

The Shared Learning Trust

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THE CHALK  
HILLS ACADEMY

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Effective Date: September 2023

Last Reviewed: September 2023

Reviewed By: Dean Chauhan and Sarah Cameron-Hall

Next Review Date: September 2024

Version: 1

## Aims

It is our aim to create a culture of excellent attendance and punctuality. We recognise that good attendance is learned behavior and as such it forms an integral part of the Academy's ethos and culture.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Our Academy will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home – school links and communication systems that can be used whenever there is a concern about attendance so that these can be effectively identified and addressed.

We will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students and strive to achieve our Academy target to be above the national attendance average.

## Legislation & Guidance

This policy is informed by of the Department of Education (DfE) guidance for attendance.

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

This policy also takes into regard of the DfE statutory guidance documents on: parental responsibility measures, children missing in education, supporting pupils with medical conditions at school, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision and safeguarding.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following Academy policies:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND)
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Statement
- Supporting Students with Medical needs
- Anti-bullying

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Academy will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.
- Expect all Form Tutors to accurately complete am registration.
- Expect all teachers to complete class registers accurately for each lesson and pm registration.
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence and follow up any unexplained absences.
- Display attendance rates around the Academy and reward good and improved attendance of all students.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to students returning after absence.
- Consult with all members of the school community and the Trust Director of Attendance and Welfare in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Regularly evaluate attendance procedures.
- Include attendance information, and related issues, in termly reports to student's parents/carers which is also accessible via the Arbor parent app.
- Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a student is absent, she/he will be missed and to recognise the needs of the individual student when planning re-integration following significant periods of absence.
- Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibility to ensure their son/daughter leaves for school on time and provide explanation for absences. They will be discouraged from taking holidays in term time.
- Issue Penalty Notices to parents who refuse to support improvement in their child's attendance in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.

### Unplanned Absence:

- All parents/carers must notify the Academy Attendance Officer (or reception) by 8.15am or as soon as practically possible on the first day of their child's absence. The absence line is open 24 hours a day. 01582 884100 – press 1 for absence line.
- If no contact is made from the parents on the morning of the student's first day of absence, the Attendance Officer will send a message via our 'SMS' system.
- The Attendance Officer and Year Teams will call all parents and carers by 11am everyday if there has been no response to our message.
- If students are absent on day 2 and 3 without communication a follow up call will be made and unannounced home visits may be undertaken.
- If the student has not returned after 5 days without communication then a secondary home visit will be made and a conversation with the Local Authority MASH Team will be held should there be any safeguarding concerns. Concerns will be raised on CPOMS.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the Academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness in which case you may be asked for medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card without which the absence may be unauthorised.
- Parents receive letters when attendance becomes a concern. This will be decided by the Attendance Officer, Head of Year or Senior Lead for attendance during meetings.
- Parents are invited to parent panels to discuss concerns re attendance. This will then lead to timely reviews for improvement.
- Fixed Penalty Warning Notices may be sent after 8 sessions of unauthorised absence-
- Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued when a pupil reaches six unauthorised absences in a six week monitoring and then monitored by the local authority for payment.

### Planned Absence:

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the Academy in advance of the appointment. This information must be sent to the Attendance officer prior to the appointment and must include confirmation of appointment

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 school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

### Persistent Absence

If a pupil's absence continues to decline after contact has been made with their parent/carer, we will consider involving The Shared Learning Trust Director of Attendance and Welfare.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. Therefore, if a pupil's attendance is less than 90% they are classified as a persistent absentee which is a cause for concern.

Pupil absence data is 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 to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## REGISTRATION AND PUNCTUALITY

### Marking of Registers:

- Staff have a legal obligation to complete the register accurately.
- This will be completed in Arbor
- All notes from students must be passed on immediately to the Attendance Officer.
- Tutors should check that notes have the name of student, tutor group and dates of absence.
- **Tutors should follow up on all absences, requesting notes in planners by calling or emailing parents.**

Teachers need to allow enough time to complete their registers electronically in their lesson

**.All Form Tutors must complete AM registration by 8.50am.**

**All KS3 TUTORS must complete their PM registers by 1:10pm**

**All KS4 form tutors must complete their PM registers by 12:40pm**

### Morning Registration (form times)

Students, who arrive at their form group after **8:43am**, should be given a late mark (L) – this counts as a “present” but shows that the student did not arrive on time. Students who arrive late for PL time will be given a 20 minute after school detention the next day. If a student is late to PL time on three occasions over a two week period then they will be subject to an Academy ‘Lockdown’ for a period of two weeks.

Form Registers close at **8.50am**.

Anybody not arriving by **9.10am** will be marked absent for Form (“U”) and will sign in at Student reception.

If a reasonable excuse is not provided in writing, a late detention will be given, which will be served after school detention the following day. Students who do not attend this detention, will be seen by their Head of Year and will attend the following day in seclusion.

### Afternoon Registration (KS3 1:10pm and KS4 12:40pm)

Afternoon registration occurs during form time and is performed by their form tutor. Any students arriving after this time will be marked as ‘L’ late.

### Arrival at Lessons

If students arrive after the late bell and do not have a note from a teacher then they should be marked as late and issued with a next day detention.

### Lesson registration - Post Registration Truancy

- Class Teachers should register students in all lessons using Arbor.
- Each student must be coded either present (/), late (L) or absent (N).

- Class teachers must contact Patrol for any student who is not present in their lesson but was marked present in their previous lesson or at Form time.
- Patrol will then begin a search of the Academy for the missing students
- If the student is not located in the Academy then the Head of Year or Senior Head of Year will contact parents/carers.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Form Tutors

Tutors are the people who know the students best. They have the most contact with them and are usually aware of the outside influences. Their intervention is imperative if we are to improve attendance.

Form Tutors must:

- Give attendance/punctuality a high profile.
- Take the required actions as highlighted by the attendance tracker sent out by the SLT lead for Attendance.
- Use the Attendance tracker weekly in PL time to highlight improved and continued positive attendance.
- Celebrate positive and improved attendance during the celebrating success PL activity
- Monitor attendance and absence of all members of the PL group via the attendance tracker
- Identify any patterns of absence within their PL group and provide the appropriate support and guidance.
- Ensure HOY/AHOY are aware of any attendance issues within their Form groups
- Monitor registration via Arbor
- Pass notes from parents/carers to the Attendance office to ensure that they are coded appropriately.
- Ask students for "authorisation" notes and, if not received then call home.
- Any notes from phone calls home or absence notes should be passed to the Attendance Office promptly.

If any information raises concern of a safeguarding nature then this information will be passed to the safeguarding team immediately, for example a number of unexplained absences

### Class Teachers

Class Teachers will:

- Take a register for every lesson.
- Inform patrol immediately if a student marked present in their previous lesson or at registration is missing from their lesson.
- Follow up suspicious absences.
- Act on lateness, through appropriate conversations and letters.
- Inform admin team of any changes required to class lists.
- When requested, provide work promptly for absent students.

## Curriculum Leaders

Curriculum Leaders will:

- Ensure that class lists are updated following any changes.
- Ensure that teaching staff are taking class registers in every lesson.
- Provide work for students that are to be educated offsite. This will be coordinated by the relevant Head of Year and Assistant Head of Year.

## Head of Year and Assistant Head of Year:

- Monitor the work of their form tutors in fulfilling the above role.
- Give attendance / punctuality a high profile and include it as a standing item on the agenda of Head of Year Meetings.
- Ensure the attendance tracker is used weekly within Form time.
- Meet weekly with the Attendance Officer to analyse the attendance tracker and agree actions.
- Passing information to the Attendance Officer ensure that procedures are followed to take students off roll as soon as possible, if they have left.
- Discouraging term time *leave* and obtaining work for those students where it is unavoidable.
- With the Attendance Officer/Assistant Principal implement plans to achieve improved attendance.
- Implement the school system of rewards and sanctions (see the Behaviour for Learning Policy).
- Support/monitor the work of Form tutors. Ensure completion of electronic registration. Agree plans of action about individual students.
- Meet with parents/carers and the Attendance Officer to discuss concerns about attendance of identified students.
- Work with the Assistant Principal and the Pastoral Team to create individual packages and integration plans.
- Raise serious concerns with the Trust Director of Attendance and Welfare.
- Where attendance and absence issues raise safeguarding concerns then this information will be shared with the safeguarding team immediately.
- Complete home visits as requested by the attendance team

## Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer must:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high profile.
- Ensure weekly meetings with all HOY are conducted.
- Monitor weekly attendance, report any concerns and/or patterns to HOY/SHOY/Assistant Principal
- Post out letters of concern.
- Work with students and families where PL Tutor intervention has not had the desired impact.
- With the Head of Year, make referrals to the Director of Attendance & Welfare where planned intervention has had no impact on attendance.
- Make first day contact with parents/carers of students who are not in school and where the reason for absence is not known between 9:30 – 11:30am.
- Register students who are late. Setting consequences for lateness.
- Ensure all registers are taken correctly.
- Meet with the Assistant Principal and Director of Attendance & Welfare on a regular basis.
- Complete register totals on a weekly basis.
- Complete annual school returns to the Government.

- Meet with and calling parents for pre-referral meetings.
- Conference students with poor attendance.
- Produce reports on attendance. These include, but are not limited to:
  - Weekly list of unaccounted absences for tutors
  - 3-week “official register”
  - Letters to students requesting notes
  - Daily and weekly lateness
- Analysing attendance figures to provide useful information on attendance of individuals, groups and the whole Academy.
- Carrying out post registration truancy checks.
- Completing CME (Children Missing Education) Proformas within 5 days of being made aware when a student has left and referring to the TMPAW.
- Removing students who have left at CME completed having checked all lateness to find student whereabouts.

### **SLT Lead for Attendance**

The SLT Lead for Attendance will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high profile across the academy.
- Meet with the Attendance Officer (Weekly) and Director of Attendance & Welfare (three-weekly) on a regular basis.
- Support and monitor work of the Attendance Officer and HOY (re attendance and punctuality).
- Ensure that individual students, form groups and year groups are aware of their attendance.
- Hold staff to account regarding their statutory obligations.
- Liaise with/work alongside the Director of Attendance & Welfare in producing an annual attendance action plan.
- Is the Delegated Authority for the academy for the process of issuing Penalty Notices in conjunction with The Director of Attendance & Welfare.
- Agree Penalty Notice process alongside The Director of Attendance Welfare in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct to parents who refuse to improve their children’s attendance.
- Line manage Attendance Officer.
- Ensure CME referrals to the Director of Attendance and Welfare are made promptly by Attendance Officer, removing students from roll as soon as local authority reference number has been provided.



## The Shared Learning Trust Director for Attendance and Welfare and Team.

The Director and team will:

- Discuss potential referrals with the SLT Lead for Attendance and suggest the most appropriate course of action.
- Attend CP conferences, Child in Need, Core Group, strategy, planning meetings and MM meetings as necessary.
- Inform parents that their child is involved with the DAWO (Director of Attendance and Welfare) or AWO (Attendance and Welfare Officer) as appropriate.
- Issue Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letters to all who meet the criteria under the Local Authority code of conduct.
- Create and maintain interventions for persistent absentees.
- Meet with the SLT Attendance Lead on a regular basis (three-weekly).
- Meet with the DSL Officer where concerns arise and complete referrals as appropriate
- Feed into EHA and Pre EHA
- Complete Penalty Notice process alongside SLT lead for unauthorised absences or casework; whichever is appropriate, ensuring compliance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.
- Create and maintain all paperwork relating to the issuing of Penalty Notices.
- Track all Penalty Notices that have been issued.
- Ensure all Penalty Notices are sent to Local Authority.
- Complete all paperwork and associated evidence for unpaid Penalty Notices as required by the LA
- Oversee commencement of legal proceedings through the academy issuing of penalty notices or initiate prosecution action where the criteria of the Local Authority Code of Conduct has been met. Completing relevant legal paperwork, and referral, as requested by the Local Authority.
- Liaise with the Local Authority EWS where legal proceedings have commenced under statutory duty.
- CME visits, casework and ad hoc home visits
- Completing CME Proformas and forward to Luton Borough Council CME coordinator.
- Advise school as to best practice and new regulations regarding attendance and the relevant government guidance as and when published.
- Complete Monthly and Annual reports as requested.
- Tracking all attendance interventions utilised with appropriate outcomes.
- Provide attendance analysis reports where appropriate
- Complete the Irregular Attender Returns Form for each pupil who meets the Local Authority criteria and forward to the Local Authority EWS on a half termly basis as per the EWS code of conduct.

### PHASING IN OF RETURNING ABSENTEES

Where a student has been absent for an extended period, and if parents/carers and the child desire it, a phased return may be organised by the Head of Year in conjunction with the SLT Attendance Lead, The Director of Attendance & Welfare and other agencies where appropriate. The precise nature of this depends on individual circumstances but may, for example, include the student spending some time in the inclusion area, attending mornings only or carrying an attendance report. Close monitoring should be undertaken by the Head of Year to ensure the effectiveness of chosen strategies.

## TERM TIME LEAVE

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. The amendments remove references to 'holiday' and extended leave of absence as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The Head of School may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is the Head of School who will determine the number of school days a student can be away from school should the leave be granted. Requests for leave of absence should not normally be granted for the purposes of a 'holiday'. The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on 'holiday' during term time. The Head of School has the discretion to authorise leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance by the parents/carers that the pupil normally resides with and will need to meet the strict criteria (refer to the relevant proforma/request form). Unauthorised term-time leave may result in a penalty notice being issued for each parent per pupil.

Students whose parents/carers wish to take term-time leave should complete a request form. This is returned to the Attendance Officer who will process the request. Before a response is given the request should be passed to the SLT Lead for Attendance for approval, then to the Attendance Officer and The Director of Attendance & Welfare for monitoring and issuing of Penalty Notices.

**Retrospective leave of absence requests will not be authorised under any circumstances.**

### Looked After Children

All Looked after Children will have the designated teacher for LAC to support them, with their Head of Year as their key worker.

Where attendance issues arise with Looked after Children the Attendance Officer or The Director of Attendance & Welfare will liaise with the designated teacher for LAC to decide together how to proceed. No legal interventions can take place for LAC children as per LBC code of conduct and government guidelines.

### Religious Observance

The Academy will follow the guidelines set by the government and the Luton Education Welfare Service with regard to matters relating to religious observance and attendance.

The Education Regulations (2006) state that: "schools must authorise absence that is due to religious observance but the day must be:

- Exclusively set apart for religious observance
- Set apart by the parents/carers' religious body (not the parents/carers themselves)

If the religious body sets apart a single day for religious observance and the parents ask for 4 days leave of absence, the school is only required to allow two days per annum (one day per festival). The remainder is discretionary leave. All requests for discretionary leave must be made in advance."

Bearing the above in mind the following will apply:

- In the all cases, eg Eid, (unless advised otherwise by the EWS) one day will be authorised and coded 'R'.
- Any additional days will have to be requested in advance, and a reason for the request provided.
- The Academy will then decide whether the request is reasonable and should be granted.
- Any further days that a student takes which have not been authorised by the Academy will be marked as unauthorised absences.
- The Academy will not generally authorise additional days retrospectively.

Circumstances where the Academy will not authorise additional days include:

- To go shopping prior to the religious observance day.
- To prepare food etc. for the day.
- To 'recover' after festivities.
- To pick up/drop off relatives at the airport.

As with all authorised absence, the Academy will, wherever possible, look at the individual circumstances and may consider the student's attendance record when deciding whether to authorise additional days.

## **BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES & UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE**

- Students whose absence from the trust establishment gives cause for concern, or who are absent during the school day, are interviewed by a member of the attendance/ pastoral support team upon their return to the academy to understand the reason for their absence. Where required, parents/ carers will be invited to meet with the attendance/ pastoral support team to discuss support. Students whose attendance is at risk of becoming problematic, will have all support and intervention logged via a personalised student log on Arbor and logged on CPOMS.
- If the needs and barriers are individual to the student the support include provision of mentoring, or some other targeted support.
- Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming problematic, the Attendance Officer and the Head of Year will always seek the support of the parent in improving attendance, with the intention of working together to address any in-school barriers. A standard letter, accompanied by an attendance print out, will explain to the parent the extent of the problem and request they attend a meeting. Where possible, the parent will be made aware of the situation initially by telephone, and an appointment to discuss the problem will be offered during this initial discussion. An Attendance Action Plan may be drawn up at this meeting (See appendix 2)
- Where barriers are outside of the establishment's control, the meeting will focus on supporting parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. It is important that that actions are agreed, recorded and regularly reviewed with the student, family and services and/or organisations that have been providing the ongoing support. This could form the basis of an Early Help Plan or a referral to the MASH Team.
- Where further absence concerns arise, further action will be necessary, refer to appendix 1

- Where further support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the establishment we will work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners to establish a more formalised approach, this would include formal conversation with the senior leader responsible for attendance, the Director of Attendance and Welfare for the trust, and may include the trust's point of contact in the local authority Education Welfare Team. These meetings should clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but should also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.
- Where voluntary support has been ineffective and/or has not been engaged with or not considered appropriate, the local authority will be engaged to consider legal intervention as detailed in Section 4: Expectations of local authorities.

This could include:

- Putting formal support in place in the form of a Parenting Contract;
- The issue of a Parenting Order
- The issue of an Education Supervision Order (ESO)
- Issuing a fixed penalty notice, after a warning notice has expired, where support has not been successful, or engaged with, and it may re-engage a parent.
- Intensifying support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe and there are mitigating circumstances (below 50% attendance);
- Attendance prosecution after all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate.
- In all cases the relevant staff will monitor the impact of any interventions, in discussion with the student, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the child.

## **STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS or SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

We acknowledge that some students face greater barriers than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs or disabilities. We work collaboratively with parents to understand the barriers to attending, and where required will put in additional support to help improve attendance. In some circumstances a referral to the Medical Needs Teaching Service will be appropriate.

### **USE OF REDUCED TIMETABLES**

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is agreed by both the Principal and the parents / carers that it is in a student's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable may be considered. 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. Formal arrangements will be put in place to regularly review the impact of the time-limited reduced timetable, with the view to reintegrate to full-time education. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the Principal has agreed to a student being absent for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

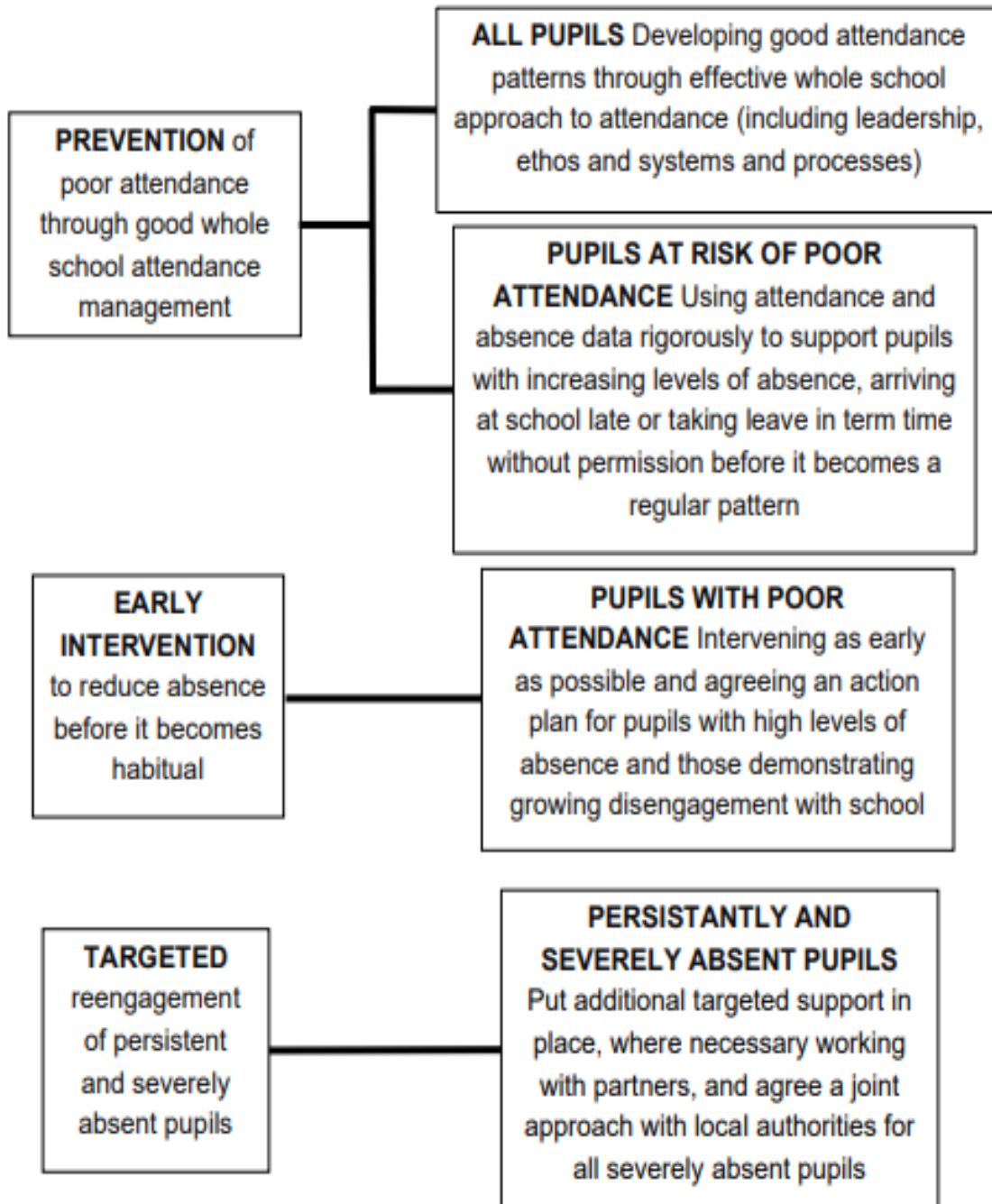
These are monitored and reported to the Local Authority.

### **Rewards and interventions:**

The Academy recognises the importance of rewarding excellent attendance. Rewards can be awarded on an individual or form group basis and could include:

- Attendance raffle
- Rewards lunch
- Kangaroo Pass
- Sports wear day
- Rewards trip
- Race to 50
- Golden Ticket
- Cookie voucher
- Attendance Leagues Tables
- Pastoral attendance intervention
- Attendance assemblies
- Positive postcard home

**Effective school attendance improvement and management**



Attendance Action Plan					
Student Name:				Form:	
Date of Meeting:		Present at Meeting:			
Address:					
Percentage Attendance:		Authorised Absences:		Lates:	
Number of Sessions Missed:		Unauthorised Absences:			
Reasons for absence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>				
The student will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>				
The parent will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>				
The Academy will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>				
Review Date:					
Signed:	Student:		Parent:		
	Academy Staff:		Position:		