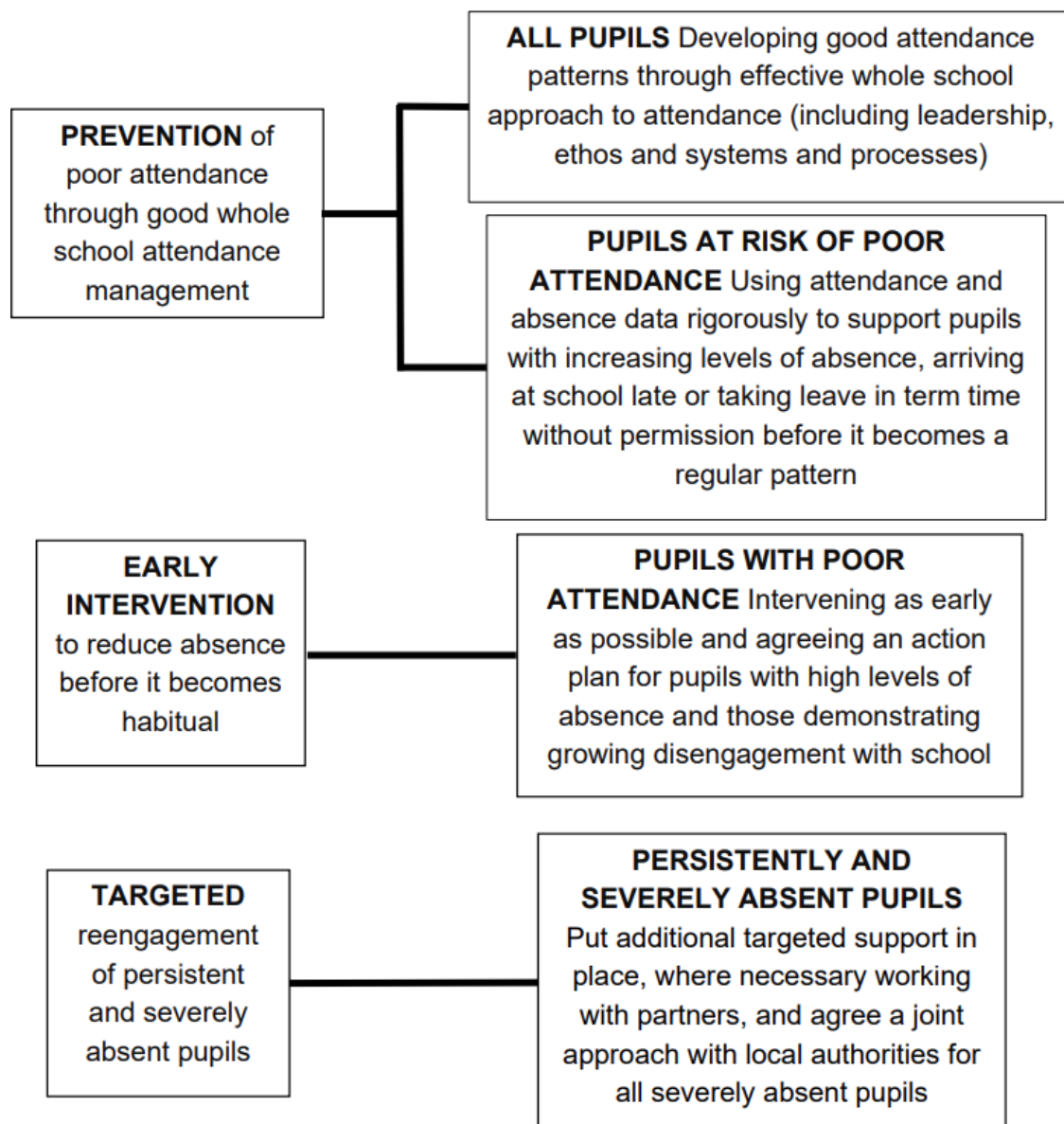
Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

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Appendix 5

Guidance from page 46 of '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' August 2024 – Effective school attendance improvement and management



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