

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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), which also sets out the relevant legislation and other associated guidance.

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.

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).

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- 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 parent/carers 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Joanna Dziopa (Head of School) and can be contacted via jdziopa@treehouseschool.org.uk.

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information by the school's MIS by 9.30am and 1.30pm.

3.6 Office staff

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parent/carers about absence and follow up unexplained absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parent/carers 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 one 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.

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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

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

Pupils must arrive at school ready for registration by 9:30am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:30am and will be kept open until 10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm and will be kept open until 1.45pm.

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 [020 8815 5424](tel:02088155424).

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.

However, we encourage parent/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.

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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.

TreeHouse 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 pupils' 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 parent/carers

The school will regularly inform parent/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via the Annual Review meetings and end of year report that are sent home in the Summer. There will be more frequent communication for any children with attendance Issues, we closely monitor attendance rates, particularly if a pupil has persistent absence, less than 90%.

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 two 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.

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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 for pupils who have reached the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 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

TreeHouse 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 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 Phase Leads every half term.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

TreeHouse 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.

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Schools have a statutory duty to share daily attendance data with the Department for Education and Local Authority; and to benchmark this data against local, regional and national levels. TreeHouse School Governing Body will regularly review this data and work with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus.

7.2 Analysing attendance

TreeHouse 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

TreeHouse 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 parent/carers 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%

- Work with each identified pupil and their parent/carers 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 parent/carers 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.

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

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- 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.
- 1:1 learning spaces.
- Classwork sent home or access to on-line learning (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 parent/carers 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/carer 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/carers 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
Y3	Part of the school premises being closed	Pupil is unable to attend because part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use
Y4	Whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Pupil is unable to attend because the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather).
Y5	Pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Accordance with public health guidance or law	The pupil is well enough to attend but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend.
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' (Y) codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school.
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent. The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Pupil has unexplained or unexpected absence before the register closes. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. This is a temporary code, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, no more than 5 school days after the session.

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O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Pupil is absent where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. This code is not used at TreeHouse School.
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil is unable to attend because not admitted yet. To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens
#	Planned whole school closure	Pupil is unable to attend because of whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as: half terms, bank holidays, weekends, non-educational days (Inset) etc.

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Appendix 2

TREEHOUSE 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 six 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.

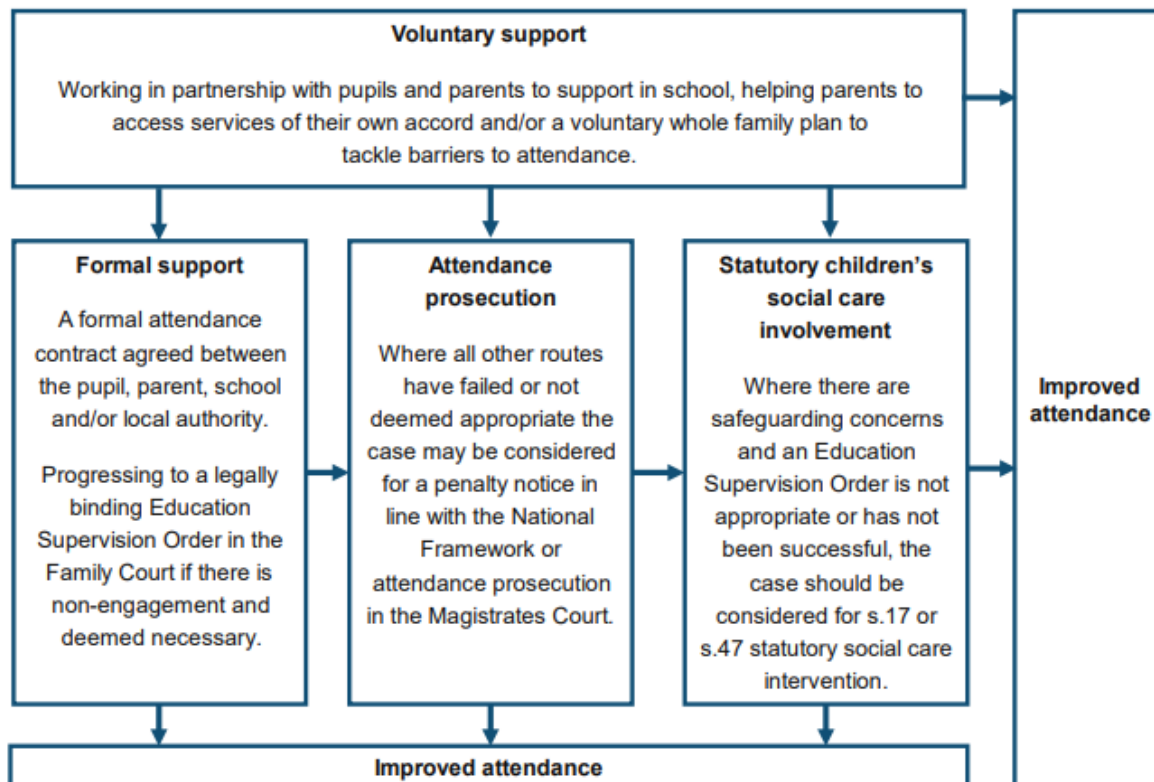
Please complete this form and return it to the School Office. Please allow 10 working days for your request to be processed.

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.

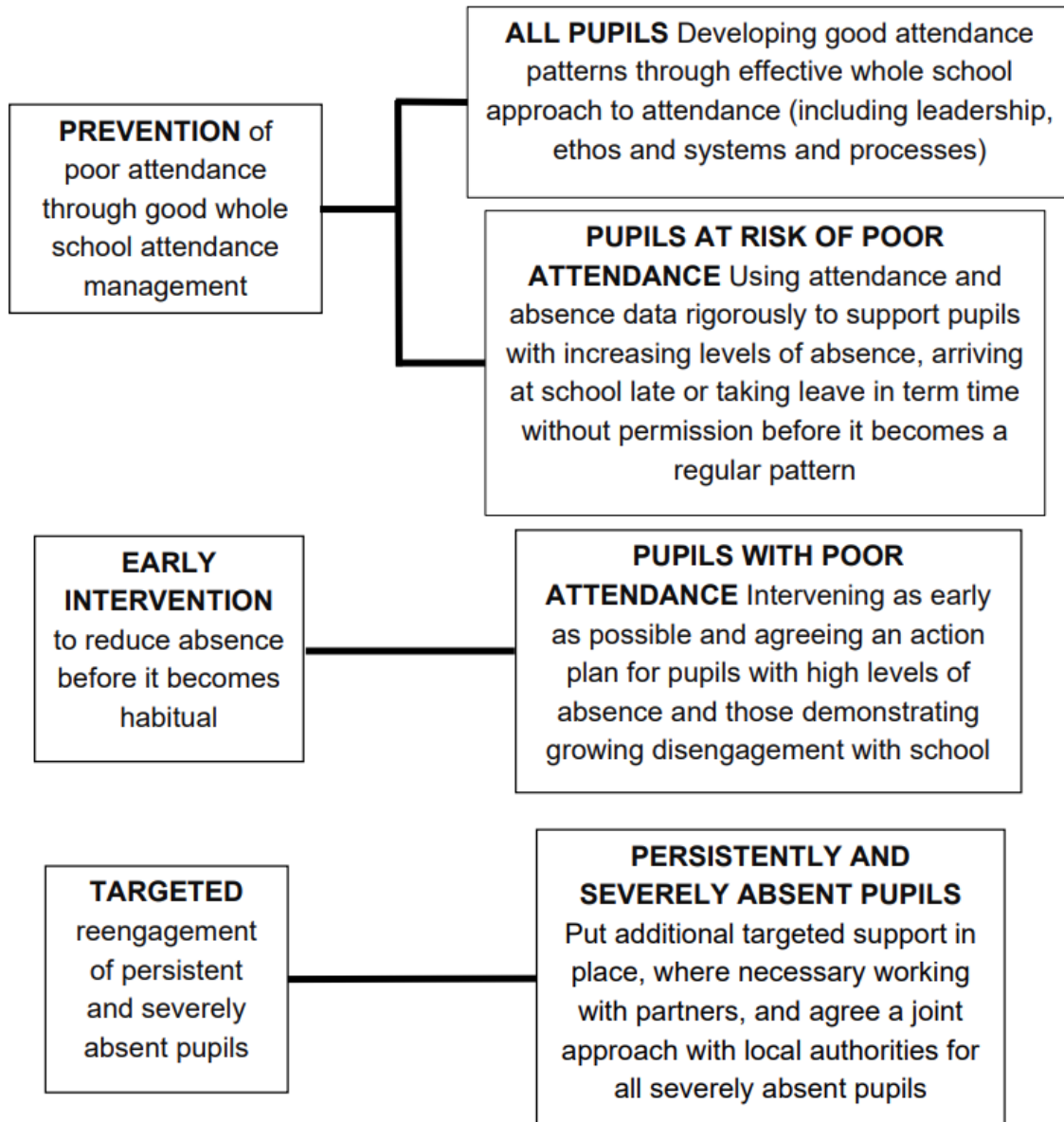
Enforce

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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