

Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of Adoption:	11.09.2025	Date of Review:	SEPT 2026
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Version:	APPROVED	Date approved:	11.09.2025
CHANGES	UPDATED TO REFELCT KCSIE SEPT 25		

Contents

Attendance Expectations	3
Aims of the policy.....	3
Objectives of the policy	3
The school will:	3
School’s responsibilities	3
Parent responsibilities	4
Monitoring attendance.....	4
School procedure for following up absences:	4
Escalation of Concerns.....	4
Requests for Leave of Absence (exceptional circumstances).....	5
Illness	5
Expected Levels of Attendance.....	5
Medical appointments.....	6
Lateness	6
Promoting good attendance	7
Internal Process for Promoting Good Attendance	8
Penalty Notice Regulations 2024 and Statutory Guidance.....	8
The role of the Attendance Support Worker	9
Persistent and Severe Absence.....	9
Children missing from education	9
Suspensions and Exclusions	10
Governors monitoring and review	10
Appendix 1: Attendance Monitoring	11
Appendix 2: REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME	12
Appendix 3: Attendance Improvement Process	13

Attendance Expectations

At Whitley Park we take attendance seriously as it is the cornerstone of achievement. We expect regular and prompt attendance and we work in partnership with parents and pupils to ensure this is achieved. As outlined in Department for Education in the guidance Working Together to improve school attendance (September 2024), we recognise that that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation. Therefore, monitoring attendance and punctuality is given high priority as one of our safeguarding responsibilities.

Aims of the policy

- To set clear expectations and aspirations that all pupils have a high standard of school attendance and punctuality.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To make attendance a priority for everyone.
- To ensure there is a clear process to identify and address emerging attendance concerns
- To work effectively with parents, pupils, and partners through building trusted relationships to work together to remove barriers to attendance.

Objectives of the policy

- For attendance to be at least in line with national figures
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days

The school will:

- **Expect** every child to attend on time, every day throughout the school year.
- **Ensure** parents understand the positive impact good attendance has on a child's achievements and well-being.
- **Support children and families** to overcome barriers affecting pupil attendance.
- **Challenge** poor attendance and lateness taking legal action where appropriate.
- **NOT** authorise any holidays taken during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

School's responsibilities

Daily data sharing: In line with DfE requirements, Whitley Park will share daily attendance register data with the Local Authority and Department for Education as required.]

Senior Attendance Champion: The Headteacher is the Senior Attendance Champion with strategic responsibility for attendance.

- Communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Support families who require targeted intervention
- Maintain appropriate attendance data
- Have appropriate registration processes in place

- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
- Complete systematic daily records which chart absence, lateness and attendance at alternative provision
- Collaborate with the ASW (Attendance Support Worker) and other external professionals, including social workers, to support their work with pupils as necessary
- Submit termly attendance reports to the LOCAL AUTHORITY
- Ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Promote good attendance through rewards and recognition

See **Appendix 1** for attendance monitoring activities

Attendance codes: The school uses DfE attendance/absence codes (updated Aug 2024). Staff must use the correct session codes; a code sheet will be maintained by the Attendance Officer.]

Parent responsibilities

- Prepare children to be in class ready for learning by the start of each school day at 8:45 a.m.
- Ensure children have an effective bedtime routine and healthy sleep habits
- Contact school on every day of any absence (attendance@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk/01189375566)
- Make applications for leave in writing on the school's 'Leave of Absence Form', giving the reason for the request
- Work with the school and Attendance Support Worker to improve lateness and attendance
- Avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day

Monitoring attendance

Daily register checking and follow up by the Attendance Officer will support the monitoring of pupil attendance. In addition, termly evaluation and review, including with governors, will support thorough evaluation and action planning.

School procedure for following up absences:

- **First day absence:** If parents/carers have not communicated with the school a first-day absence text will be sent
- **Second day absence:** A further attempt to contact parents/carers by text will be made requesting they contact the school immediately.
- **Third day absence:** A further attempt to contact parents/carers by phone will be made. If the school is again unable to contact parents/carers and if school staff are becoming concerned for the welfare of the child/children absent from school without a reason, the school may contact the police to arrange for a welfare check to be carried out at the home address or a home visit maybe made by the Attendance Officer and Welfare Officer

Escalation of Concerns

Notice to Improve: Where informal support has not secured sufficient improvement, the school will issue a written Notice to Improve to parents, setting clear attendance targets and a review period (3–6 weeks). Failure to improve may lead to a penalty notice referral.

The school Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and raise this weekly at the school Safeguarding Team meeting. Where issues persist, the following will be initiated:

- **Stage 1:** We will use attendance data fortnightly to identify children whose attendance is declining and any concerning patterns of attendance.

- **Stage 2:** If the concerns persist the Attendance Officer will write to the parents/carers and invite them to school for a meeting.
- **Stage 3:** If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the ASW.
- **Stage 4:** If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues.
- **Stage 5:** Where concerns meet threshold, the school will contact Children's Single Point of Access to complete a referral to Children's Social Care.

Please note that ultimately the Local authority can take legal action, including parenting orders, Education Supervision Orders and prosecution/fines when attendance issues persist and negatively impact a child's education and development.

Requests for Leave of Absence (exceptional circumstances)

- When a child starts Whitley Park Primary and Nursery, parents are given the following clear message: 'There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.'
- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Request for leave of absence from school during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify the parents of their decision. We endeavour to meet with parents requesting leave of absence. Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised. The school may also request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.
- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation, this will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.
- Where leave of absence is denied, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (G code) and parents informed in writing.

Illness

Medical evidence: The school may request evidence where absence is frequent or patterns emerge. Requests will be proportionate (e.g., appointment card, GP note) and avoid undue burden on families.

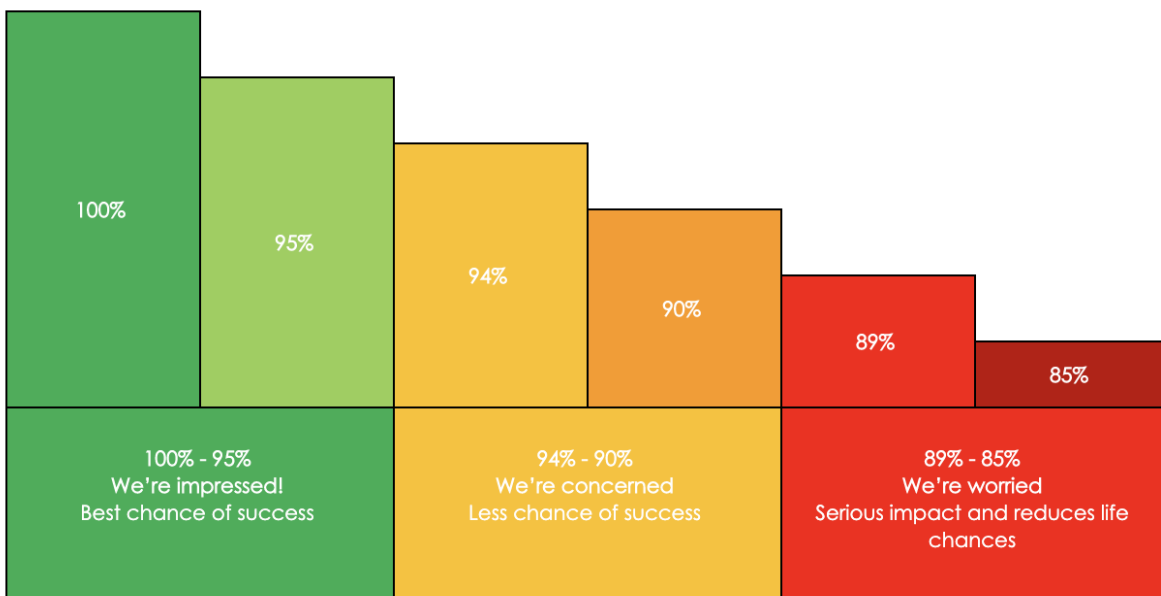
Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school they should follow the absence process.

Medical evidence: The school may request evidence where absence is frequent or patterns emerge. Requests will be proportionate (e.g., appointment card, GP note) and avoid undue burden on families.

Expected Levels of Attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success.

		190 School Days in Total	No. of lessons missed over a year	No. of days absent over a year	No. of weeks absent over a year
We're impressed!	100% attendance	190 days	0	0	0
Best chance of success	95% attendance	180 days	50 lessons	10 days	2 weeks
We're concerned	94% attendance	179 days	55 lessons	11 days	Over 2 weeks
Less chance of success	90% attendance	171 days	95 lessons	19 days	Nearly 4 weeks
We're worried	89% attendance	169 days	105 lessons	21 days	Over 4 weeks
Serious impact and reduces life chances	85% attendance	161 days	145 lessons	29 days	Nearly 6 weeks



Medical appointments

- Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.
- Where appointments have to be taken during the school day, parents should request permission for their child to be absent in advance, whenever possible. Only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment.
- Parents are required to provide a copy of the appointment letter or card prior to the day of the appointment. Absences will only be authorised when this information has been received.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill.

- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils.
- Children must be in class by 8:30am (Additional Resource Children)/8:45 (mainstream children) each day. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. Registers are closed at 9.00am. Children who arrive late must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book after 9.00.
- Pupils who arrive after 9.15 will be marked with a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Lateness will be monitored by the Attendance Officer Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to a meeting in school with the Attendance Officer to identify how this can be addressed, and a plan will be agreed.
- If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer.
- The school day ends at 3:15pm for all mainstream children.3:00pm for children in Additional Resource Provision

Notification of absence

- Parents must notify the school on each day of the absence before 9.15am by email attendance@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk or by phone (01189375566) .
- Parents understand that the school - reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- Medical evidence: The school may request evidence where absence is frequent or patterns emerge. Requests will be proportionate (e.g., appointment card, GP note) and avoid undue burden on families.
- The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:
 - Child is absent and there are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
 - Medical evidence: The school may request evidence where absence is frequent or patterns emerge. Requests will be proportionate (e.g., appointment card, GP note) and avoid undue burden on families.
 - Child is absent and the same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
 - Child is absent and attendance is below expected levels and there is a concerning pattern of absence/reasons for absence.
 - Where there is a medical problem and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

Promoting good attendance

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by:

- Awarding an attendance bear to the class with the highest attendance in the Headteacher's weekly assembly
- School attendance is shared with pupils and staff in assembly every week by a member of the Leadership Team.
- Offering seasonal incentives including raffle prizes for children who achieve 100% attendance each term. The names of children who have 100% attendance will be put into a termly prize draw. Each term, tickets

will be drawn and the winners announced in assembly. This is designed to promote and encourage excellent attendance across the school.

- Sharing termly attendance reports with parents and carers
- Making school a safe place where children belong and feel part of a community.

The Attendance Champion (Mr Nathan Butler-Broad) works together with the Attendance Officer (Miss Anj Maskell) to monitor and evaluate attendance levels and implement strategies to improve whole school attendance.

Internal Process for Promoting Good Attendance

Good attendance is everyone's priority. When children are not in school, they are not learning and at risk of underachieving. At Whitley Park, we promote and challenge attendance at all levels. As part of this whole school approach, every two weeks, the Attendance Officer will identify children who are causing concern and have experienced two or more period of absence in the same short term

The Attendance Officer will share this information with class teachers who have a duty to contact parents/carers and emphasise the importance of being in school through explanation of what has been missed and enquiry into how an improvement can be secured in partnership. The details of this face-to-face conversation/phone call will then be recorded on CPOMS as a attendance/safeguarding concern.

The Attendance Officer will monitor the follow up and use this information to complement existing processes, including attendance panels and pathways to prosecution.

Penalty Notice Regulations 2024 and Statutory Guidance

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions in a rolling 10-week period, the school will consider referral to the Local Authority following the LA Code of Conduct. First penalty notice is £80 if paid within 21 days, £160 if paid within 28 days; repeat notices follow the statutory scheme.

School will consider whether a penalty notice (fine) is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold of 10 unauthorised absences in a rolling 10-week period.
(this does not apply to leave of absence)

If school considers that the trigger has been met and a penalty notice is appropriate, they will refer to the Local Authority in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct. If the Local authority issues a penalty notice it is per parent per child/ The first penalty notice issued to a parent will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

If the threshold is met a 2nd time in three years and a 2nd Penalty notice is issued to the same parent in relation to the same child – this will a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

The role of the Attendance Support Worker

The Attendance support worker is an external partner service brokered through Reading Local Authority. Attendance Support Workers strive to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. The Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

The Attendance Support Worker is **Sylvia Hamilton**.

Persistent and Severe Absence

Part-time timetables: Any part-time arrangement will be a short-term measure, agreed in writing with parents and professionals, with review dates no more than 2 weeks apart, and cancelled as soon as no longer necessary. SEN/Medical needs: Reasonable adjustments will be made where a child has SEND or health needs. Attendance plans will be personalised, with phased returns or alternative provision considered where appropriate.

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), the school will work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. Primarily, this focus will be on supporting children and families to overcome barriers that might be negatively affecting a child's ability to regularly attend school.

Focus will be given to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

This may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration reasonable adjustments to meet medical or SEND needs. In exceptional circumstances this might include the offer of an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

In all cases, the school will carefully analyse patterns of both persistent and severe absence and make these a focus of regular data monitoring. In this way, the school will identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Challenging both persistent and severe absence is a recognised strategic priority of the school.

Part-time timetables: Any part-time arrangement will be a short-term measure, agreed in writing with parents and professionals, with review dates no more than 2 weeks apart, and cancelled as soon as no longer necessary. SEN/Medical needs: Reasonable adjustments will be made where a child has SEND or health needs. Attendance plans will be personalised, with phased returns or alternative provision considered where appropriate.

Children missing from education

A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Where a child is repeatedly absent from school, especially for long periods, it could indicate potential safeguarding issues such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

We monitor children that go missing, particularly on repeat occasions, and report them to the Designated Safeguarding Officer – following our normal safeguarding procedures. If a child is missing for 10 days or more the school will notify the local authority (CME@reading.gov.uk).

We have both admission and attendance registers which all pupils are placed on.

We will inform the local authority of any pupil who has been deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home education.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

We will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, as outlined in [Keeping children safe in education 2025](#).

Suspensions and Exclusions

The school is committed to keeping children in school. However, there are occasions where suspension/exclusion is necessary to keep pupils/staff safe. If a child is suspended, the school will provide work for them to complete at home. If a child is excluded, the school will provide work for the first 5 days/until the child is offered a placement by the local authority. If a child has a social worker, the school will inform them of any suspension/exclusion and work in partnership to secure improvement.

Governors monitoring and review

Governors will receive termly reports on persistent and severe absence, analysis by pupil group, and the impact of actions. They will hold leaders to account for attendance strategy.

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The school's attendance figures are reviewed by the Governing Body on a termly basis. This will be reviewed by the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer and approved by Governors annually.

Office use only:

Appendix 1: Attendance Monitoring

Attendance codes: The school uses DfE attendance/absence codes (updated Aug 2024). Staff must use the correct session codes; a code sheet will be maintained by the Attendance Officer.

<u>Daily</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Termly</u>
<p>Registering children who are late after 9.00am</p> <p>Check registers at 9.15 (AM) and Nursery pm by 1pm.</p> <p>Text parents of missing children who have not contacted school to give a reason for absence (AM)</p> <p>After Day 3 with no contact consider making home visit (AM). A welfare call to 101 if no contact made.</p> <p>Discuss safeguarding concerns linked to attendance at weekly safeguarding meeting.</p> <p>Vulnerable pupils known to Children’s Services -alert Social worker or family worker by email</p> <p>10 days post as missing on S2S</p>	<p>AM to notify teachers of children who have had two episodes or more of absence in a short term. Teachers to address concerns with parents/carers and record on CPOMS.</p> <p>AM meet with ASW then HT to discuss target pupils and those causing concern and actions agreed</p> <p>Meet with parents of those children causing concern (under 90%). Set targets, review dates. Text reminder to attend.</p> <p>Feedback to teachers re medical threshold for child</p> <p>Trends report (AM) to be discussed at review meetings</p>	<p>Text to all parents/carers to remind them of first day of term</p> <p>Complete at a glance overview of the whole year group to pick up any pupils causing concern or where attendance has dropped. Communicate this to teaching staff for follow up calls/conversations</p> <p>Submit returns to Local Authority. Including details of children on part time timetables (AM)</p> <p>Review Termly Attendance Report to Govs (AM)</p> <p>Audit of registers (LOCAL AUTHORITY)</p>
`		
<u>Governors</u>	<u>Local Authority involvement statutory responsibilities</u>	<u>Other aspects to check (AM)</u>
<p>Governors are responsible for monitoring updates on the progress of attendance percentages and any prosecutions/fines/ persistent absences</p>	<p>Liaison with Education Welfare Service re statutory involvement re attendance panels, parenting orders, Education Supervision Orders, fines, fixed penalty notices, prosecutions, missing children</p>	<p>Extended holidays when to take children off role</p> <p>Children missing in education</p>

WP Attendance policy October 2024 APPROVED FGB

Appendix 2: REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME



This form is to be fully completed and forwarded to the Attendance Officer of the school. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child's/ren's regular attendance at school. The Head Teacher may authorise leave of absence but **only in very exceptional circumstances**. All information on this form is required in order to process this application.

Any application should be made **well in advance** and parents are strongly advised to apply for leave of absence **before** making any arrangements. If your child does not return on the agreed date, then you may lose the school place.

If this request is your 1st request and for 5 days or less, you will receive a response from us within 3 working days. If this request is for more than 5 days, or is a second request for leave, then you will need to meet with the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer and we will contact you to arrange an appointment date and time as soon as possible.

Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for any unauthorised leave of absences during term time, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. A Fixed Penalty Notice is issued per parent per child.

I request that leave of absence be granted to:

Name _____ Teacher's Name _____

From (first day of absence) _____ to (last day of absence) _____

Date _____ Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Mother Full name _____ DOB _____

Father Full name _____ DOB _____

Have you already had leave in this school year? Yes/No
attendance are both good? Yes/No
My child's punctuality and

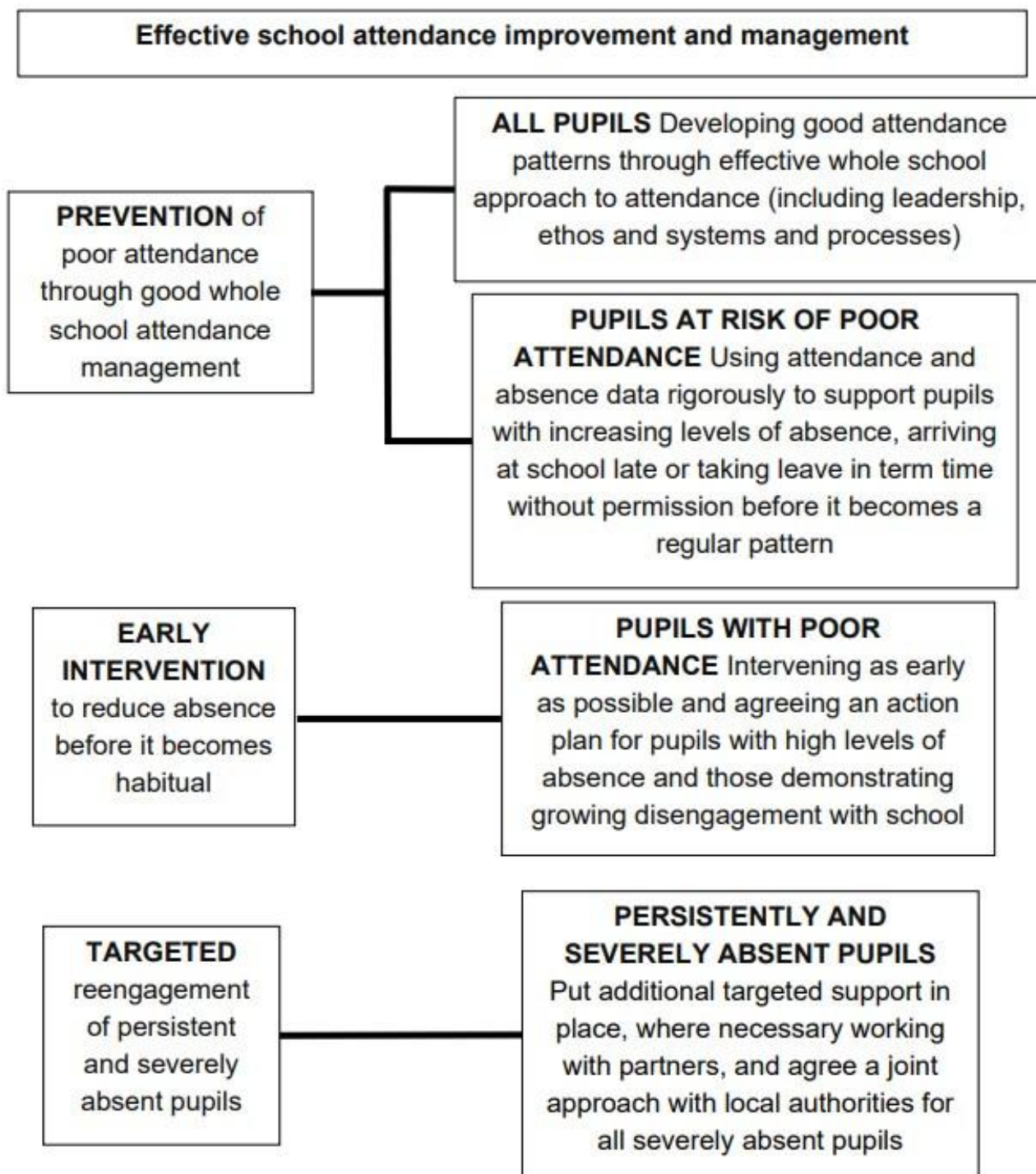
Reason for application for leave of absence – please complete this section

.....
.....

Decision: Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Date _____ Signed _____

Reason:



Compliance statement: This policy is written with regard to the DfE’s Working together to improve school attendance (Aug 2024). The school complies with requirements on daily data sharing, attendance codes, and penalty notice processes.