



Eskdale School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2023 -24

Policy Status	
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Next Review	August 2024
Signed (Chair of Governors): 	

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As a school we aim to provide the best possible educational provision to the young people in our care. In order to do this, it is essential that the students attend regularly and punctually.

Eskdale School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.

Evidence clearly shows that good attendance brings about improved performance in all areas of their educational life and has a major impact on the success of students throughout their lives. Good attendance also plays an important role in ensuring that the young people in our school are safe.

This policy has been written in conjunction with local authority guidelines and statutory regulations.

Aims of the Attendance Policy

- To improve the overall attendance of students registered at school
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including students, parents, staff and Governors
- To reduce the number of students who have more than 10% overall absence and reduce the number of persistent and severe absentees
- To develop a frame work which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- To promote effective partnerships with external services and agencies
- To recognise the needs of the individual students when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

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.

Attendance Targets

Our attendance target is **95%** because we recognise that good attendance is imperative to academic, social and personal success, we have set an ambitious, but realistic target and any attendance below that will incur a level of intervention to support students and families.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at Eskdale School have a key role to play in promoting good attendance for our students and will work to provide an environment in which all young people are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to attending every day.

Roles and Responsibilities in Promoting Attendance

To ensure that **parents** are aware of school attendance procedures and their parental responsibility for their child's attendance and punctuality, Eskdale School will:

- Give information on attendance and punctuality in home-school communication and on the school's website
- Produce academic reports to parents which include attendance data
- During induction evenings for parents and students, the acceptable levels of attendance will be discussed
- Produce material providing information regarding school's attendance and links between attendance and achievement and the low tolerance of holidays in term time
- Involve parents from the earliest stage of poor attendance.
- Encourage all parents into school (via appointments)
- Make phone contact, using designated school staff, on the first day of absence if contact has not been made by parents
- Include parents in reintegration plans
- Make full use of letters regarding attendance and punctuality
- Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents

To ensure that **students** are aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality, Eskdale School will:

- Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality
- Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum
- Reward students for excellent attendance
- Record late to school and late to lessons
- Include students in reintegration plans
- Highlight attendance in PSHE, tutor time and assemblies
- Not allow students off site for lunchtimes

To raise the profile of attendance and punctuality to **school staff**, Eskdale School will:

- Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum

- Provide information regarding attendance in staff communication and on the school's website
- Provide INSET training for appointed/promoted staff/new tutors
- Produce reports, when required to the Governors
- Discuss attendance issues in pastoral staff meetings and in relevant staff meetings (for example attendance review meetings, pastoral management meetings, multi-agency meetings)

Roles and responsibilities in monitoring and addressing attendance:

All Staff will:

- Mark registers promptly and accurately. Tutors and class teachers will mark a student as present, late or unauthorised absence (/ present, L late or N absent). The accuracy of registers will be monitored by the administration team and the relevant Pastoral team. Any issues with registers will be taken to the Senior Leadership Team for further action.

A school register is a legal document that must be filled in accurately.

- All staff have a responsibility to complete a register accurately and as early in the lesson as is practical, for every class they teach.
- Promptly pass to the relevant staff all information regarding student absences.
- Monitor attendance patterns and make referrals to the relevant staff where there are causes for concern.

Heads of Year will:

- Monitor attendance of specific students and liaise with parents on issues impacting upon student attendance, striving to remove any barriers to good attendance
- Carry out home visits where appropriate
- Liaise with North Yorkshire Council (NYC) Attendance and Enforcement team about any pupil whose attendance is giving cause for concern
- Make referrals to the NYC Attendance and Enforcement team

The **Attendance Team** will:

- Monitor attendance across the school
- Monitor accurate and prompt completion of registers
- Make first day and subsequent contact with parents to establish reasons for absence
- Accurately record reasons for absence
- Inform parents of truancy
- Identify poor attenders and contact parents and take appropriate action.
- Offer help and support to parents and student
- Produce attendance data for ongoing monitoring, for NYC Attendance and Enforcement team, Senior Leadership Team, Governors, Department of Education and OFSTED

The **North Yorkshire Council Attendance and Enforcement team** will:

- Monitor attendance of students referred to them
- Make regular contact with parents where appropriate

- Record contact made in relation to caseload and provide feedback to the school
- Carry out home visits where appropriate
- Provide support to caseload families
- Inform Eskdale School of referrals made to other services/agencies from their team
- Help to organise multi-agency attendance panel meetings
- Issue fixed penalty warnings, fixed penalty notices and initiate Court proceedings in a timely manner
- Hold attendance clinics where appropriate

The **Designated Senior Leader for attendance** will:

- Lead attendance across the school
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- Have an oversight of data analysis
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to students and families
- Advise the Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Advise the Head of School whether or not to authorise requests for absence
- Attend multi-agency Attendance meetings
- Monitor patterns of attendance across the School
- Report, as required on attendance patterns to the Governors and OFSTED
- Hold the attendance team to account

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Paul Dixon (Deputy Head of School)** and he can be contacted via school Reception on 01947 602856 or via the post@eskdale-school.co.uk email address.

The **Head of School** will:

- Ensure Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitor school-level absence data and reporting of it to governors
- Issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The **Governors** will:

- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school
- Make sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

Recording Attendance/Absence

Eskdale School is required by law to take an attendance register twice daily, using approved attendance codes which show whether a student is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity off-site. School days are divided into two sessions one in the morning and one in the afternoon, divided by a lunch

period. We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day in registration and at the start of each of the day's five lessons.

Every half-day absence from school is classified as either authorised or unauthorised. Only Eskdale School can make the decision about what absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents or carers cannot do so. Accurate information about the reason for absence must be collected and provided so that the correct decision can be made.

Categorising Absence

Absences may be categorised as either authorised or unauthorised. Absences will usually be authorised in the following circumstances;

- Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend (I). If a child's attendance is under 90% then school may request medical evidence to satisfy that the child is in fact too ill to attend school
- Where a student has a necessary medical appointment that cannot take place outside the school day (M)
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for absence which is beyond the family's control (C)
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student and/or student's parent belongs (R)
- Other exceptional circumstances, e.g. a family bereavement (C)
- A student participating in an approved non-educational activity (P)

Examples, although not an exhaustive list, of absences which will be recorded as unauthorised (O) are;

- Where no explanation has been given by the parent
- Where the school is not satisfied with the parental explanation
- The child is on a family holiday
- Due to poor attendance a student is required to produce medical evidence for illness absence fails to do so
- An unexceptional reason e.g., a pupil's birthday.
- The decision whether or not an absence is authorised will always rest with the Head of School

Leave of absence taken during term time

Government regulations state that "head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances." While leave of absence may therefore be granted during term time in exceptional circumstances, it is entirely at the discretion of the Head of School and is not a parental right.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable. For example:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent, sibling or close family member – taking account of travel and funeral arrangements
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence
- Serious illness of a close relative – though only if the Head of School is

- satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the Local Authority as appropriate (county standard or above for sporting activities)
- Time-off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Services
- Weddings of parents and siblings. Please note a holiday around a wedding will not be authorised.

Eskdale School considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The school will also consider current levels of absence, particularly unauthorised absence when deciding.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and no later than five working school days prior to the absence in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via our school office.

The school may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
Eskdale School does not authorise term-time holidays.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision

Please note the following;

- Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice
- School term dates are published via the school’s newsletter and website.
- The request will be considered and the parent will be informed whether or not the leave of absence has been granted. Please note ‘exceptional circumstances’ do not include a situation where parents choose to take students out of school to fit in with their work-related holiday dates and will not be authorised
- If the request is granted, the absence will be authorised. (this will only be in genuinely exceptional circumstances)

- If the leave of absence is not granted and the parent still takes their child out of the school, the absence will not be authorised and may be referred to the local authority. In such cases a penalty notice may be issued by the local authority. This may involve a fine being issued. Failure to pay any such fine could lead to prosecution in a Magistrates Court.
- If a parent removes their child without requesting leave of absence, the school may apply to the local authority for a penalty notice to be issued.
- Please refer to the DfE 'Amendments to School Attendance Regulations' for further details
- Please refer to North Yorkshire Council's attendance and enforcement education team guidance on their website

Legal Sanctions

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

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- 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.

North Yorkshire Council Penalty Notice procedures:

The Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice in response to requests made by school provided that the following conditions have been met:

- A leave of absence has been taken without the permission of the Head of School
- A leave of absence has been agreed and the student returns to school after the agreed date without explanation
- no application for leave has been made
- The child has been removed from school for ten or more sessions (five days)
- The Local Authority is satisfied that the parent had full knowledge of the procedures and the possible consequences

Information about North Yorkshire Council's Penalty Notice procedures can be found on their website.

Post Registration Truancy

Students who leave school without permission after the register has been taken are putting themselves at risk. Any member of staff who witnesses a pupil leaving school in this way or who is suspicious about why a student is not in their lesson, should contact the Attendance Team immediately who will contact parents once there is clarification that a student has left the school without permission. At this point the student then reverts to being the responsibility of parents who will then be advised to contact the police as they see fit. The student will be issued with a detention in order to pay back the missed time and where the behaviour persists parents will be required to attend the school in person to discuss the matter.

Punctuality and lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Eskdale School puts high expectations on its students in terms of punctuality. If students are late at the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher/tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the young person and can also encourage further absence.

How we manage lateness

- We expect pupils to be in registration on time at 8.55am
- Official afternoon registration is taken at the start of Period 4
- All morning registers are marked by 9.15am and students will receive a late mark from their tutor if they are not in registration by that time
- Three late marks in a half term will lead to an after-school detention – parents will be notified of this
- If a student is late into registration or school they must enter school via reception and must sign in with reception staff
- At 9.55am the registers are closed
- If a student has a persistent late record parents will be asked to meet with a relevant member of staff (their tutor, pastoral support staff or Head of Year) initially to resolve the problem. Parents can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time

Procedures for parents to follow in the event of their child being absent

If a student is absent parents are required to either:

- **Contact us by 8.40am on each day of absence** by

Either:

The parental contact option on Bromcom

OR

Email:

Post@eskdale-school.co.uk

OR

Phone:

01947 602856

Whilst any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the student. If a student is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

If a student is absent on the first day of absence we will:

- Mark the absence in line with statutory guidance with authorisation being at the discretion of the Head of School. The relevant staff member will gather the information regarding absence and mark the register appropriately, ensuring consistency and allowing for more effective data interrogation. The reasons given for absence will be noted on the school system
- Mark the absence as unauthorised in the first instance if no reason for absence has been given
- Telephone and/or text message parents on the first day of absence if we have not received a reason. It is essential that parents reply to this text and/or return the call so Eskdale School knows the whereabouts of the student to ensure the child is safeguarded
- Any missing students' names are passed to the relevant Pastoral team
- The Attendance Team may also:
 - i. carry out home visits, where no reason has been given or if the student has been absent for 3 consecutive days.
 - ii. Refer to relevant agencies if a safeguarding risk is suspected.

If a parent knows in advance that their child will be absent, e.g. due to a medical appointment which cannot be arranged out of school time, they should inform school of this prior to the event with evidence of the appointment handed in to the school office or the student's tutor or Head of Year. As far as possible appointments should be made outside of the school day and students should attend school before and after the appointment where practicable.

Students leaving the site during the school day

There may be occasions when students have to leave the site during the school day, e.g. non-routine medical appointment (note must be provided) or a child falling ill during the day. When this happens students should leave via the main reception. No student should leave without the Pastoral Team being notified and authorising the departure. In addition, the sign out sheet must be completed in reception prior to a student leaving to ensure there is an accurate register of students on site. Other than in exceptional circumstances, students will only be allowed to leave if accompanied by their parent or another authorised adult.

Support to improve attendance

There may be a range of reasons why a student may have poor or declining attendance. Eskdale School will offer appropriate, practicable support to overcome any barriers to improving attendance. Parents should contact school at an early stage to highlight any issues so that we can work together to resolve any problems. Depending upon the circumstances and the level of absence, Eskdale School or the parent may refer the student to North Yorkshire's Attendance and Enforcement team who will work with parents and the school to improve attendance.

Early Intervention

Early intervention can prevent poor attendance therefore attendance and punctuality are monitored throughout the year. When a student's attendance drops below 92% the reasons for the attendance will be carefully investigated and a letter of concern may be sent to parents explaining that an improvement in attendance is required and that their child is risking becoming a persistent absentee. If an improvement is not forthcoming the school will not authorise any further absence unless medical evidence is provided.

Examples of support that can be offered;

- Regular attendance reviews and action plans
- Early Help Meetings
- Healthy Child Team
- North Yorkshire Attendance and Enforcement referral (e.g. home visits)
- Other relevant agency referrals
- Peer group mentors
- Key person within school
- Rewards and incentives
- Home visits carried out by the Attendance and/or Pastoral Team

Persistent Absence

When a student's attendance drops below 90% contact will be made home with a letter of concern sent to parents explaining that an improvement in attendance is required and that their child is persistently absentee. If an improvement is not forthcoming the school will not authorise any further absence unless medical evidence is provided.

In line with DfE and OFSTED guidance, any student with less than 90% attendance is classed as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absence. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parent to meet with the relevant pastoral team if there is no improvement from the initial contact from school. A representative from the local Attendance and Enforcement team will also be informed. If attendance fails to improve an action plan will be jointly instigated. If sufficient improvement is not made the local authority has the power to issue sanctions such as Family orders, Penalty Notices (fines) or court proceedings. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or three months' imprisonment.

Rewards

Eskdale School recognises and rewards students with excellent attendance and students with improved attendance. Incentive schemes with the aim of improving student attendance may also run from time to time. Our attendance rewards include:

- Acknowledgement at celebrating success events, such as Achievement Assemblies for those with 100% attendance for the term and/or year
- Termly draws for vouchers/tokens for students with 100% attendance and/or improved attendance
- Draws for vouchers/tokens for students with 100% attendance for the academic year
- Half termly treats for best attending/most improved tutor group in each year group
- Draws for vouchers/tokens for students with significantly improved attendance
- Achievement points

Review and monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed every year and attendance level targets will be decided upon by the Head of School.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Eskdale School's Behaviour Policy
- Whitby Schools Partnership (WSP) Child Protection Policy
- WSP SEND Policy

Appendix 1

Register Coding used at Eskdale School

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

Absence coding used at Eskdale School

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Exclusion	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised Holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious Observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study Leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Traveller Absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised		
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	No reason provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code will be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a week)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with the reason given for absence
U	Arrived after registration	Student arrived at school after the register had closed

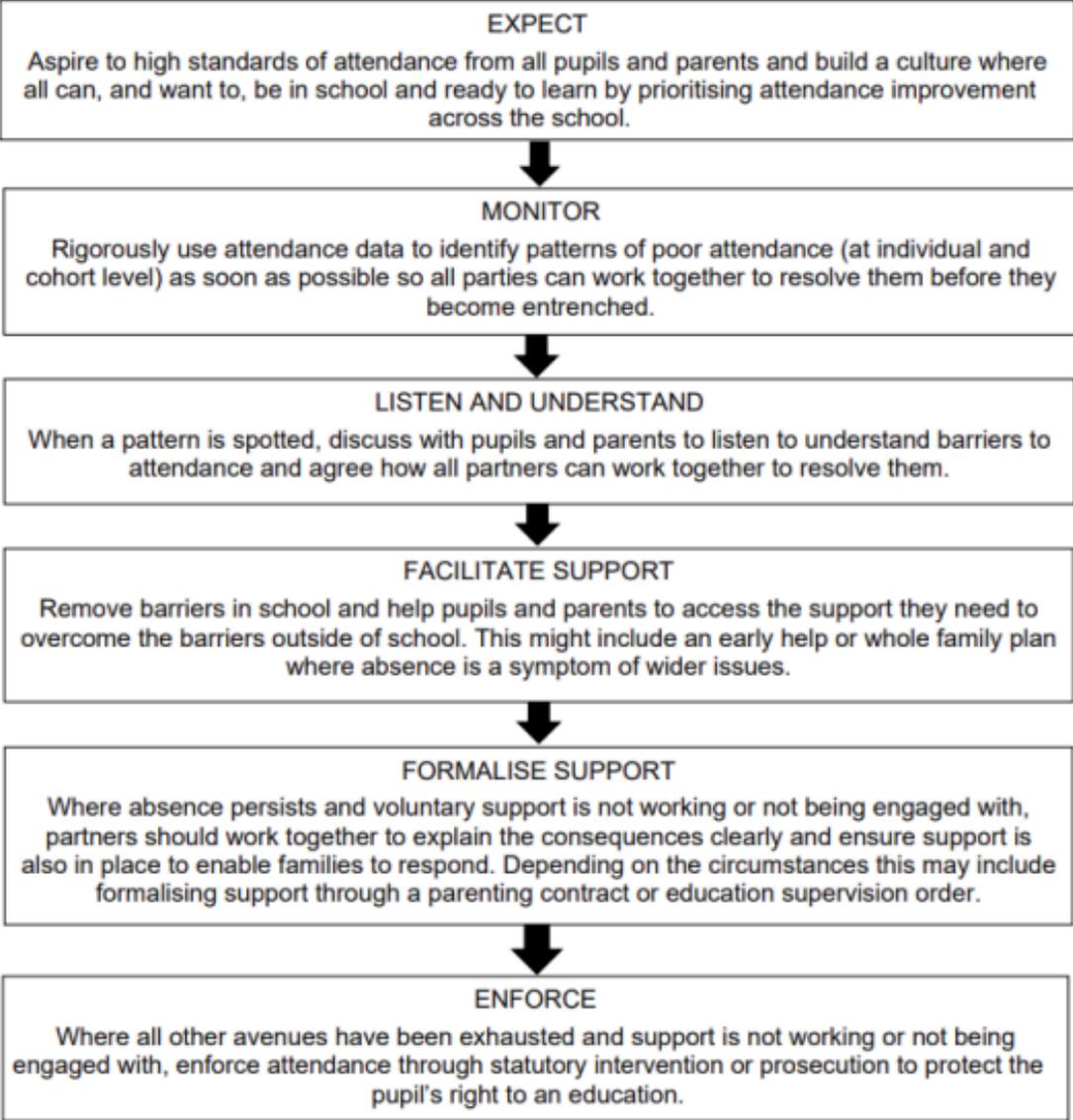
Other codes used at Eskdale School

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2

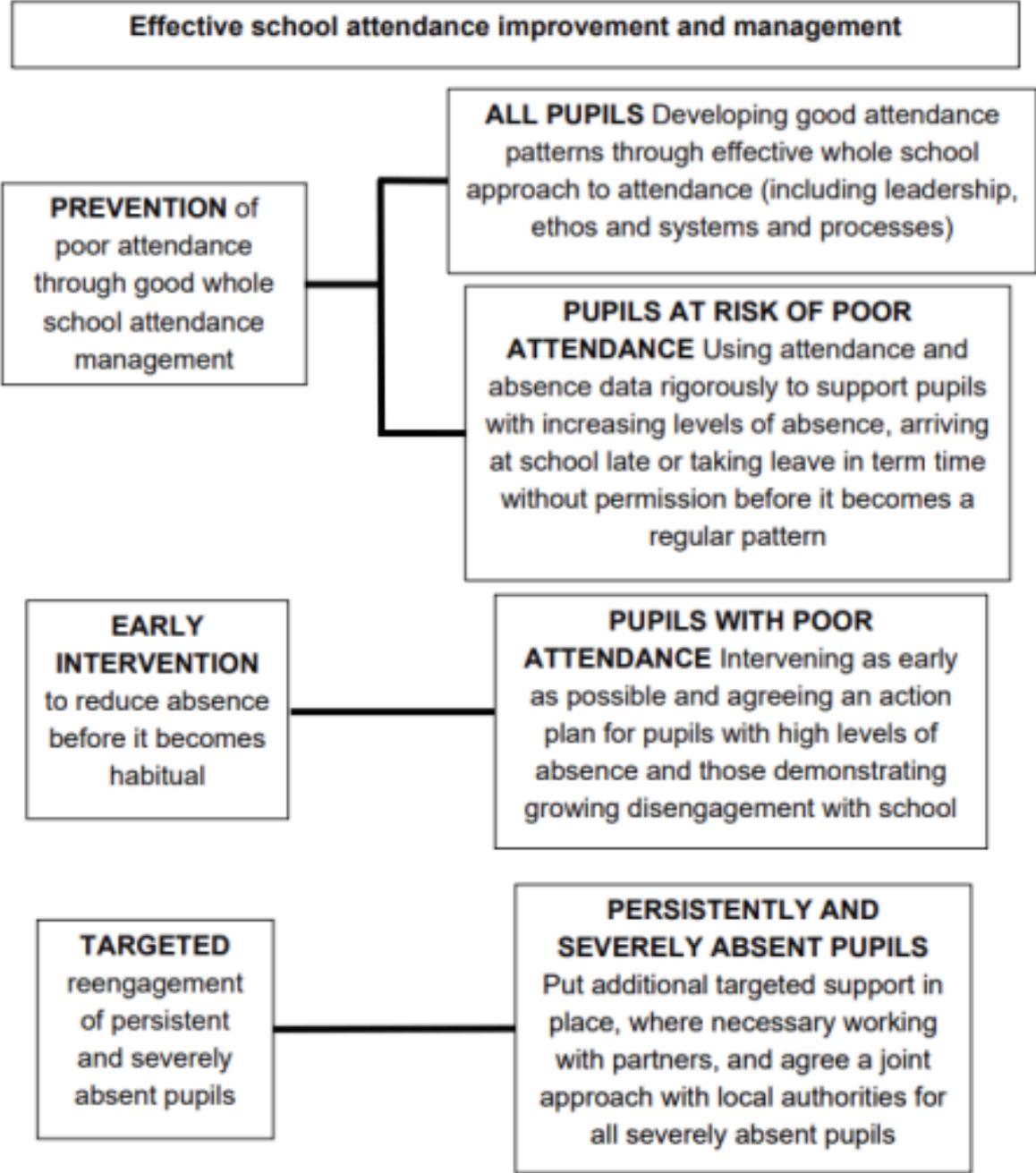
Working together to improve school attendance flow chart

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>



Appendix 3

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>



Appendix 4

Levels of support

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

