

# Attendance

Strategy

2023/2024

PARTNERSHIPS | OPPORTUNITY | INTEGRITY | EQUITY | EXCELLENCE | PEOPLE-CENTRED



Consilium  
Academies

*Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions*

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## 1. Aims

At Consilium Academies we believe in the unique value of each individual. Our vision, actions, and purpose are guided by this principle and a dedication to do all we can for the communities we serve and we never put a ceiling on potential. We recognise that for students to achieve their potential they must have excellent attendance and punctuality and we aspire for all students to have 100% attendance. We are unapologetically uncompromising on our attendance expectations.

We recognise that the curriculum, the liveliness and quality of teaching, the quality of relationships and of the school as a community, all directly affect students' willingness to come to school. Each of these areas will continue to be developed through the School Improvement Strategy.

We are committed to generating an ethos that encourages students to be positive in all aspects of school life and have excellent attendance. We will listen, understand, empathise and support– but will not tolerate low levels of attendance.

At Consilium Academies, positive attitudes towards good attendance will be encouraged through:

- Having high expectations for every pupil's attendance at school.
- Communicating these expectations clearly, strongly and consistently to parents and to pupils including sharing student attendance data.
- Targeting poor attendance through a staged approach.
- Raising awareness of expectations with both staff and students via assemblies, pastoral meetings, tutor group discussion.
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence, including regular communications to parents and carers stressing the importance of good attendance and our expectations regarding attendance for students not meeting the overall target.
- Creating a safe and supportive environment where all students can thrive.
- Working with external agencies, parents/carers and students in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.
- Understanding that good attendance does not happen in isolation – there is an interrelationship between attendance and the quality of the school's curriculum, ethos, behaviour and inclusivity.
- Continually pushing for whole-school improvement once attendance reaches the national average.
- See the process of securing good attendance for all pupils as an ongoing process, never something that is 'finished'.
- Celebrating good attendance wherever possible. Point 7 highlights some of the great ways we celebrate attendance at Consilium Academies.

## 2. The importance of school attendance

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7% (9 days), compared to 3.5% (6.5 days) among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% - 9 days) compared to 2.7% -5 days). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8% (17 days), compared to 5.2% (10 days) among those achieving grade 4.1. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% -17 days) compared to (3.7% - 7 days). 2 12.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent)<sup>3</sup> and

serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study)<sup>4</sup>.

The table below highlights the impact that days of absence will have on the % attendance for each student. This is useful when looking at the absence rates for a student across a term.

<b>% Attendance</b>	<b>Days Missed</b>
100%	0
99%	1.9
98%	3.8
97%	5.7
96%	7.6
95%	9.5
94%	11.4
93%	13.3
92%	15.2
91%	17.1
90%	19
85%	28.5
80%	38

### 3. The most effective schools/trusts

In building a culture of good school attendance, all schools need to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. Schools that have good attendance recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture.
- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities should include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly

to pupils and parents through all available channels. In doing so, schools should help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It should also include clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.

- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Develop strong and productive relationships with parents to ensure that the attendance of their child is of the highest priority.

#### 4. Managing and improving attendance

- Engage in data and strategies shared by the DfE on attendance and absence.
- Engage in Trust attendance reviews and develop comprehensive action plans that will be reviewed termly.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities should include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes,
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand – this will be published on the schools' websites and shared with parents at the start of each academic year, and throughout as required.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any team around the family. Where interventions are failing, work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.
- Have a clear escalation process for absence and illnesses.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for our schools to implement a temporary part-time timetable to meet student's individual needs. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour. It will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution.
- There is a need for schools to ensure that colleagues are in receipt of regular training in order to understand both the local and national context regarding attendance.

#### 5. Legislation and guidance

This strategy considers the legal requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006, Page 4 of 13

- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

## 6. Definitions

### **Definitions of Absences**

All students, parents and carers should be aware of the statutory obligations relating to attendance and punctuality. It is important to understand the difference between authorised, unauthorised and persistent absence.

#### **Authorised absence**

morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason such as illness or medical appointment that is unable to be outside of school time. Where our schools have agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day, we will treat this absence as authorised (e.g., Reintegration timetable).

#### **Unauthorised absence**

those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given e.g., truancy, unexplained absence, students kept off school unnecessarily. This type of absence can lead to the involvement of the Local Authority.

#### **Persistence absence**

An absence authorised or unauthorised which exceeds 10% or more schooling across the school year. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects. Parents may be invited to attend a meeting with relevant staff around intervention and support.

## 7. The Attendance Register

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. The law requires the register to be taken twice a day at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session. See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes. On each occasion we must record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

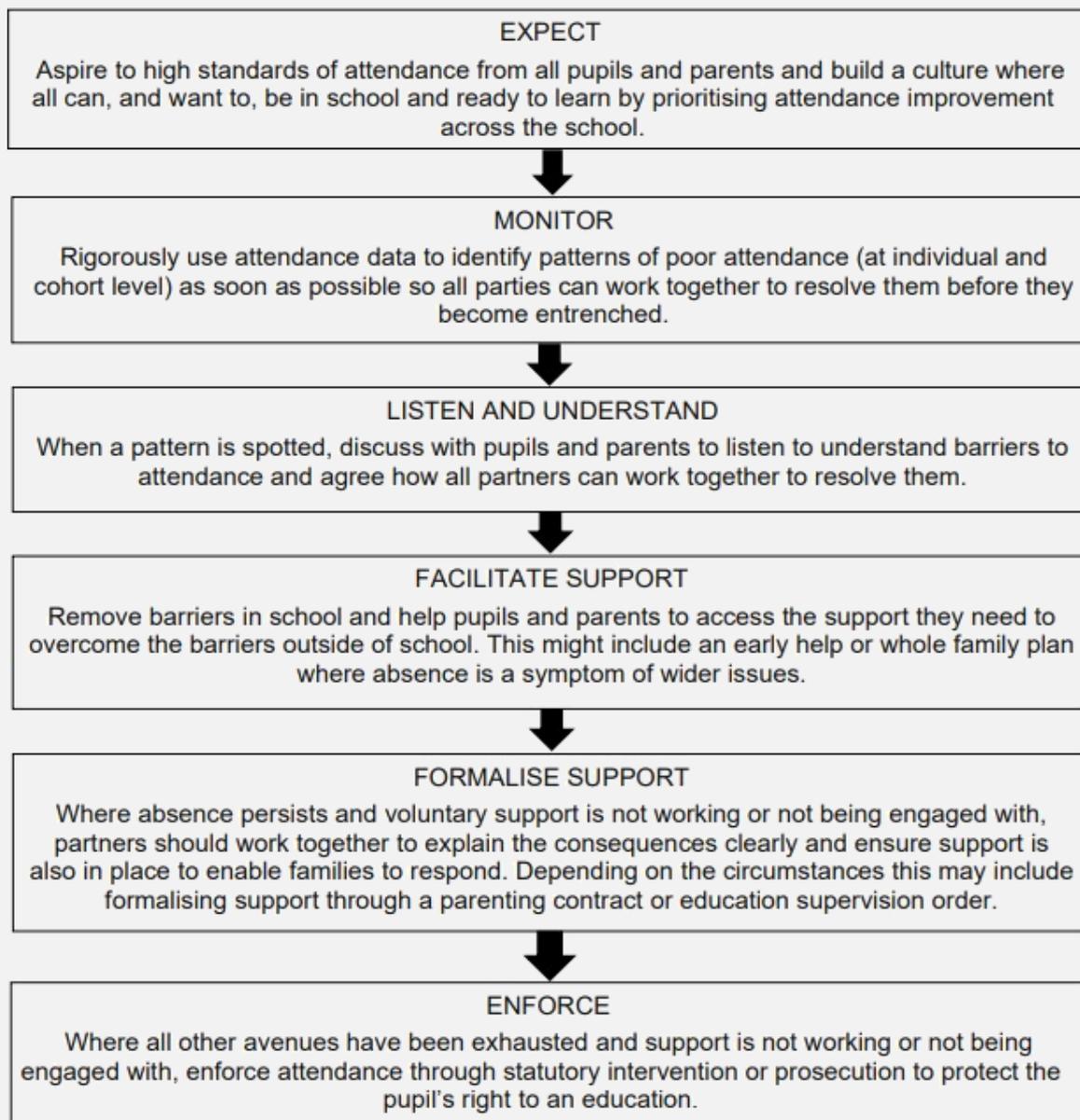
Our schools will proactively manage lateness and set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This will be the same for every session and no longer than 30 minutes after the session begins.

After this period students who arrive late will be logged on the register using the code, 'U'. Late and arrived after the register closed, this is classes as an unauthorised absence.

Our academies PM register will be taken at the start of Lesson 4 by the class teacher. The beginning of the afternoon session is marked by the class teacher during lesson 4 and recorded on the MIS system. Irregularities will be followed

up by a parental phone call as soon as possible.

## 8. Working together to improve attendance



## 9. If a child is too ill to attend school

In order to make informed decisions about their child's fitness for attending, parents and carers are encouraged to refer to the NHS guidance; Is My Child Too Ill for School? <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>.

Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may require medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent will not be accepted as medical evidence when attendance is a serious concern.

For the purpose of this strategy, 'serious concern' may be defined as: repeated unexplained/unauthorised absences or

3 x separate illnesses within a half term where no medical condition or underlying health issues have been identified.

If your child suffers from an underlying health issue or medical condition that may affect their attendance, the intervention and/or support strategies put in place may be different to the traditional interventions in place at the school.

## 10. Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

We recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year at both Trust and school level. We recognise that certain groups of pupils may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible. We will be analytical about what is stopping individuals from attending and where persistent absence appears to be intransigent, we know there are often complex factors at play – our schools will work with you to help break down barriers and offer support.

Monitoring of attendance and absence will happen through;

- Interrogating attendance data rigorously, robustly and regularly, at all levels, in all schools.
- Setting challenging attendance targets for whole academy attendance and aspiring for all students to have 100% attendance.
- Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with our local academy committee members.
- Specific measures are taken to monitor attendance at an academy and Trust wide level. These processes are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the effective safeguarding of all pupils through specific tailored interventions.
- School and Trust level attendance data is shared weekly with all school leaders to support the improvements in attendance across the Trust. Key analysis will look at:
  - Attendance and absence – year to date and weekly.
  - correct and consistent use of codes, including absence and late codes.
  - trends in reasons for absence for example -use of the C code, leave of absence and exclusions
  - trends in particular groups (SEN, PP, vulnerable, ethnic groups, gender, year groups)

Attendance data informs action planning and supports the identification of key priorities in our academies development plan and future revisions of this strategy.

## 11. Roles and Responsibilities

Consilium Academies regularly reviews the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all students of all abilities. In addition, each Academy will be supported in strategies for promoting attendance across our schools and having the highest expectations for our students.

The Trust will provide regular opportunities to bring together staff from different schools to learn from each other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions.

The schools will commit to, where reasonably possible, holding more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student. This goes beyond the legal minimum and the school will try to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

The school will take the following actions to ensure absence is challenged and to ensure student wellbeing. All actions taken and any necessary escalation will be in line with the child protection and safeguarding policy at each school.

Day 1 to 3 Absence: Phone call home daily to obtain reason for absence and wellbeing check. Contact is expected daily to confirm when the student is due back to school.

If contact is not made with a parent/carer during day 1, 2 or 3 - Eyes on the student will be expected on day 3 in the form of a home visit. If this is unsuccessful then escalation will be made where necessary.

Depending on the reason for absence and the history of absence, if a student has not been seen for 5 consecutive

days, a wellbeing check will be completed in the form of a home visit. If this is unsuccessful then escalation will be made where necessary.

If contact has been made between school and the parent/carer but the student still has not returned for 8 consecutive school days, another home visit wellbeing check will take place. If this visit is unsuccessful this may be escalated in a referral to the Police, to ensure the welfare of the student.

The strategic lead for attendance in our academies have specific responsibility to oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality through liaison with the Trust leaders, Heads of Year (HOY), Attendance and Family Welfare Teams, and the Local Authority.

The Attendance and Family Welfare Teams are responsible for maintaining an accurate attendance register via the SIMS Attendance Module and for providing attendance data as required.

HOY and the Attendance and Family Welfare Team are responsible for monitoring and improving individual student attendance through liaison with Trust leaders, Form Tutors and the Local Authority.

Form Tutors are responsible for marking registers during tutor time and informing students of weekly attendance figures as well as updating tutor notice boards.

The class teacher is responsible for taking a register during the first 10 minutes of each lesson.

Where individual attendance is cause for concern - frequent or long-term or unexplained absence - follow-up action with parents will be taken by the Attendance and Family Welfare Team or HOY, who may decide to make a referral for an Early Help Assessment through Children's Services.

Every effort will be made to encourage students with poor attendance records to return to school and when appropriate short-term re-integration programmes will be tailored to individual needs.

When a student's attendance fails to improve despite the support offered through our school staff, the academies monitoring and intervention programmes and agencies that work with us, it is likely that the student and his/her parents or carers will be referred to the Local Authority and placed on 'Fast Track' attendance process which can lead to court prosecution (where this is an available option from the Local Authority).

## **12. Celebrating Attendance**

Across all our schools we believe in rewarding good attendance and punctuality to engage and motivate our students. We have many creative and impactful initiatives and strategies to support and celebrate attendance and punctuality.

Below are just some of the ways we celebrate attendance across the Trust;

- Individual Attendance certificates - half termly, termly and yearly
- Attendance Leagues to create competition between form groups
- 100% attendance badges
- Weekly Attendance Heroes - winners are publicised on social media
- Queue jump / early lunch passes
- Praise/Achievement points for weekly 100% attendance
- Friday Campaigns to reduce absences on Fridays – positive praise for improvements week on week
- Pizza Friday
- Crunchie Friday - Rewards students under different Attendance categories every Friday
- 100% club – Students with 100% Attendance since September are included in a raffle in the Summer and positive praise posters around the school
- Xmas Discos - over 95% attendance for Years 7,8 and 9
- Summer Party for 95% to 100% attendance
- Prom incentives
- Wheel of fortune - all students in school for one full week are entered into the wheel of fortune with one winner per tutor group

- ‘Hot Chocolate with the Head’
- Buddy/peer mentor system

### 13. Punctuality

We expect all students to have excellent punctuality to support their life choices after school.

#### What are the benefits of being on time?

- It gets the day off to a good start and puts students in a positive frame of mind, so that they can make the most of their learning opportunities.
- Form time is very important. Lots of information about the school day is given out first thing in a morning and students may miss key information if they are late.
- It sets positive patterns for the future. You can't expect to keep a job if you're always coming in late;
- It leads to better achievement as students attend for the entirety of each lesson.
- It helps students develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and towards others and is a sign of good character;
- It is respectful to teachers and to peers and builds good habits for later in life

#### What happens if your child is late?

If your child is going to be late for school, where possible we encourage parents and carers to contact the school office advise us of the reason for your child's lateness. If there is a justifiable reason for their lateness the office will make a note of it and will ensure that your child is not given a 'late detention'.

If your child has a medical appointment that will cause them to be late, please let us know in advance by either calling the office or sending your child in with a note/appointment card so that we can mark it on our registers. For emergency appointments a phone call in the morning is much appreciated.

If your child is late they **must** sign in Student Services or Reception.

The Heads of Year and Attendance Officer closely monitor punctuality and parents/carers of any students who are late on a regular basis will be contacted and asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the effects of their child's poor punctuality and work with parents/carers to try and improve it by putting appropriate interventions in place.

After the registers close any students that arrive after this time (without a legitimate reason) will be given a 'U' code on the registers. This is classed as an unauthorised absence. Please be aware that the school can apply to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice for any student that receives 10 or more 'U' codes for lateness. This may result in parents/carers receiving a fine of up to £120 per parent/per child.

### 14. Holidays

Family holidays are discouraged and are not authorised by the school. The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Where the school does not agree on an absence or where the parent/carer keeps the child away from school in excess of the period agreed, that time will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Applications for leave of absence which are made in advance and are refused or parents/carers who take their child on holiday without seeking schools approval will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent/ carer in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### 15. Children Missing in Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education, which is suitable to

their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Our academies must enter students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Schools will monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that students' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the student can be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child.

This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

## **16. Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities**

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, schools should be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

This should include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.

Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.

## **17. Part-time timetables**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests or it is highlighted in an EHCP, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. 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.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a parttime timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

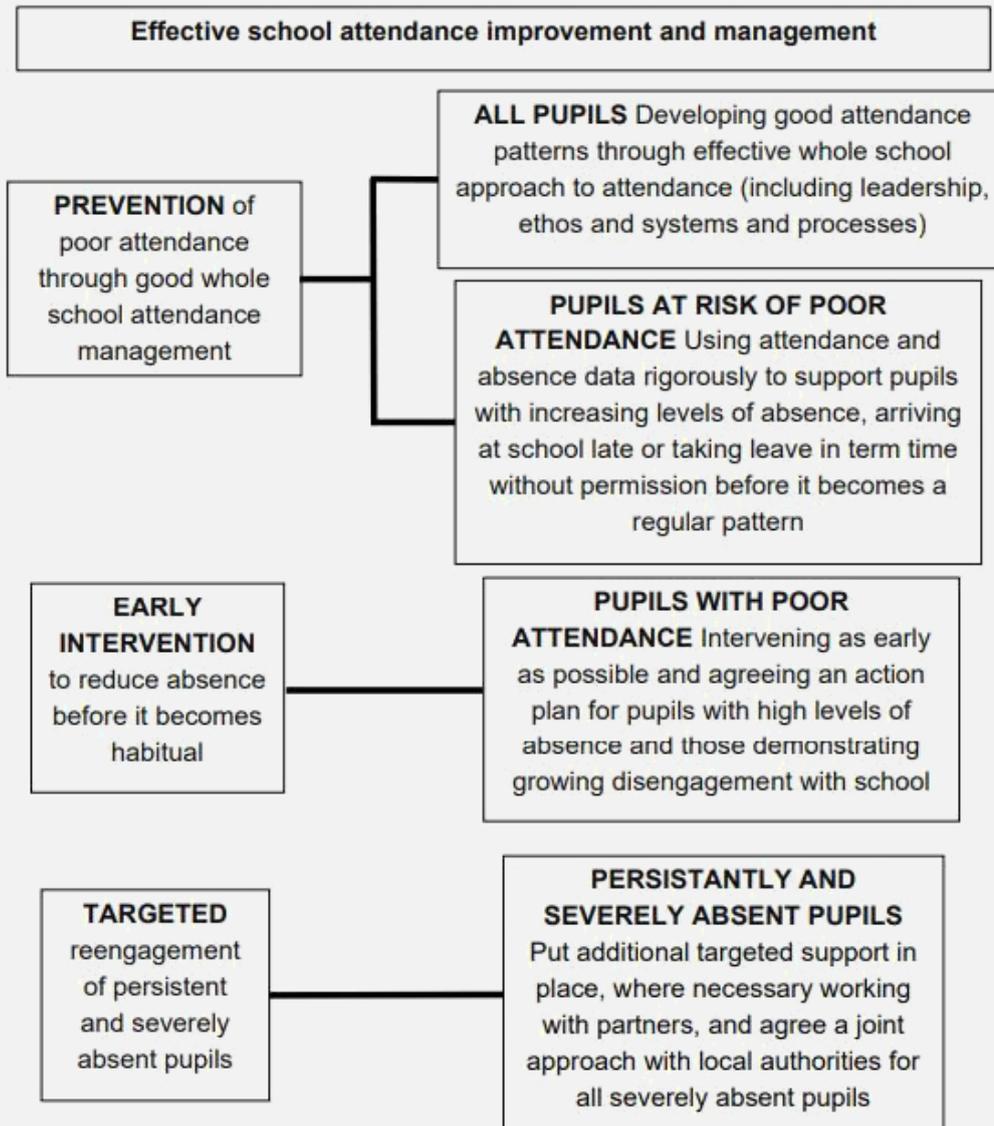
The Trust Head of Safeguarding must be informed of requests for part time.

### 18. Alternative Provision

On occasion, it is necessary for a child to attend Alternative Provision. The rationale for this must be very strong and the decision made must be beneficial to the young person involved. The Consilium School assumes full responsibility for the safety, welfare and progress of that child in provision. Regular monitoring checks are to be completed and documented by the school and the decision must be constantly under review.

Alternative provision numbers must be reported to the School Improvement Board each term.

#### Effective holistic absence management



## 19. Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

(School attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)))

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 DFE 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
<b>Authorised Absences</b>		
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
<b>Unauthorised Absences</b>		
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
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)
<b>Other Attendance Codes</b>		
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
#	Panned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

