



The Birley Academy
A L.E.A.D. Academy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

*L.E.A.D. Academy Trust
2023/24*

POLICY/PROCEDURE MANAGEMENT LOG

Document	Attendance Policy
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Aims

1. At The Birley Academy we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our culture and ethos that values good attendance, including by:
 - 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.
 - Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons

Legislation and Guidance

2. This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education 2022 (DfE) updated September 2023, 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 [The Education Act 1996](#)
 - Part 3 of The Education Act 2002 [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 2007 \(and 2013 amendments\)](#)

Roles and Responsibilities

Academy Trustees are responsible for:

3. Ensuring that there is a Trust-wide strategy to improve attendance.

Academy Governing Bodies (AGBs) are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of good attendance across the academy's policies and through its ethos
- Making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher

4. The Headteacher is responsible for:
 - Implementation of this policy at the academy.
 - Monitoring absence data and reporting it to governors.
 - Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
 - Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
 - Authorising the Local Authority issuing of fixed-penalty notices where necessary.
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The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

5. The designated senior leader is responsible for:
- Leading attendance across the academy
 - Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
 - Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
 - Having an oversight of data analysis
 - Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Nathan Bulley and can be contacted via nathanbulley@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk or 0114 2392531.

The Senior Attendance Lead

6. The academy's senior attendance lead is responsible for:
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
 - Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
 - Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher.
 - Ensuring all suitable attendance routines are completed.
 - Working with all stakeholders to tackle persistent absence.
 - Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
 - Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
 - Line management of the Attendance Support Team.

The Senior Attendance Lead is Samantha Calvert and can be contacted via 0114 239 2531, extension 2278; or samanthacalvert@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Class Teachers/Form Tutors

7. Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the office within the first ten minutes of every lesson/registration period.

Attendance Support Team

8. Attendance Support Staff will:
- Record all absence details received on a day-to-day basis and log it on the academy MIS system.
 - Track register completion and absence from lessons, ensuring safeguarding routines are followed for all pupils.
 - Build constructive relationships with parents/carers to encourage positive family support and involvement.
 - Proactively identify pupils at risk of disaffection through liaison with internal and external staff.
 - Support targeted intervention and support.
 - Provide the pastoral team with more detailed support on attendance.
 - Follow-up on suspected truancy by liaising with parents.
 - Conduct home visits with parents to establish clear plans for attendance intervention.

Parents/Carers

9. Parents/carers are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
 - Call the academy to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when their child is expected to return.
 - Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and update accordingly.
 - Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day.

Pupils

10. Pupils are expected to:
- Attend every day on time.
 - Attend every timetabled session on time.

The Local Authority

11. The Local Authority is legally obliged to:
- Provide a strategic approach to improving attendance and ensure that it is a key focus of all frontline services.
 - Provide access to the School Support Team
 - Enable opportunities to share effective practice.
 - Work with academies to issue legal interventions.

Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

12. At The Birley Academy, we keep an attendance register of all pupils on the academy roll.
13. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:
- Present
 - Attending an approved off-site educational activity
 - Absent
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
14. 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.

DfE attendance codes can be found in appendix 1.

15. We will also record:
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- 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 due to exceptional circumstances.
16. We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
 17. The school day at The Birley Academy starts at 8:25am. Pupils must arrive by 8.20am every day.
 18. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.10am.
 19. The register for the second session will be taken at 11.55am and will be kept open until 12.35pm.
 20. The register will be taken in the first 10 minutes of every lesson. Students arriving 5 minutes late will be registered as 'L' and will receive a detention.

Unplanned Absence

21. The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the Academy and selecting option 1, leaving a voicemail if the Attendance Team are unable to answer. They should follow this procedure on each individual day of continued absence.
22. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless The Birley Academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, or attendance falls beneath 92.5% (unless there are proven mitigating circumstances). If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, The Birley Academy may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
23. If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

24. Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy. The evidence must also be emailed to the Attendance Team via attendance@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk.
25. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of the academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.
26. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for any other type of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the date or dates of the requested absence.

Lateness and Punctuality

27. A pupil who arrives late:
 - Before the register has closed, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code 'L'
 - After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code 'U' which signifies that the pupil arrived after the official closing of the register and denotes an unauthorised absence.
 - Any pupil who is late for school without a valid and approved reason will be issued with an on-the-day after school detention running from 14.50pm - 15.20pm.

Following up Unexplained Absence

28. Where any pupil we expect to attend does not attend, or stops attending without reason, the academy will:
- Text and/or call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the academy may visit the pupil's home or contact emergency/social services.
 - Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
 - Identify the correct absence 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 academy will consider involving the School Attendance Support Team and or other frontline services.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

29. The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via the reporting system.
30. Parent/carers can request a copy of their child's attendance certificate at any time by contacting the attendance team.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term-time Absence

31. Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. The Birley Academy will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. As Headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.
32. 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 (Appendix 3), emailed on request to attendance@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk. It is also available on the school website. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
33. Valid reasons for authorised absence may 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 academy 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 academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
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Pupils with Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

34. In line with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority (LA) have a duty to: “make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.”
35. This applies to children and young people who are of statutory school age and who:
 - are permanently resident in the local authority and
 - who are not in school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative due to ill health and
 - where the health need and necessity for absence has been validated as necessary by a medical doctor
 - will not receive a suitable full-time education unless the local authority makes arrangements for this.
36. Health problems include disabilities, physical illnesses, injuries and clinically defined mental health problems. Suitable medical evidence will be required, including details of the health problem, how long the condition is expected to last, the likely outcome, and a treatment plan. This must be provided by a suitable medical professional, normally a hospital consultant. However, where specific medical evidence is not available quickly, the local authority will liaise with other medical professionals (e.g. the child's GP), so that provision of education is not delayed.

Children Missing Education (CME)

37. The academy recognises that early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk, and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in education. The academy will:
 - Follow absence procedures.
 - Make a referral to CME if information is obtained that the family have moved out of area, with no forwarding school/academy.
 - Make a referral to CME if a pupil has not returned after 10 days and there has been no contact with the family, despite efforts made by the academy.
 - Work closely with the Children Missing Education (CME) Officer to identify a pupil's current whereabouts/destination.
 - Agree with CME an appropriate time and category to remove the child from the academy roll. This includes those children and young people who are expected to move swiftly into appropriate provision; this is in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
 - Contact the Local Authority via CME after 20 school days of absence, to discuss whether to remove a pupil from the academy roll. The final decision about removal from the academy roll remains with the Headteacher.
 - The academy will create a 'lost pupil' record on the national Lost Pupils Database School to School (s2s) to assist future schools and Children Missing from Education Officers to identify and locate children.
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Legal Sanctions

38. The academy can refer parents to the local authority where they do not ensure that children attend school. Parents can be fined for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
39. If issued with a fine, via a fixed penalty notice (FPN), each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
40. 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
 - Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
41. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

42. Process-
 - Step 1: If your child's attendance falls below 95%, a letter will be sent home notifying you of this and offering support.
 - Step 2: If your child's attendance falls below 92.5%, you will be invited to a supportive meeting with a member of the Attendance Team to discuss the way forward.
 - Step 3: If your child's attendance continues to decline following this meeting and support offered, you will be invited in for a meeting with the Senior Leader responsible for attendance. A parental agreement will be signed in this meeting.
 - Step 4: If there is a continued decline, the case will be discussed with the Local Authority's Attendance and Inclusion team and we may issue a legal warning. Any further time off may result in us consulting with the Education Welfare Service and processing penalty notices or court proceedings if required.

Engagement Cohort

43. A strategy used frequently in relation to persistent or severe absence is the engagement cohort. This is a separate facility for specific students that allows curriculum adaptations enabling them to gain access to educational provision in a more bespoke form.

Rewards

44. Celebrating success is a key aspect of school life at The Birley Academy. There will be many ways in which students will be rewarded for attendance to school. Pupils need to be recognised for not only good attendance but also, as appropriate, for improved attendance.
45. Attendance will be celebrated- both formally and informally- in form time, assemblies, celebration events and parents' evenings. Rewards will operate through a variety of school initiatives. These include communication with home, certificates, prize draws, rewards activities in school and trips and visits. School trips and events are a privilege. Pupils must ensure they have good attendance to take part.

Attendance Monitoring

46. All pupils' attendance is monitored daily and every week using data analysis from the electronic register.
47. Our academy operates a 'Key Cohorts' system of graduated support depending on need.
48. Alongside this a step procedure is used to communicate with parents/carers and students to provide support to improve attendance.
49. Statistical evidence for the whole academy and for individual classes is analysed every week and shared with staff.
50. Home visits will be made in a targeted process for students who are absent from school to support parents and students with ways to improve their attendance percentage and any personal circumstances, collect medical evidence and offer support when required.
51. If a student is absent from school for 3 days or more, it is required that we conduct a safe and well check.

Monitoring Attendance

52. Monitor attendance and absence data trends on a weekly, half-termly, termly, and yearly basis in relation to whole cohorts and distinct pupil groups.
53. Monitor individual pupil attendance, absence and punctuality on a daily and weekly basis.
54. Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
55. Pupil-level absence data will be collected daily and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying academy-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

Analysing Attendance

56. The academy 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.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

57. The academy will:
 - Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors/Deputy Heads of Year and other academy 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.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

58. 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.
 59. The academy will:
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- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Use all available legal means at the academy's disposal to challenge situations where there is severe and persistent absence.
- Raise concerns with the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Specialist, and Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker, to seek support for involvement for families with children at risk of being persistently absent.
- Targeted daily telephone calls are made to absent students to offer support and discuss any concerns.
- Regular parental meetings are arranged to prevent ongoing absences.
- We monitor these students closely to prevent escalation throughout our attendance step procedure.
- Mentoring groups are set up with our persistently absent students to support positive engagement around school.

Truancy

60. If the student is known to have been in school, but has not attended all, or some of their lessons without reason, then they are classed as truant.
61. If this is to occur, then the truant will be placed into All Day Removal Room and serve an after-school detention on the same day. Parents/carers will be notified of the incident.
62. If the truancy persists a parental meeting will be conducted and further actions and/or strategies will be implemented to rectify the behaviour.
63. If it is believed that the truant has left the school site then, the Academy will inform the parent/carer should the student not be found. In this situation we would advise the parent/carer to contact the child themselves.
64. If the school is unable to contact the parent to inform them of their child's truancy, then messages will be left for the parent. As a school we will endeavour to try all available contact numbers on the school system to notify the parent of the truancy.
65. If no contact can be made the school may be left no other option but to contact the police.
66. In either case, the student's sanction will be similar to the previous example.
67. Sometimes parents/carers believe that their child is at school, but the student has not actually entered the building. Should this happen then, the school would naturally believe the student to be absent and would contact the parent/carer for a reason for the absence. If we are unable to contact the parent then messages will be left to make sure that the parent is aware of the absence. At this point the truancy would come to light. In this situation we would advise the parent/carer to contact the child themselves, but if they do not get any response, then we would advise that they contact the police. For this reason it is important that parents keep the school informed of any changes of contact details.

Communication with Parents

68. Attendance will be communicated to parents/carers during Tutor evenings/Parents' Evenings.
 69. Parents/carers are regularly informed about attendance issues in the school's bulletins.
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70. Attendance newsletters are sent out every term reminding parents of the Academy's monitoring procedures for attendance.
71. Letters are sent about absence and lateness, stressing the legal requirements for students to attend.
72. Parents/carers of students whose attendance is a cause for concern are sent letters to inform them of the Academy's intended actions in line with the step system.
73. The Academy will attempt to work with parents/carers to address attendance issues and make reasonable efforts to support parents/carers in getting their children to the Academy.
74. Social media, e.g. Twitter or Facebook, will be used to communicate and update parents/carers on attendance within year groups. This will be communicated on a regular basis.
75. Celebration postcards will be sent for high attendance and most improved attendance.

Policy Review

76. This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once per year by the Senior Leader responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the AGB.

Links with Other Policies

77. This policy links to the following policies:
 - Child protection and safeguarding policy
 - Behaviour policy
 - Equality policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

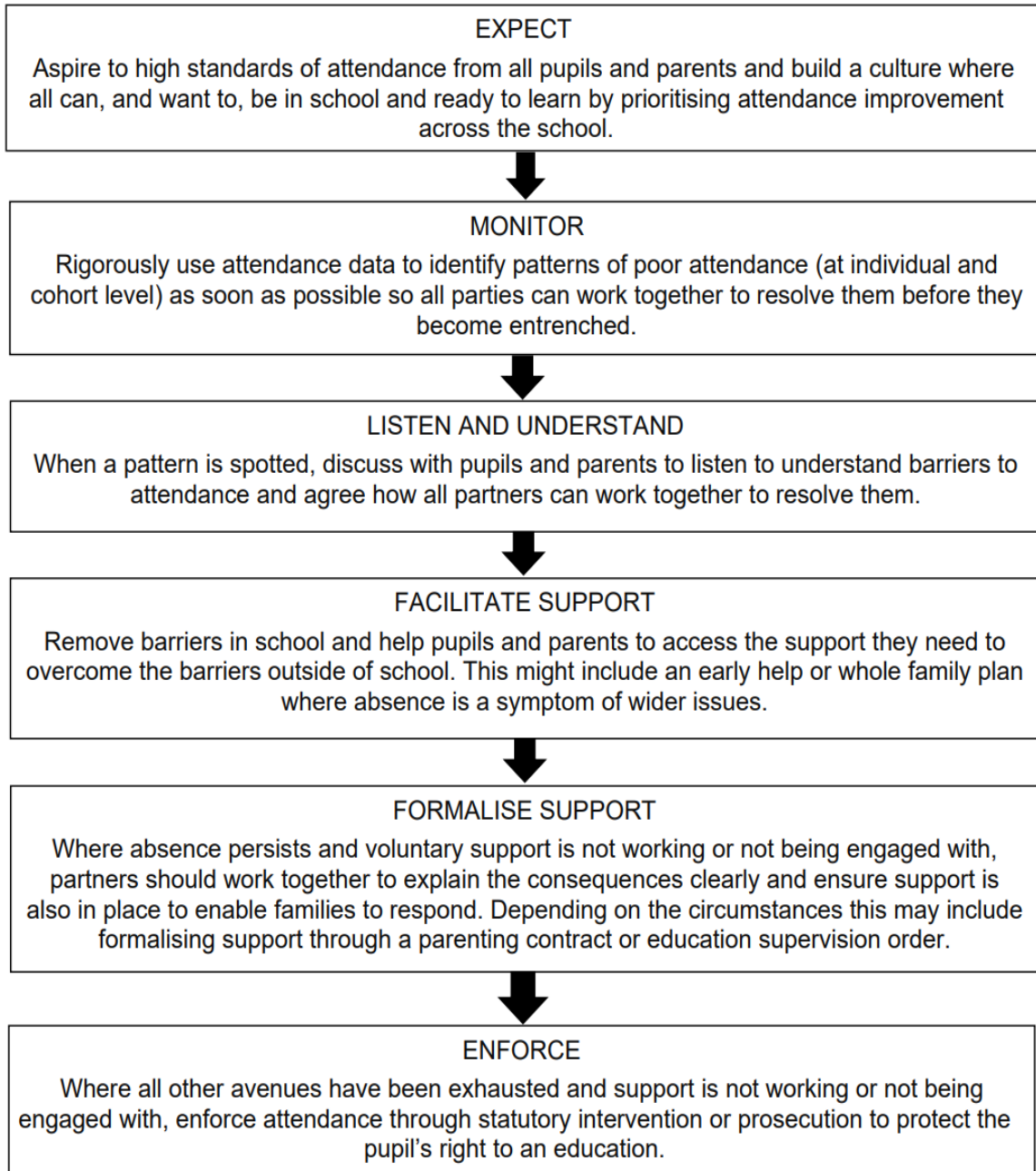
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

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

Appendix 2:

Flow chart of promoting good attendance



Appendix 3

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST (one form per family)

Before completing this form please ensure you have understood schools policy for term time leave.

Name of Pupil Siblings in this or other schools (name, dob, name of school) Current address:		Name of Parents/Carers 1:(please ensure school have correct details for all parent/carers) Parent/Carer 1 DoB: Name of Parent/carer 2: Parent/carer 2 DoB:	
Dates of leave. From		To	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifications for leave during term time should be authorised by the head teacher if the reason is considered to be an exceptional circumstance. • Reason for leave: • Do you consider there to be exceptional circumstances (please indicate)? • Yes • (please attach additional information/evidence to support your circumstances) • No • Where will you be staying during the leave period? Please provide the full address and Emergency Contact Details (UK and Abroad) UK: Abroad:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I confirm that the information on this form is true. • I agree to keep the school informed of any changes to my travel arrangements or if my child is unable to return to school on to due date. • I am aware that if my child does not return to school by the date provided that he/she is at risk of losing their place at this school. • I am aware that I may be fined and/or prosecuted for any time which my child is absent from school that has not been authorised by the Head teacher. 			
Signed by parent/carer		Print name & relationship to child	Date
For school use only		Date request received / /	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has the notification been considered by the Head teacher? Y/N - Has the notification been discussed with the parent/carer? Y/N Date: - No of days Authorised No of days Unauthorised - Date of decision letter sent to parent/carer (only if leave is to be granted): 			
If unauthorised leave is taken and this case complies with Penalty Notice criteria please forward to CILS along with Pupil/student attendance register.			
Name of school		Head teacher's signature	Date



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