

Attendance Policy



DfE no: 850/6107

Approved by: Governing board	Date: November 2023
Signed by: Jane Pratt	Position: Chair of the Governing board
Last reviewed: November 2023	Next review due: November 2023



Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed at least annually in line with DfE, HSCP, HCC and any other relevant guidance.

Author: Matthew Atkinson	Title: Headteacher	Ref:	Date: November 2023
Inclusion Education is the working name of Inclusion Hampshire CIO registered number 1162711			

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. A whole school approach	3
4. Benefits of good attendance	4
5. Achieving “good” attendance	5
6. Strategies for improving attendance	7
7. Roles and responsibilities	7
8. Procedures	9
8.1 Informing Inclusion School of an absence	9
8.2 Requesting a leave of absence	9
8.3 Daily absence procedures	10
8.4. Requesting additional support	10
9. Attendance monitoring	10
9.1 Monitoring attendance	10
9.2 Analysing attendance	11
10. Safeguarding and external support	11
11. Links with other policies	12
12. Appendices	12
Appendix A: whole school approach to managing and improving attendance	13
Appendix B: Term time leave request form	14
Appendix C: Working together to improve attendance absence codes	15
Appendix D: Inclusion School attendance support procedures	17

1. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Outline Inclusion School's and government's expectations around promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Communicate the benefits of good attendance
- Reduce unauthorised absence and act early to address patterns of absence
- Detail attendance and absence procedures
- Articulate how Inclusion School monitors and evaluates attendance
- Describe the strategies and support Inclusion School and its staff utilise to enable an improvement in learner attendance and support families

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), 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](#)
- Part 3 of [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 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. A whole school approach

Inclusion School strongly promotes, encourages and celebrates good attendance for all its learners and their families because of the benefits it provides to each learner's personal development and academic progress.

However, Inclusion School recognises that many of its learners are experiencing ongoing mental health needs, and some are in crisis. In these circumstances, each learner's attendance is viewed individually and within the context of each learner's needs and it is essential that Inclusion School, parents/carers and other professionals communicate and work together to understand, promote, improve good attendance on an individual, learner level.

Punctuality is part of Inclusion School's expectation of good attendance but as a school, with many young people being transported by Local Authority transport, this is sometimes out of their control.

Inclusion embeds a whole school approach to attendance in which all staff, learners and parents/carers understand the benefits of good attendance and believe in this mindset.

All staff are trained in valuing and celebrating good attendance and identifying persistent or declining attendance to ensure early intervention.

As a school, we work in partnership with the learner and their family to be a positive, safe and welcoming environment in which they want to be present. We communicate the benefits of good attendance throughout a learner's time and celebrate this in reports and communication with families.

However, as per our Admissions Policy, many of our learners have experienced significant gaps in education, and/or have experienced emotionally-based school avoidance. Therefore, we set expectations around attendance for each learner and allowing them the time to achieve this goal.

We want to work with our learners and their families to be able our learners to contribute to our school community but, for most, this takes patience and time for them to achieve.

During our admissions process we identify those who experience emotionally-based school avoidance, or with significant gaps in education, and work with the learner's previous school, their family and the Local Authority to support this from the start of their journey at Inclusion School to develop a bespoke attendance plan. Further details of this can be found in Section 5.

Inclusion School has high expectations and standards for its staff around attendance and punctuality as these serve as important modelling for our learners. For example, if a lesson starts at 9am, it is the expectation that a teacher/tutor is always on site to meet and greet their students.

Inclusion School's strategic lead responsible for the organisation's approach to attendance is Yvonne Haynes.

Appendix A, taken from "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" captures our whole school approach.

4. Benefits of good attendance

There are numerous benefits to a young person's mental health and wellbeing, personal, social and academic from regularly attending school. These benefits can be taken for granted and easily overlooked. At Inclusion School we feel it is important to communicate the positives of regular attendance.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the benefits for learners who regularly attend into the following areas:

Learning and attainment

- Access support to meet learning and other needs from trained teachers and tutors
- Increase self-esteem through positive recognition of effort and achievement
- Enhance literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
- Increase opportunities for college, university, employment or chosen future
- Achieved recognised qualifications
- Develop forms of intelligences (e.g. emotional, interpersonal, logical-mathematical, verbal-linguistic)
- Develop confidence through learning with a supportive network of teachers, tutors and wellbeing professionals
- Increase organisational ability
- Access greater number of qualifications through regular attendance
- Experience the transformative potential of education

Social and personal development

- Sustained engagement in education
- Experience a sense of belonging and community outside of the family

- Build and experience friendships
- Develop resilience
- Develop teamwork and understanding of others' needs and beliefs
- Develop social communication and interaction skills
- Experience positive routine and structure
- Experience a sense of achievement
- Engage with kind and nurturing adults who can be positive role models
- Develop positive routines
- Develop practical skills, such as cooking, gardening and employability skills
- Experience new cultures, beliefs and people to broaden horizons and break down prejudice and stereotypes
- Develop identity, purpose and independence

Mental health and wellbeing

- Access mental health support from experienced, trained and caring adults, including signposting to other services
- Develop strategies for positive mental health and wellbeing for success in school, post-16 education and workplace environments
- Develop the resilience and endurance to balance mental health and wellbeing with educational or other expectations (e.g. work)
- Develop confidence and self-esteem through relationships peers and trusted adults
- Experience a change of environment
- Support peers and others
- Develop friendships to challenge feelings of loneliness
- Develop positive relationships and routines (e.g. to support sleep)
- Attend a non-judgemental, accepting and calm environment
- Offer a distraction from other problems
- Engage with physical exercise to boost mental wellbeing
- Access therapeutic activities, such as art, crafts and music to benefit wellbeing

5. Achieving “good” attendance

Inclusion School's lead for measuring and monitoring attendance is Yvonne Haynes, Inclusion School's Senior Mental Health Lead and DDSL. Inclusion School knows that for its learners, who have significant gaps in education and/or have been identified as emotionally-based school avoiders, good attendance requires a bespoke, learner-centred and holistic approach.

The Deputy Headteacher and SEND Lead, Ele Murphy, will also be essential in designing a personalised support package to improve attendance. All staff will have this information shared with them to ensure a consistent approach is implemented by the whole school.

Inclusion School knows from its experience that learners with mental health needs often struggle to sustain education for 30 hours per week across a school year and require flexibility at times dictated by their mental health.

Inclusion School has worked closely with its Occupational Therapy provider (ACE) to understand our learner's emotional energy and capacity. For example, each learner's “battery” capacity can be too low due to their mental health and wellbeing (blue/red zone) to learn and succeed and requires a timetable intervention to prevent further escalation, and ultimately withdraw from education altogether.

It is therefore important that learners have the opportunity to temporarily “recharge” at home and have a mental health break to develop resilience whilst learning positive and sustainable mental health strategies long term, alongside the school’s mental health team, to ensure that they can sustain education and employment long term.

The following extract based on the expertise of Occupational Therapists (OT), why learners who are on bespoke timetable plans to how help achieve a learner’s version of “good” attendance until they can be in line with national expectations:

“ACE Children’s Occupational Therapy (OT) Team provide onsite direct and indirect support for the students attending Inclusion School. Appropriately identified students may, initially, be provided with a reduced timetable, by way of supporting their sensory modulation, anxiety management and social-emotion-communication needs. These students are likely to present with ‘behaviours that challenge’, due to previously negative experiences in an education setting, which will have led them to find the classroom environment intimidating and distressing. In these instances, by initially reducing the student’s timetable, they experience a graded approach towards increased and longer-term education attendance and engagement. This approach enables these students to gradually acclimatise to their new supportive environment and adjust to the therapeutic approach delivered by the teaching staff.”

- ACE Children’s Occupational Therapy, October 2023

The school has developed two approaches to enable good attendance, and the school works with its learners and their parents/carers to design and implement these plans.

For every learner, the school has designed a personalised “good” attendance figure based on attendance at their previous setting and previous terms at Inclusion school. This is reviewed half termly alongside fortnightly timetable reviews by the school’s SLT. The Local Authority is informed of these in regular meetings between the Deputy Headteacher (SEND) and the school caseworker.

5.1 Mental Health Individual Timetable Plans (MHITP)

Mental Health Individual Timetable Plans (MHITP) are used:

- When learners have experienced a mental health crisis
- Struggling to sustain full-time education due to feeling burnout, exhaustion or other mental health need.

How this presents depends on each learner and can range from proactive communication to prolonged and sustained emotional dysregulation even after bespoke mental health and wellbeing interventions on site.

There are two variations of these plans: on-site and off-site.

Learners may be on site but not attending all lessons due to experiencing difficulties. In these cases, learners are completing mindfulness activities, task trays or independent learning projects.

Off-site plans are for those who are struggling to manage being on school site. The Mental Health Lead, tutor or other member of staff may identify a learner struggling to attend school during contact with the learner or their parent/carer.

These plans are agreed with parents/carers and recorded and reviewed fortnightly by the Mental Health Lead. A daily safeguarding phone call takes place on the days when they are not expected to attend school.

5.2 Individual Timetable Plans (ITP)

Individual Timetable Plans are for those learners who start at Inclusion School who are anxious about returning to education. These are gradual transition plans agreed by the Mental Health Lead, Pastoral Lead, learner and parent.

On admission to Inclusion School, the school's Pastoral Lead, Jane Gardner, will home visit the learner and their family. Based on the learner and their parents/carers views, and their EHCP/background, the school will agree a bespoke transition timetable which will be reviewed every two weeks. If a learner is doing well and wishes to attend more frequently, the school will promote and encourage this.

These plans are agreed with parents/carers and recorded and reviewed fortnightly by the Mental Health Lead. A daily safeguarding phone call takes place on the days when they are not expected to attend school.

6. Strategies for improving attendance

Alongside our timetable interventions, to improve attendance long term, the following is a non-exhaustive list of strategies and supportive measures Inclusion School implements to improve attendance.

- A small step approach to returning to school, including simply “crossing the threshold”
- Implement a reduced timetable, with fortnightly reviews to look to increase the reduced timetable gradually and supportively
- Be met by a trusted member of staff at the start of each day
- Time at the start of the day (or another time during the day) with Inclusion School's therapy animals
- Accessing additional therapeutic and wellbeing support within school, such as Mental Health & Wellbeing Practitioner, art or music
- Changing classes or lessons due to difficult peer relationships (if these cannot be resolved in another manner)
- A home visit to discuss concerns and identify appropriate support
- A personal return to education plan can be formulated at home visits, identifying trusted adults, effective strategies and embedding learner voice.
- Social stories and visual timetables, led by the SEND Lead
- The Pastoral Lead, or another DSL-trained member of staff, will look, with parental/carer/learner permission, to collect the learner from their home to take them to school
- Arrange a review meeting with parents/carers, as well and with support from our Pastoral Manager
- Referrals for further support such as Hampshire SEN, Early Help Hub, Children's Services, CAMHS, GP, sleep support or other appropriate avenues of support
- Hold an Emergency Annual Review
- If following all these interventions a learner continues not to attend education, and other strategies have been put in place, and there has not been any other safeguarding considerations which have prompted a Children's Services referral, a referral to Children's Services will be made under Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Level 4 Threshold “chronic persistent absence” (HSCP Threshold Chart, July 2019)

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

7.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating Individual Timetable and Mental Health Attendance Plans in partnership with learners and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Yvonne Haynes and can be contacted via email at yvonne.haynes@inclusionschool.org.uk.

7.4 Teachers and tutors

Teachers and tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.30am each school day.

It is everyone's responsibility to share concerns around attendance of learners.

7.5 School Office Staff

School Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the pastoral lead, Jane Gardner, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

7.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends according to their timetable.

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.15am on the day of the absence ([add if your school expects this] and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

7.7 Learners

Learners are expected to:

- Attend every according to their timetable

8. Procedures

Schools have to register attendance twice per day – at the start of the day and after lunch. Registers are open for 20 minutes in the morning and 5 minutes in the afternoon but it is the expectation that these will be completed at the **beginning (within the first 5 minutes)** of these form periods.

8.1 Informing Inclusion School of an absence

If your child will be absent on a specific day, please use the following procedures to inform Inclusion School.

If you know that your child will be absent in advance (e.g. a medical appointment) please contact Inclusion School by:

- Phone on 01256 437177
- Email at absence@inclusionschool.org.uk

If your child has an unexpected absence (i.e. illness), we ask that you contact us by email or phone by 9.15am using details provided above.

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school directly on the first day of absence, and all subsequent days, with a reason for absence.

Parents/carers who do not make contact with the school regarding a child's absence and cannot be contacted by the school will have an unauthorised absence recorded for their child.

If no contact is received by 10am the school admin team will contact you directly as part of our safeguarding procedures.

8.2 Requesting a leave of absence

If you wish to request a leave of absence (e.g. holiday), please contact the School Admin Manager at paula.ball@inclusionschool.org.uk

The Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2013 regulations make clear that Headteachers can only grant leave of absence during term time when there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher will determine if the request for an absence in term time is exceptional and will consider each request on a case by case basis.

If a request is made for longer than 10 days parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the request. Similarly, if multiple short breaks are requested that add up to 10 days parents/carers will be

contacted to discuss the matter.

Senior Leaders, Trustees and Governors at Inclusion School fully recognise the stress and sensory overload that some children can experience in crowded situations from high levels of noise, needing to queue etc. When children are stressed this places additional strain on the rest of the family. This means that for some families to have a relaxing, restful holiday this needs to take place outside busy school holiday periods. Governors are also committed to granting leave of absence for family respite which is often only provided in term time.

Please see Appendix A for a copy of a term time leave request form.

8.3 Daily absence procedures

If a learner does not arrive for their session by 9.30am, and the Admin Team has not been contacted by the parent/carer to inform Inclusion School of the learner's absence in advance, it is the responsibility of the Form Tutor or Admin Team to follow the following safeguarding procedures:

1. The Form Tutor will take the register at the start of the Form period. The register is open for 20 minutes.
2. If the learner has not arrived within the 15 minutes of the registration period opening, a member of the admin team will make a call to the primary contact number. They will be marked as an unauthorised absence (N, reason for absence not yet provided) on the register until we have spoken with a parent/carer when the code will be updated to reflect the correct absence code.
3. If a voicemail facility is available we will always leave a message saying that [name] has not arrived and ask for them to return the call with a reason for absence as soon as possible.
4. All communication will be recorded, including if a voicemail message has been left.
5. The admin team will update the register with the appropriate absence code once the call has been returned with a reason for absence and update the register.

Please note the following:

- If a learner arrives late but before the register closes this will be marked on the register as L (late arrival before the register closed).
- If the learner arrives after 25 minutes this will be marked as U (arrived in school after registration closed)

To assist with this process, Inclusion School asks that parents/carers provide at least two emergency contact numbers prior to a learner starting so that someone can be contacted if a learner is absent.

8.4. Requesting additional support

If you are concerned about your child's attendance and would like to request additional support from Inclusion, please contact our Pastoral Lead, Jane Gardner (jane.gardner@inclusionschool.org.uk) to discuss how we can support you and your child.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual level

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for

concern

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data monthly to identify learners and cohorts in need of additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support for these learners and their families.

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Attendance and absence is discussed at learner review meetings, which can include Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Annual Reviews, Personal Education Plans (PEP), Autumn Term Review and any meeting requested by parents/carers or suggested by the school

School attendance is reported termly to the Inclusion School governing board and Inclusion Hampshire Trustees including the cohorts overall percentage, the number of 'persistently' and 'severely' absent, and is differentiated by category of vulnerable learners (e.g. Child Protection, SEND, EAL, Looked After Child, Pupil Premium, FSM and Looked After Children). The overall attendance percentage is compared term-on-term and year-by-year.

10. Safeguarding and external support

As outlined in this policy, Inclusion School will be in daily contact with parents/carers if their child is absent.

If Inclusion School staff are not able to contact the two emergency contacts provided during admission this will prompt an unannounced visit from a member of the safeguarding team. For Basingstoke and the surrounding area this will take place within 48 hours. This may take longer for learners living outside of this radius due to the small size of the school and may prompt a Children's Services referral.

If there is no one at home or no contact is made at the home visit the member of the safeguarding team will contact the police and make a referral to Hampshire Childrens Services.

A learner's absence could be indicative of a deeper issue. Although Inclusion School will do all it can to support a learner and their family, there will be some support that it cannot provide and require the involvement of other partners and agencies, such as Early Help, CAMHS, ALP and the Local Authority. After Inclusion School has exhausted all other options, it will seek to involve other partners, which may include legal intervention (see "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)").

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Inclusion School recognises the safeguarding risks associated with those learners who are absent from education and proactively acts to prevent this.

It is the responsibility of the Mental Health Lead to lead these discussions with the learner and their family following home visits and other communication.

Ultimately, if attendance does not improve, it indicates that Inclusion School is not the correct placement for that learner. As Inclusion School has said that it can meet the learners needs and they

are not attending it will require the SEND Lead to lead discussions with the learner, parent/carer and the Local Authority SEN department at an Emergency Annual Review.

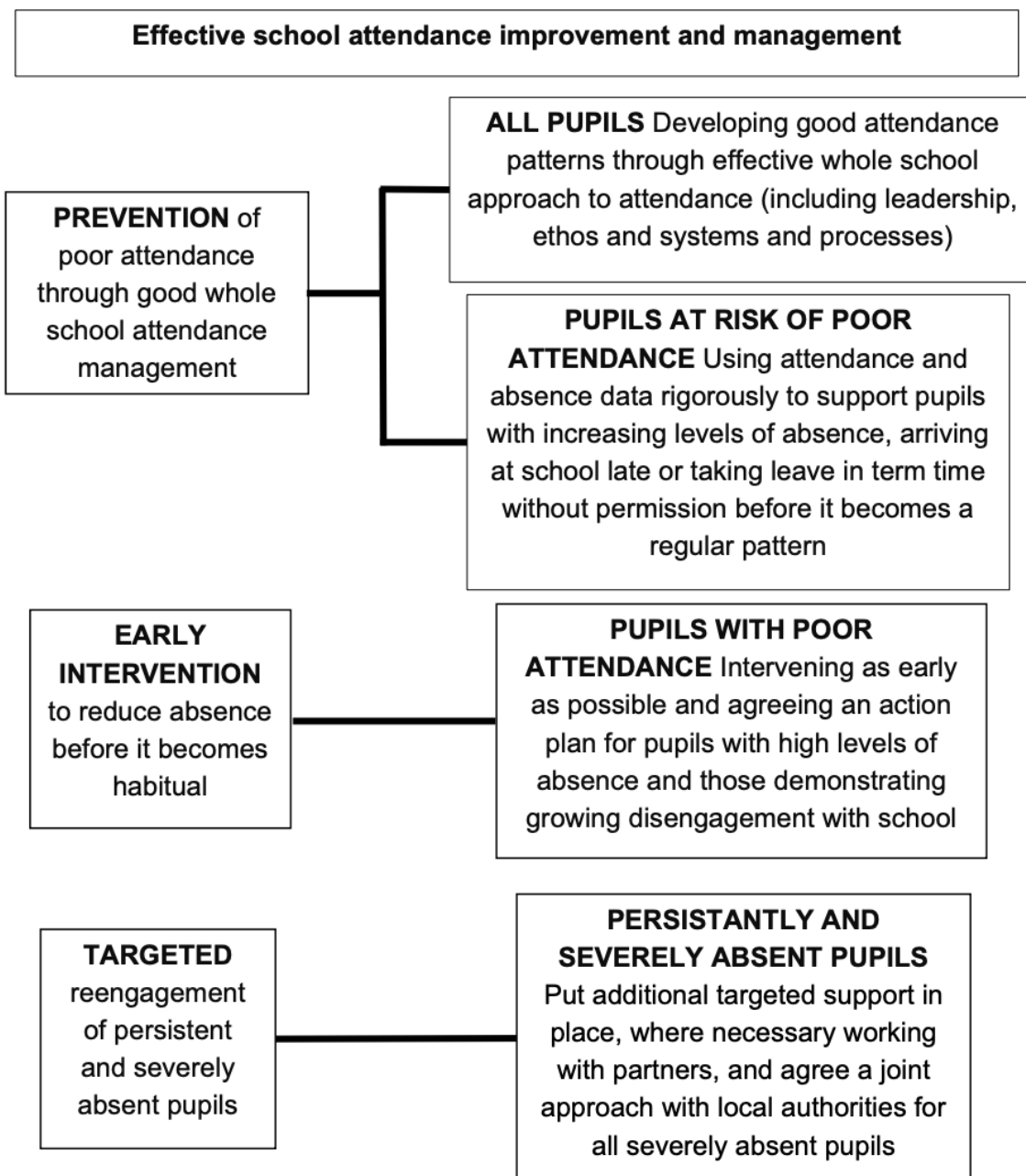
11. Links with other policies

This online safety policy is linked to our:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Remote Learning Policy

12. Appendices

Appendix A: whole school approach to managing and improving attendance



Appendix B: Term time leave request form

Inclusion School - APPLICATION FOR THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE OF A SCHOOL CHILD

TO: **The Headteacher**

I would like to request that my child _____ be granted leave of absence from the above named provision from _____ until _____ (please give inclusive dates) for the following reason: (If this leave of absence is for a holiday, it is important that you explain why it is impossible for this to be taken during the school holidays).

Signature of Parent: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

NOTE: The parent of the learner should send this application to the Headteacher or the office **before any holiday bookings are made.**

INCLUSION SCHOOL

Request for absence for the above learner is authorised/non authorised.

Reasons for non-authorisation

Signed: _____ Headteacher| _____

(a copy of the whole of this form should be returned to the parent)

Appendix C: [Working together to improve attendance absence codes](#)

Meaning	Code	Definition
Present	/\	Present in school / = am \ = pm
	L	Late arrival in school before registration closed
Authorised absence from school	C	Leave of absence granted by the school
	H	Leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school
	E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
	I	Illness
	M	Medical or dental appointment
	R	Religious observance
	S	Study leave
	T	Traveller absence
Unauthorised absence from school	G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school
	N	Reason for absence not yet provided
	O	Absent without authorisation
	U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Attending an approved educational activity	D	Dual registered at another school
	B	Off-site educational Activity
	J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
	P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity

	V	Educational visit or trip
	W	Work experience
Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Appendix D: Inclusion School attendance support procedures

Inclusion School attendance support procedures

