Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The Sheriff Partnership

Home of Coventry and Central Warwickshire Teaching School Hub

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Reviewed by	Nicola Dandy
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1. Aims

Lawrence Sheriff is committed to maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality throughout the school community. Good attendance and punctuality are learned behaviours, and Lawrence Sheriff recognises the importance of developing strong patterns of attendance across the school community. As such, attendance is an integral part of the school's ethos, culture and day to day life. Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Thus poor attendance has a negative impact on academic progress. All activities, outside commitments or appointments which could give rise to unnecessary or unauthorised absence are discouraged, formally through the Home/School Agreement and Sixth Form Agreement, and informally through comments at parents' meetings.

Poor attendance, persistent absence, severe absence, repeated lateness, part-time timetables and children missing education may all be indicators of safeguarding concerns including neglect, domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, exploitation, county lines activity, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation.

Attendance at Lawrence Sheriff is everyone's responsibility and the school is fully committed to ensuring a culture which:

- promotes good attendance and punctuality; reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ensures every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- means we act early to address patterns of absence
- means we work collaboratively with parents and provide appropriate support to enable parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has regard to the Department for Education statutory guidance "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" and associated attendance regulations.

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 Body

The Pastoral Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher and wider leadership team to account for the implementation of this Policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy at the school

- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance manager

The school attendance manager:

- monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- reports concerns about attendance to the Senior Leadership team
- works with the wider pastoral team to improve attendance and tackle persistent absence
- advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers/form tutors

- Class teachers/Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the attendance manager / school office.
- All Class teachers, Form tutors, and Pastoral staff are required to promote good attendance and to monitor their groups for patterns of non-attendance and lateness.
- If a Form tutor suspects that a pupil is deliberately not attending school, they should discuss the matter with the appropriate Head of House/Attendance Manager. If the matter is not then resolved, the Head of House/Attendance Manager should then arrange a meeting with the parents/carers in order to resolve the matter.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Lawrence Sheriff maintains an attendance register. All pupils on roll at the school are placed upon this register.

An attendance register is taken at the start of the first period each day and then at the beginning of each period thereafter. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- present in the morning if they are registered by 8.50 (AM registration)
- authorised Late if they arrive at school after 8.50 and before 9.20 (this is marked by Code L)
- unauthorised Late if they arrive after 9.20 (this is marked by code U, and counts as an unauthorised absence for the half day)
- present in the afternoon if they are registered by the beginning of (PM) registration the beginning of period 4 (early period 4 = 12:05pm or late period 4 = 12:45pm)

- authorised Late in the afternoon if they arrive after the beginning of registration
- attending an approved off-site educational activity
- absent
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the full list of DfE attendance codes.

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day. The school operates a first-day call system. Parents/carers are required to telephone the school before 9.30 am on any day when their son /daughter is absent. If the absence is expected to last more than one day, the parent/carer should indicate the date of return. Parents will be contacted if they fail to do this as the school needs to be certain that the pupil is safe. Alternatively, parents can email attendance@lawrencesheriffschool.com or Edulink. **Self-certification by any pupil, including those in Sixth Form, is not acceptable.**

The register for the first session will be taken at the beginning of each lesson and will be kept open until 20 minutes after period 1 (AM registration) or period 5 (PM registration) has begun. A register for all other periods will be taken at the beginning of the lesson.

Attendance of all pupils is checked by electronic registration each lesson. Registration must take place in a classroom and be done by the teacher. It is never acceptable to register outside or in a corridor. Where classes have to take place away from the classroom such as in PE, the register will be taken on Edulink . Registers should not be projected onto the white board.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers are required to telephone the school on the first and subsequent days of a pupil's absence to the main school office; this applies to all pupils including those in Sixth Form (see also section 7). Alternatively, parents/carers are asked to email the school on the first and subsequent days of a pupil's absence to attendance@lawrencesheriffschool.com or log in to Edulink from the school's website page and click on 'Attendance' and then click on 'Report Absences'. If contact has not been made by a parent or guardian for a pupil in Year's 7-13 on the first day of absence, then the school office will send a 'group call text' and will then continue to attempt to make contact with parents and establish the reason for absence. (Please note that the school reserves the right to carry out checks to ensure the proper use of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy by requesting parents/carers provide written confirmation of a pupil's absence).

The school 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. The school 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 accordingly.

4.3 Planned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for all types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 5 sets out which term-time absences the school can authorise. The school encourages 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. 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. When informing the school of pre-arranged medical appointments and all other types of planned absences, the same procedure as an unplanned absence should be adopted and the attendance manager should be notified at the earliest given opportunity; the attendance manager may request written notification of medical appointments. In cases of frequent or persistent absence, the school may require medical evidence to be provided.

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

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives after the lesson has begun will be marked late by the classroom teacher. If this is before the register has closed they will be marked as late, using the appropriate code and if this is after the register has closed they will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Lateness and punctuality is monitored by Form tutors and Heads of House. If issues with lateness persist then then pupil's Form tutor, or Head of House, will firstly discuss the reason for lateness with the pupil or parent/carer as appropriate and strategies will be put in place to improve punctuality. If lateness continues without good reason, then the pupil will be placed in detention with a view of making up the cumulative time missed from lessons due to lateness. If a pupil is late, they should be warned of the consequences of this behaviour by their Form tutor/teacher.

If the offence is repeated without any good reason (i.e. due to late trains or buses etc.) then the Head of House will, where appropriate, discuss this with the pupil and impose a detention where appropriate. Arriving to school late on two or more occasions can result in an after school detention.

If lateness continues the Head of House /Attendance Manager will contact parents and address this issue.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, Lawrence Sheriff will:

- follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason via the most appropriate channel, such as a group call, telephone call, email or letter, and where appropriate a home visit may be undertaken

- ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

- identify whether or not the absence is approved

- identify the correct attendance code to use

All Form tutors and Heads of House are required to promote good attendance and to monitor their groups for patterns of non-attendance and lateness. Pupils' attendance is regularly monitored and, particularly if their attendance falls below 95% over a prolonged period, the school will contact parents to discuss how the matter can be improved. In cases where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, more formal measures may be required. Where attendance does not improve and is still below 90%, where a pupil is habitually late, or in circumstances of unauthorised absence, the school may refer the case to the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) Team provided by Warwickshire County Council. The Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) is a service provided by Warwickshire County Council that supports the school in promoting attendance and, in cases of persistent absence, they will be notified as appropriate.

If a Form tutor suspects that a pupil is deliberately not attending school they should discuss the matter with the appropriate Head of House/Attendance Manager who will then address this with parents. If the matter is not then resolved, the Head of House/Attendance Manager should then arrange a meeting with the parents/carers.

The school recognises that emotional wellbeing and mental health difficulties may affect attendance. The school will work with pupils, families and external agencies to identify barriers and provide appropriate support whilst maintaining the expectation that school attendance remains a priority.

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance and punctuality information is updated daily and shared with parents via Edu-link. Furthermore, attendance information is reported to parents via the pupil's termly reports and their end of year-school-report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' (Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_2026.pdf).

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

The Headteacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school, if leave is granted.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance (**at least 6 weeks before the proposed absence**) and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised. (**A 'Leave of Absence' can only be booked after receiving written permission from the Headteacher).**

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

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise other unavoidable absences including those for the following reasons:

- 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
- interviews for employment/further or higher education/ university open days
- agreed attainment tests e.g. music grades, driving test
- compassionate grounds e.g. bereavement
- participation in elite sporting competitions or training

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

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

For pupils whose attendance causes concern, the school may implement an Attendance Support Plan which identifies barriers to attendance, agreed actions, support measures, review dates and responsible staff.

Lawrence Sheriff recognises that absence is often a symptom of wider issues a family or young person is facing. Attendance at Lawrence Sheriff is considered to be everyone's responsibility, and as such Form tutors, Heads of House, Heads of Year, the SENCO, members of the wider pastoral team and the school's Senior Leadership Team all work collaboratively and alongside the school's attendance manager to improve attendance. Pupils with less than 90% attendance are considered to be persistently absent, and those with less than 50% attendance are considered to be 'severely absent'.

Appropriate staff will meet with parents / carers at the earliest given opportunity in order to discuss concerns relating to attendance and punctuality. Letters will be issued to parents / carers, if deemed appropriate, on a termly basis to outline concerns. Heads of House and Heads of Year will work with Form tutors and the school's attendance manager to:

- deliver intervention in a targeted way, in response to data or intelligence

- monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence (register inspections, code analysis, cohort and group monitoring, punctuality, lesson attendance across subjects and benchmarking)

- use attendance, pastoral and SEND staff who are skilled in supporting pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance

- create action plans in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families, for example, children's social care and Early Help services (these may commission or deliver interventions to improve attendance). A child who frequently misses education is considered an Early Help indicator according to KCSIE 2026

- monitor the impact of any intervention, making adjustments if necessary and using findings to inform future strategy

- identify the reasons why interventions fail to address attendance issues, and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention

- work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. The following measures outlined in Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_2026.pdf will be considered:

- Parenting contracts

- Education supervision orders

- Attendance prosecution

- Parenting orders

- Fixed penalty notices

5.3 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.

The school and Warwickshire County Council will apply the national framework for penalty notices in line with current legislation and local authority procedures. Penalty notices may be issued where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Charges and escalation arrangements will be applied in accordance with current DfE guidance and Warwickshire County Council policy.

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 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

- if 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

Lawrence Sheriff recognises that improving attendance and punctuality takes a whole school approach.

The Deputy Headteacher (Attendance Champion) will:

- promote a whole-school culture of attendance;
- analyse attendance trends;
- coordinate targeted intervention;
- oversee attendance support plans;
- report attendance trends to trustees;
- ensure attendance is viewed as a safeguarding priority.

Responsibilities include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating key messages to pupils and parents. The following strategies are used to promote a culture of improving school attendance and punctuality:

- Ensuring all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents/carers, and receive the training and professional development they need.

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels. In doing so, schools should help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It should also include clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.

- Visibly demonstrating the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or during form time. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.

7. Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Lawrence Sheriff recognises that some pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil. The school will work with parents/carers to

improve attendance, and will consider the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. Strategies for pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities include:

- having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions and making reasonable adjustments where appropriate

- putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. These will involve considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support

- working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed

- working with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day

- ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place, when needed, and considering whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance

7.1 Part-time timetables

At Lawrence Sheriff all pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. The local authority will be notified prior to implementing a part-time timetable, and this will only be in place for the shortest time necessary as per the Local Authority's guidance on part-time timetables. Any such agreement is reviewed regularly and is time limited, by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime.

8. Attendance monitoring

The attendance manager monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 10 consecutive days, then the school will usually contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer or liaising with other external services as appropriate.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is 50% or above, they will be classified as severely absent.

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, for the various pupil groups, with the national average, and share this with the Pastoral Committee of the Governing Body.

Lawrence Sheriff collects and stores data using an electronic management systems (SIMS). This data is used for internal purposes, such as to:

- track the attendance of individual pupils
- identify whetheor not there are particular groups of children / young people (e.g. SEN, Quality First,PP, EAL or those considered vulnerable) whose absences may be a cause for concern
- monitor and evaluate the attendance of those individual children / young people that are identified as being in need of support

The school will make all required returns to the local authority and Department for Education concerning pupils who are persistently absent, severely absent, children missing education, pupils absent for prolonged periods, and pupils removed from roll in accordance with statutory requirements.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance, local authority procedures or operational requirements change by Nicola Dandy (Deputy Headteacher).

10. Attendance and Children Missing Education

Lawrence Sheriff School recognises its statutory duties relating to Children Missing Education (CME). Unexplained absence, prolonged absence and repeated absence may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. The school will work with the Local Authority, safeguarding partners and other agencies where appropriate to identify and safeguard children who may be missing education.

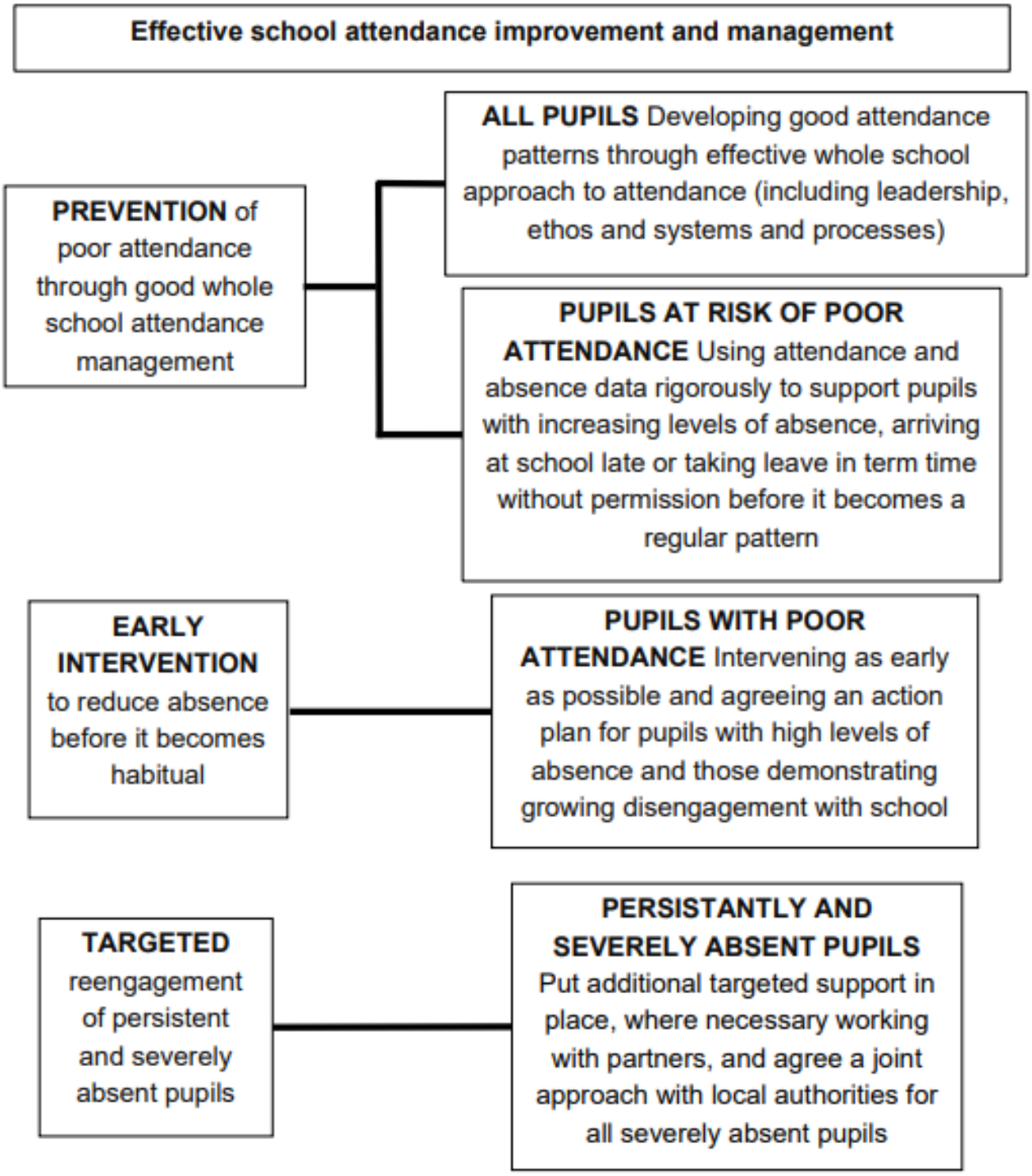
Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

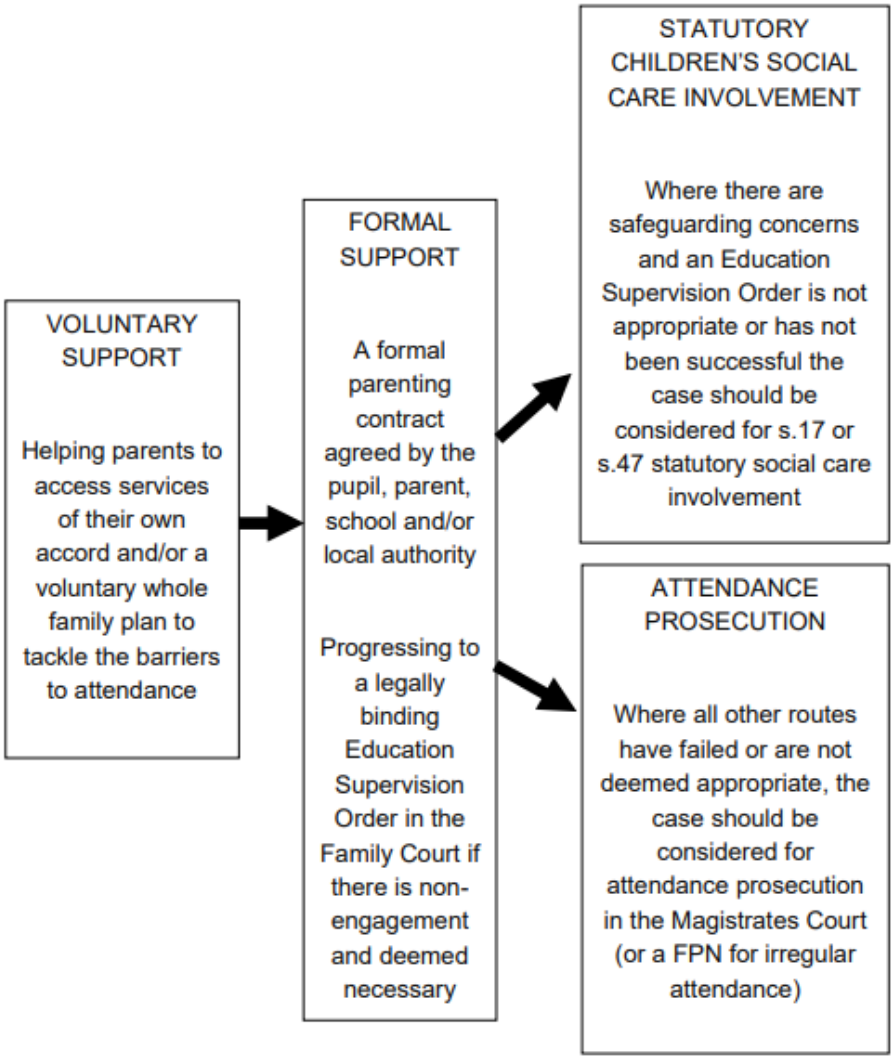
Attendance Codes – September 2024

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

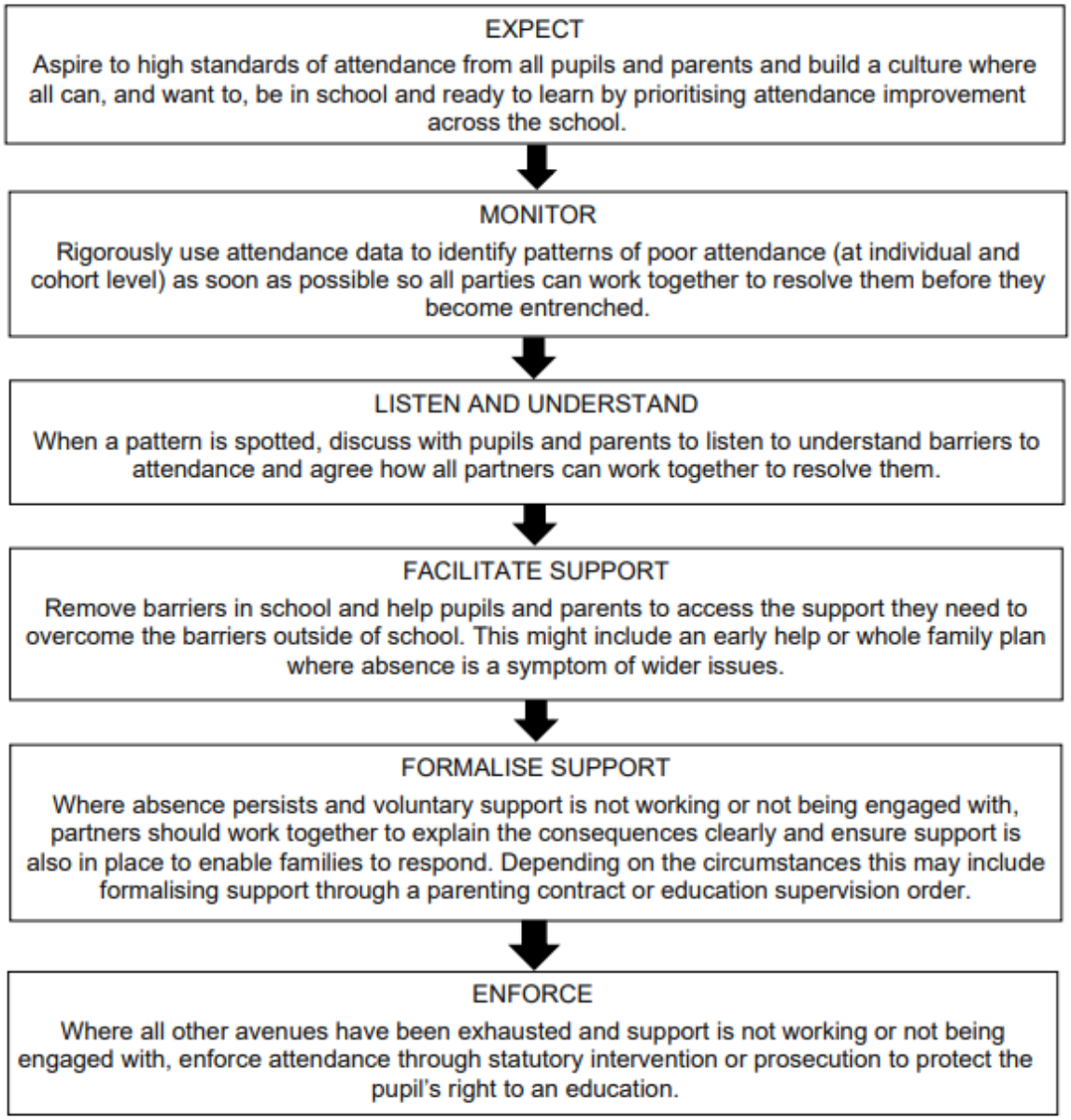
Appendix 2 - Effective School attendance improvement and management – [school attendance guidance)](#) (page 33)



Appendix 3 - Strategies for working together to improve school attendance. – school attendance guidance) (page 8) (page 8)



Appendix 4- Working collaboratively with families to improve attendance – school attendance guidance) (page 8))(page 8)

Working together to improve attendance

13. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to: