

ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING POLICY


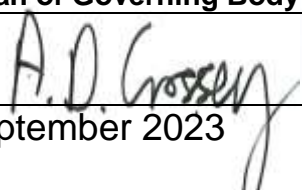


NAMED PERSON:	Emma Curtis
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Last Review Date:	September 2023
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Review Cycle:	2 Years
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Next Review Date:	September 2025
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Mr Keith Harvey Co Chairman of Governing Body	Mr Andy Crossey Co Chairman of Governing Body
Signed: 	Signed: 
Date: September 2023	Date: September 2023

Abbreviations

ATM	Attendance Manager
B4L	Behaviour for Learning
DfE	Department of Education
DHT	Deputy Headteacher
DOA	Director of Attendance
EBSA	Emotional Based School Avoidance
EHE	Elective Home Education
GCSE	General Certificate Secondary Education
LA	Local Authority
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
PCM	Parental Contract Meeting
SEN	Special Education Needs
SLT	Senior Leadership Team

1.0 This policy links to the following school policies:

- **Behaviour for Learning**
- **Anti-Bullying**
- **Learning & Teaching**
- **Safeguarding Policy**

Further guidance can be found on the Buckinghamshire Council website

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/education/education-support/attendance/>

Advice on the law in relation to attendance, national guidance and approved absence codes can also be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf

In addition, there is further documentations that outlines how all stakeholder can work together to improve School attendance.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

School attendance and attainment:

On average, pupils with higher absence over key stage 4 (year ten to year eleven) had lower GCSE attainment in 2019.

Pupils who did not achieve the standard pass (grades 9-4 in English and maths GCSEs) in 2018/19 had an absence rate of 8.8%, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved grade 4 in both subjects, and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 5 or above.

Pupils who were persistently or severely absent (who missed more than 10% and 50% respectively of possible school sessions) had lower average attainment. 35.6% of persistently absent pupils, and just 11.3% of severely absent pupils achieved the standard pass (compared to 67.6% of all pupils).

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. The Buckingham School believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Source School attendance in England, Research Briefing
Published Monday, 23 January, 2023.

The School's vision of 'Success for All', ensures that our staff will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties, in order to ensure that all students have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The Buckingham School recognise that attendance can often be a symptom of a wider issue and as a result, our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

2.0 Philosophy

We believe outstanding attendance and punctuality are vital in enabling students to make the most of their learning opportunities and thus prepare them for the demands of their adult life. Regular attendance and punctuality makes learning easier. If students are not in school attending their lessons, the chances of gaps appearing in their learning is increased. With good attendance, students will achieve better results, greater confidence, have increased self-esteem and develop useful skills for the workplace.

It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. The Buckingham School actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our students.

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive, in partnership with parents/carers and students, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

At The Buckingham School, we believe early intervention is vital in ensuring poor attendance does not become a key contributor to poor learning. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023, we recognise that Children Missing Education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming a NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Post Pandemic Expectations:

Whilst the School acknowledges that school attendance was significantly disrupted during this time, and the subsequent years after, the need for students to return to a consistent school routine is essential to support;

- Their academic progress
- Develop social and communication skills
- Support mental health and wellbeing
- Establish good habits and build resilience

3.0 The Law:

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that Parent/Carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Parent/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the School where they are registered. For educational purposes the term Parent/Carers is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have day to day child care.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that Parent/Carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Or appropriately coded if they are not in school by the Attendance Manager

4. Expectations

4.1 We expect that all our **students** will:

- Attend school regularly and all lessons in the correct uniform
- Arrive on time at 8:30am to school
- Attend all lessons promptly and in a calm and orderly manner
- Be properly prepared and equipped for the day's learning
- Be fully involved in all lessons
- Follow correct procedures for attendance and punctuality
- Understand and acknowledge that poor attendance can impact on their progress

4.2 We expect that **parents/carers** will:

- Place a high priority on attendance and achievement
- Work with the School and not against, in supporting their child's attendance
- Ensure their child is punctual to school
- Contact school, on the first morning of absence, before 8.30am whenever their child is unable to attend school and inform the attendance team by calling the absence line, email or parent mail.
- Maintain contact with the school if absence is likely to be longer than 3 days, for example, due to illness
- Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence
- Not take their child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Endeavour to keep health appointments out of school hours where possible
- Ensure family holidays are not taken in term time
- Work with the school, and other agencies if necessary, to resolve issues and ensure good attendance and punctuality
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their children attends school
- Ensure any work is completed at home during an enforced period of absence. Any additional work will not be provided, students should access any work via Google classroom, SENECA Learning or

any other online platforms used. Curriculum maps also identify what stage of learning each year group is at, during any point in the school year

- In the event of long term absence or repeated school time appointments, will provide evidence for the absence to be authorised
- Inform the Attendance Director, Form Tutor or Head of Year, of any reason or barrier that may hinder their child from attending school

It is the school who authorises any absence and not parents/carers. The Headteacher has the right to refuse authorisation of absence in accordance with Local Authority (LA) guidelines

4.3 The school will:

- Record accurately attendance and punctuality every morning and afternoon, as well as each lesson
- Initiate the first day response procedures when a student is absent without explanation
- Contact those students considered vulnerable first if they are absent
- The School will make home visits if there are safeguarding concerns, and welfare checks on those families whose child has not attended school, but have made the School aware.
- Take action on any attendance problem notified to the school
- Make referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate
- Provide early intervention on any students causing concerns with attendance
- Work together with parents/carers and students to resolve any attendance issues
- Work with students to provide an appropriate re-integration package to help return to school after long term absence
- Provide appropriate work for students who are absent from school for an extended period
- Include attendance registrations for each student when annual reports are sent home
- Acknowledge and reward students with good and improved attendance and punctuality
- Set school attendance targets and accurately complete the census when required
- Routinely remind all members of the school community around attendance expectations and procedures
- Report routinely to The School Governors
- When necessary follow statutory guidelines in addressing repeated poor attendance

5.0 Specific Roles and Responsibilities of school staff

5.1 The Director of Attendance and Attendance Manager will:

- Ensure they contact parents/carers on first day of student's absence, if not already informed, and log the information
- Communicate with families effectively and implement the appropriate interventions in accordance to the student's attendance levels
- Input information from late arrivals into Go4Schools which feeds into SIMS
- On weekly basis, produce absence report for completion by tutor. Maintain a daily log on any registers that were inaccurate or incomplete and report to DHT for them to action
- Reward those students who have demonstrated 100% or consistently high attendance over weeks, half terms and terms through House Points and/or vouchers.
- Produce data each half term as requested by SLT
- Produce data and organise PCM meetings
- Work closely with the Local Authority attendance team to ensure families are supported and held responsible for student attendance
- Produce registration certificates showing individual students' attendance to be included in annual reports and as requested by Heads of Year
- Work with the Student First Team closely where student's barriers present as multiple pastoral concerns
- Meet with Heads of Year to discuss individual attendance cases, identifying those causing concern and making interventions

- Work together with referred students and their families, as well as the school, to resolve issues of poor attendance and punctuality
- Consider referring parents/carers to the Social Services/Family Resilience team for casework if other intervention strategies prove unsuccessful or if it deems it may bring about an improvement in the child's school attendance. This may result in Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or 'Fast Track' legal proceedings. These students will be given individual Attendance Action Plans that will be drawn up in liaison with the ATM & DOA, the students and the parents/carers

5.2 The Form Tutor will:

- Set an example by having good attendance and arriving on time for lessons.
- Explain the need for and promote habits of regular attendance and punctuality with the group and individuals
- Accurately mark the register for each lesson daily (**this is a legal requirement**) only using codes ^ N or L
- Ensure absence is challenged and information is shared with the Student Office
- Follow up on any repeated or concerning absence that represents a pattern of inconstant attendance
- Identifying barriers to attendance through positive tutoring and ensuring students are accountable for their attendance
- To monitor attendance and punctuality of students in the Form, particularly those whose attendance falls below 97% but is above 94%
- Alert Heads of Year regarding any concerns about absence and punctuality if action they have taken proves ineffective
- Use the rewards and sanctions system
- Welcome long-term absentees back to the form tutor group

5.3 The Heads of Year will:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality within his/her year groups to ensure targets are met
- Ensure attendance is a regular feature in assemblies throughout the term.
- Ensure all Form Tutors are familiar with and apply the policy consistently
- Provide support for form tutors as required and hold them to account for monitoring and following up on attendance
- To work closely with the Director of Attendance to identify and reduce barriers to attending school.
- Monitor and supervise the work of their form tutors in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality
- To monitor closely the attendance of students whose attendance falls below 94%.
- Use weekly data analysis to identify individual and groups
- Follow up with students who truant lessons and respond accordingly
- Communicate with parents/carers of students who are experiencing attendance difficulties and require additional support and input
- Liaise with SLT, SEN, Inclusion and Safeguarding, when appropriate
- Liaise, when appropriate, with outside agencies
- Devise, together with parents/carers and the student, individual attendance plans where necessary e.g. for persistent lateness and/or attendance
- 4c)
- Organise work for students on long-term absence; maintaining communication between school and home
- Organise a re-integration programme for those returning from long-term absence to help catch up on missed work
- Take action following analysis of weekly attendance data
- Utilise the school's rewards and sanctions system as appropriate

5.4 The SLT member of staff responsible for: SEN alongside the SEN Manager will:

- Monitor the attendance of all students with Educational Health Care Plans
- Support the Heads of year in working with students who have very poor attendance
- Liaise with Heads of Year regarding strategies for specific students
- Support the attendance of SEN K students by working with all stakeholders

5.5 The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Help create a school ethos which promotes excellent levels of attendance
- Maintain high profile of attendance amongst students, staff, governors and parents/carers by providing where necessary:
 - INSET for staff promoting why attendance is important
 - Discussion time for attendance matters in Heads of Year meetings
 - Inspirational assemblies for use by Heads of Year in Year group assemblies
 - Half Term attendance data to Governors
- Work with Heads of Year in reviewing and developing specific rewards for promoting good attendance
- Work with Heads of Year in creating, and using consistently, a clear system of early intervention strategies for students whose attendance and/or punctuality is beginning to show signs of concern
- Conduct half-term analysis of trends and patterns of attendance and punctuality for each tutor group, year group, Key Stage and whole school. This data will include
 - Types of absences e.g. Holidays, illness, medical etc.
 - Authorised and unauthorised absences
 - Analysis also shown by gender
 - Analysis to show attendance and punctuality of students with SEN, Children Looked After and other groups as appropriate
- Keep the SLT informed on attendance matters, as necessary and provide report each half term to the Headteacher and Governors to include trends analysis using Fischer Family Trust (FFT) as a national benchmark and DfE attendance monitoring tool
- Conduct analysis of students' exam performance in relation to attendance percentage for publication in September. Provide report to Senior Leadership and Governors to include action resulting
- Ensure the attendance policy is implemented and that systems are operating effectively
- Review and update Attendance Policy, as necessary
- Hold staff accountable for accuracy of register taking

5.6 The Governors will:

- Review and endorse the 'Attendance for Learning' Policy
- Appoint Governor with responsibility for attendance
- Review attendance data termly and annually
- Set school attendance targets to reduce overall absence in accordance with "The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005" and submit them to the LA

5.7 The Subject Teacher will:

- up lateness to lessons (see B4L Policy)

6.0 REWARDS

- Rewards are effective in motivating students and encouraging excellent attendance.
- The School should follow its Rewards Policy when acknowledging positive attendance.
- Celebration of Achievement assemblies at the end of each term to present individual student certificates for 100% attendance
- Allow opportunities for those with 100% attendance or significant improvements to attend a rewards trip.

7.0 EXPECTATIONS & SANCTIONS

- Late to school- a student must fill out a lateness form at breaktime in the Student Office, failure to do so will result in an after-school detention
- If a student is late to lesson (up to 10 minutes) the teacher will issue a B2 breaktime detention, failure to attend will result in a B3 after school detention being issued
- A student more than 10 minutes late will be issued a B3 after school detention, failure to attend will result in a day in SSU- finishing at 4pm

ADDRESSING POOR ATTENDANCE:

- The Director of Attendance and Attendance Manager will monitor student's attendance and identify groups of students who are at risk of slipping under 90% e.g. Additionally, a warning letter (1a) will be sent when a student's attendance over a 3-week period is below 87%, informing Parent/Carers that their child is at risk of becoming a PA (persistent absentee).
- Students, who truant lessons will be in violation of the school behaviour ladder (see behaviour policy) and will instantly, be placed in an intervention day.
- If the student leaves the site without authorisation parents/carers will be informed by telephone as soon as the student is identified as missing. The student's behaviour will be recorded as a
- 'Serious incident' and confirmed to the parents/carers by the Heads of Year.

8.0 PARENT CONTRACT MEETINGS & FIXED PENALTY NOTICES:

- If a child's attendance is a cause for concern following a period of 3 weeks at 87% or under whilst on a parental contract or thereafter, the school will issue a formal written warning to Parent/Carers. Inviting parents to a PCM. This will allow a period of 6 weeks or half a term to improve attendance. If there are any unauthorised absences in that time a fixed penalty notice can be issued. Additionally, if attendance is deemed not to have improved sufficiently without any appropriate evidence in that period of time, a fixed penalty notice can also be issued.
- Penalty notices will be issued under the following circumstances: -

Irregular school attendance;

- School refusal
- Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Unauthorised holidays in term-time
- Being in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion during school hours
- Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued when intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve

A Penalty Notice gives the Parent/Carer the opportunity to avoid a prosecution. A £60 fine per parent/carers, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent/carers, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that Parent/Carers realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Additional information on the procedure of fixed penalty notices is in appendix 9 and also at the Buckinghamshire Council website:

https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/schools/childrens_services/social_inclusion/ews.asp

9.0 PROCEDURES TO PROMOTE GOOD ATTENDANCE

If a student arrives late, but the register is still open (DFE suggests a period of 30mins before the register is closed) they will get a late mark – L. If a student arrives after 9:30, they will be marked as – ‘U’ - and will require a reason from parents/carers. Students who arrive late can only gain access through the main reception, where they will sign in, their attendance mark will then be registered by ATM and notice entered on G4S.

Parents/carers of students who are regularly late will be informed and asked to take action to rectify the situation.

Students who need to leave school during the day, for example, to attend an authorised medical appointment, must sign out at Student Office and, on their return, sign back in. Students must not leave the school without permission, or without notification from parent/carer.

If a student is unwell during the school day, they will need to go to the Medical Officer where they will be assessed and a decision will be made if they will need to be sent home, and the Student Office will contact their parent/carer to inform them and collect them if appropriate.

Parents/carers should contact the School, via the absence phone line, Parent Mail or email the attendance manager on the first morning of absence, before 8.30am.

Students must not contact home themselves via their own phones, as this presents a safeguarding issue.

Parents/carers should maintain contact with the school if the absence is likely to be longer than 3 days. In addition, when the student returns they should bring with them a written note confirming the absence.

If the School has not been contacted on the first morning, the Attendance Manager will text Parent/Carers following the first day response process requesting a reason for the absence. The school will prioritise students they deem vulnerable, by 9:30am.

If no contact has been made an email, will be sent requesting reason for absence at the end of the day. If the absence persists the Director of Attendance and a member of the Student First Team, may carry out a home visit.

Students who miss more than 10 days of school, without any parental contact will be reported as a Child Missing (Absent) from Education with the Local Authority. Where appropriate this may also be followed up with a referral to Social Care.

Absences can only be authorised by the school and not the parents/carers. Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not “unavoidable”.

Targeted students will be supported by the early intervention strategies. Students who experience difficulties in attendance will be supported in helping them return to full time education.

10. Elective Home Education (EHE)

If a Parent/Carer indicates to the School that they are considering EHE, the school must inform the Local Authority (LA) that a student may potentially be educated by Parent/Carers.

A meeting then must be coordinated between all parties ahead of the child being withdrawn from school and the Parent/Carer confirming in writing that they are being electively home educated instead. The School will actively discourage any EHE requests and attempt to support the family in addressing any barriers to a student's attendance, however acknowledge that the decision remains with the Parent/Carers.

During the meetings, LAs, schools and other relevant professionals such as social workers where appropriate, should work to help parents and carers understand exactly what EHE means, ensure it is a positive choice taken without pressure from the school.

The School will not advise Parent/Carers to electively home educate their children. The best place for students to be educated remains in a school setting. The School will always inform social care if it feels that there are possible safeguarding concerns if a Parent/Carer chooses to withdraw their child from the school roll, in order to educate at home.

The school along with the LA and other professionals has a responsibility to help Parent/Carers fully understand the implications of withdrawing their child for EHE and their ongoing obligations, making clear that:

- Parent/Carers assume full financial responsibility,
- Their child may not be able to return to the same school if they change their mind,
- Support from schools will not continue, including any special educational needs support, and in cases where LAs are not satisfied a child is receiving a suitable education, the Parent/Carer may be issued with a School Attendance Order and / or the court may make an Education Supervision Order.

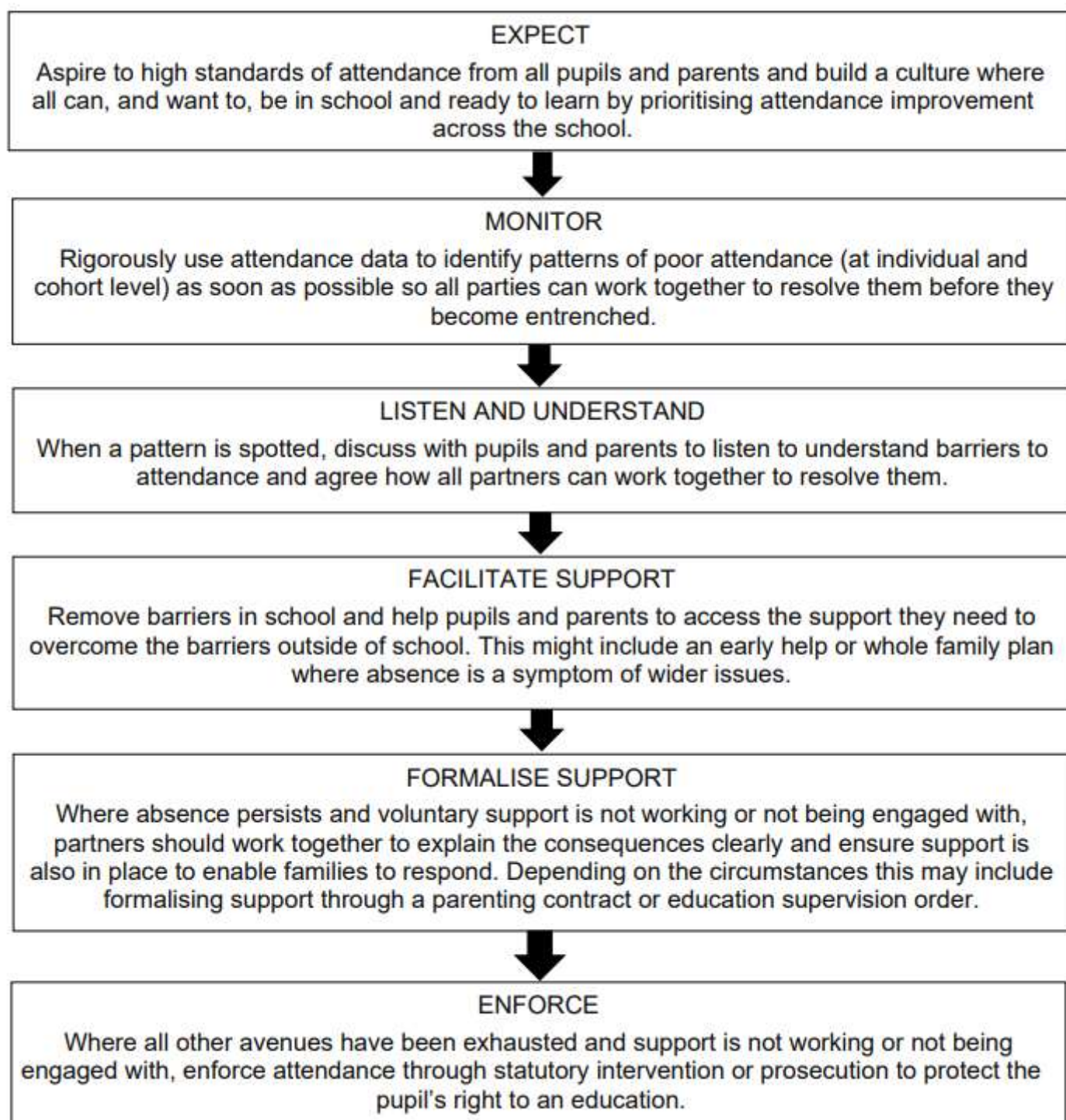
11. EMOTIONAL BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE (EBSA):

- Whilst the School acknowledges that some students find School overwhelming at times, support is in place to ensure students feel comfortable in school and develop the lifelong skill of resilience.
- There currently is no clear definition for an EBSA student
- The School will take each individual case on its own merit, but would expect any family who feel their child is unable to attend school for emotional reasons such as high levels of anxiety to provide some of the following evidence:
 - GP referral
 - CAMHS referral
 - A diagnosed mental health condition
 - Impacts of an SEN need on attendance

Appendix A

Effective School Attendance Improvement and Management

Working together to improve school attendance DfE May 2022



Appendix B

Working together to improve school attendance DfE May 2022

