



**IDE HILL CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**September 2024
TO BE REVIEWED: September 2028**

Signed by: *E Alexander*
Headteacher: Miss Elizabeth Alexander

Date: 03/09/2024

Signed by: *Bob*
Co-Headteacher: Miss Johnson

Date 03/09/2024

Signed by: *Anne Fletcher*
Chair of Governors: Mrs Anne Fletcher

Date: 03/09/2024

At Ide Hill CE Primary School, our ethos and vision "Do everything in love" shapes all that we do. We aim for children to form a positive attitude towards school and positive attendance. Our values of Love, Respect and Responsibility support us in our aim for all children to develop a love of God, a love learning, a love of everyone and a love of life.

Ide Hill Church of England Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all of our pupils. The Governors, Head Teacher and staff recognise that there is a direct link between regular attendance and good academic performance. It is our aim that all pupils will reach their full potential both academically and socially. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. Our school actively promotes 100% attendance for all of our pupils and we use a variety of rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play in giving your child a good start in life, and a legal responsibility to ensure good attendance. We promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies to resolve attendance problems.

Ide Hill CE School is a Rights Respecting School. We recognise the following Rights on the Convention of the child:

Article 28 : Every child has the right to an education.

Article 29 : Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 31 : Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities

Article 19 : Every child has the right to be safe and cared for.

This policy has been written in conjunction with 'Working together to improve school attendance' – Department for Education. Published: 29th February 2024. Applied from: 19th August 2024. [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) For further guidance on key areas and legal requirements, please read the whole document.

'Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn'

'Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.'

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:50 am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

It is important that school and home communicate well to support all children in attending school. If this is something parents would like to discuss further or be supported with, please contact the school office to arrange a meeting with our attendance lead, class teacher or SENCO.

The Role of the School Staff

At Ide Hill School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues and contacting parents to notify them of poor attendance.

In reference to 'Working together to improve attendance', we believe that:

'Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families.'

We will work together with families to:

'Expect: Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor: Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand: When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support: Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support: Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce: Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.'

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils as present or no reason given and the school office is responsible for contacting parents by 9:30am using the 'first call system' to find out why the child is not in school. The office will then enter the correct coding on the school system.

"Do everything in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14

The class teacher will notify the Headteacher of children whose attendance is causing concern. Daily discussions will take place, as well as weekly attendance meetings between the Headteacher and office staff which form the attendance team. Patterns and trends will be analysed in order to deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families or groups of children/classes.

It is the responsibility of The Headteacher (Attendance Officer) to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call. This is called the 'first call' system.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- If there is a safeguarding concern, a welfare check or home visit will be made with two members of staff to the family home. This is to include a DSL. A referral to the Front Door may also be made.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed termly of the child's attendance figure

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- **95 - 100% attendance:** the school office to investigate and notify the Headteacher.
- **90 - 95% attendance** – the Headteacher to contact parents.
Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice. For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

To facilitate effective working across the local authority area, schools are expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker, nursing service or the Local Authority if a child has an Education Health Care Plan if there are unexplained absences from school.'

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Lateness

At Ide Hill School the register is taken at 8:50am and 1:00pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9:15 am and 1:30 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

"Do everything in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out a period of 15 school days, during which the child must be present for every session.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (For full details please see code C1)
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable. (For full details please see part-time timetable section of 'Working together to improve school attendance – February 2024)
- Exceptional circumstances: All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. The Headteacher must use a consistent approach and is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified. If no explanation is received from a parent, absences will not be authorised

Absence during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that **will not be authorised**:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill

"Do everything in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14

- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Visiting Family
- Child's/family birthday
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' circumstances are that the absence is **rare, significant, unavoidable and short. In this context, 'unavoidable' implies an event that could not reasonably be scheduled during school holiday time.**

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence

Persistent unauthorised absence

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing. When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings need to be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Medical evidence for recording absences may also be requested should further evidence be needed or a child is off on multiple occasions.

'Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, schools can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in supporting pupils at school with medical conditions or arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'

Further information regarding Education Supervision Orders, Attendance Prosecution and Parenting Orders may be found here: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during a rolling a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks) These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

*A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

*A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)

- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Celebrating and promoting good attendance

As a school we want to proactively manage and improve attendance throughout the school and have put in a number of initiatives to do this. Including:

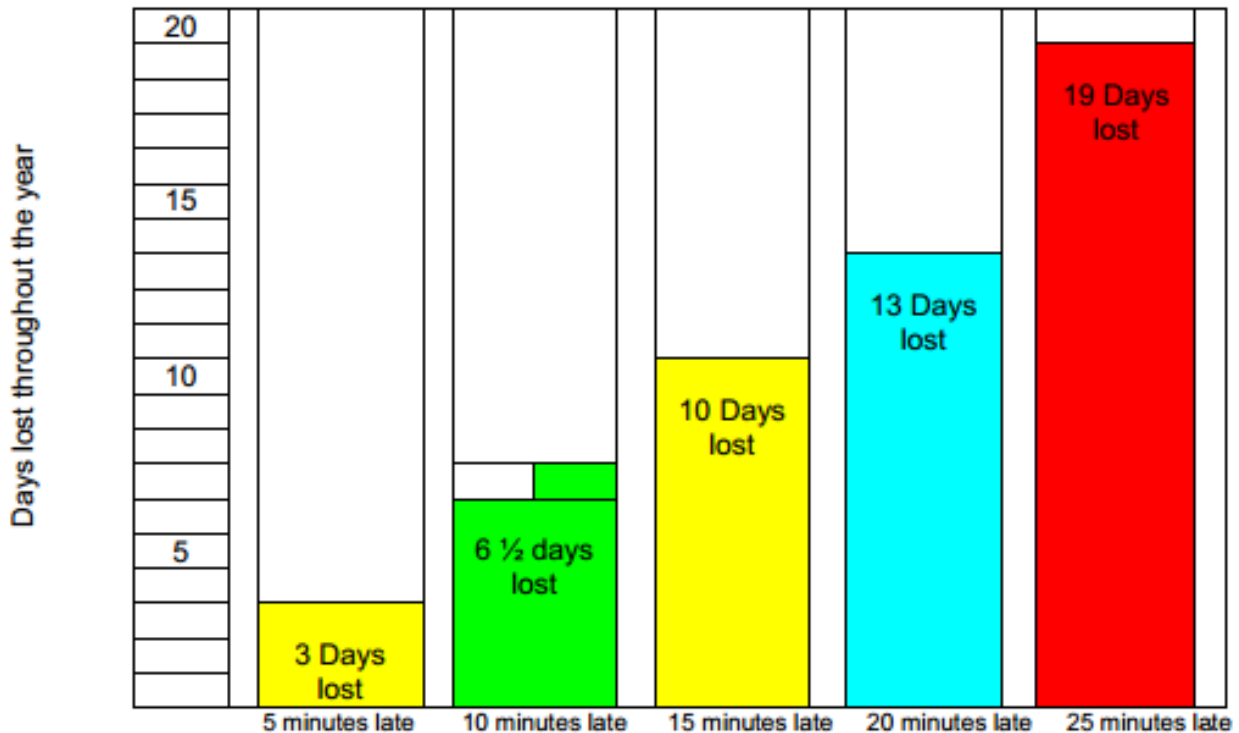
- *Weekly raffle tickets on the gate to promote being on time. This is then celebrated in our Celebration Worship on a Friday .
- *Termly 100% certificates
- *Improvement certificates
- *Termly records of attendance shared with parents
- *Class attendance shared weekly in Celebration Assembly
- *Daily colouring in charts for the term and celebrating successes along the way – rewards for certain points
- *Individual support to encourage children to come into school or be on time
- *Careful planning of the curriculum so the children are excited to be in school – trips, visits, theme days, sensory circuits, daily mile being introduced, parents invited in for events, assemblies and sharing work
- *Promoting Nurture and Well Being throughout the school – building strong relationships

Days off school add up to lost learning

175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR			175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments.		
190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR 190 days for your child's education EXCELLENT 97-100% Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start (95-96% GOOD)	10 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence Half a term missed	38 days absence	47 days absence
	180 DAYS OF EDUCATION	171 DAYS OF EDUCATION	161 DAYS OF EDUCATION	152 DAYS OF EDUCATION	143 DAYS OF EDUCATION
	Less than 95%	90%	85%	80%	75%
	SCHOOL MONITORS Less than expected level of attendance	WORRYING Less chance of success. Makes it harder to make progress		SERIOUS CONCERN Not fair on your child. Court action	

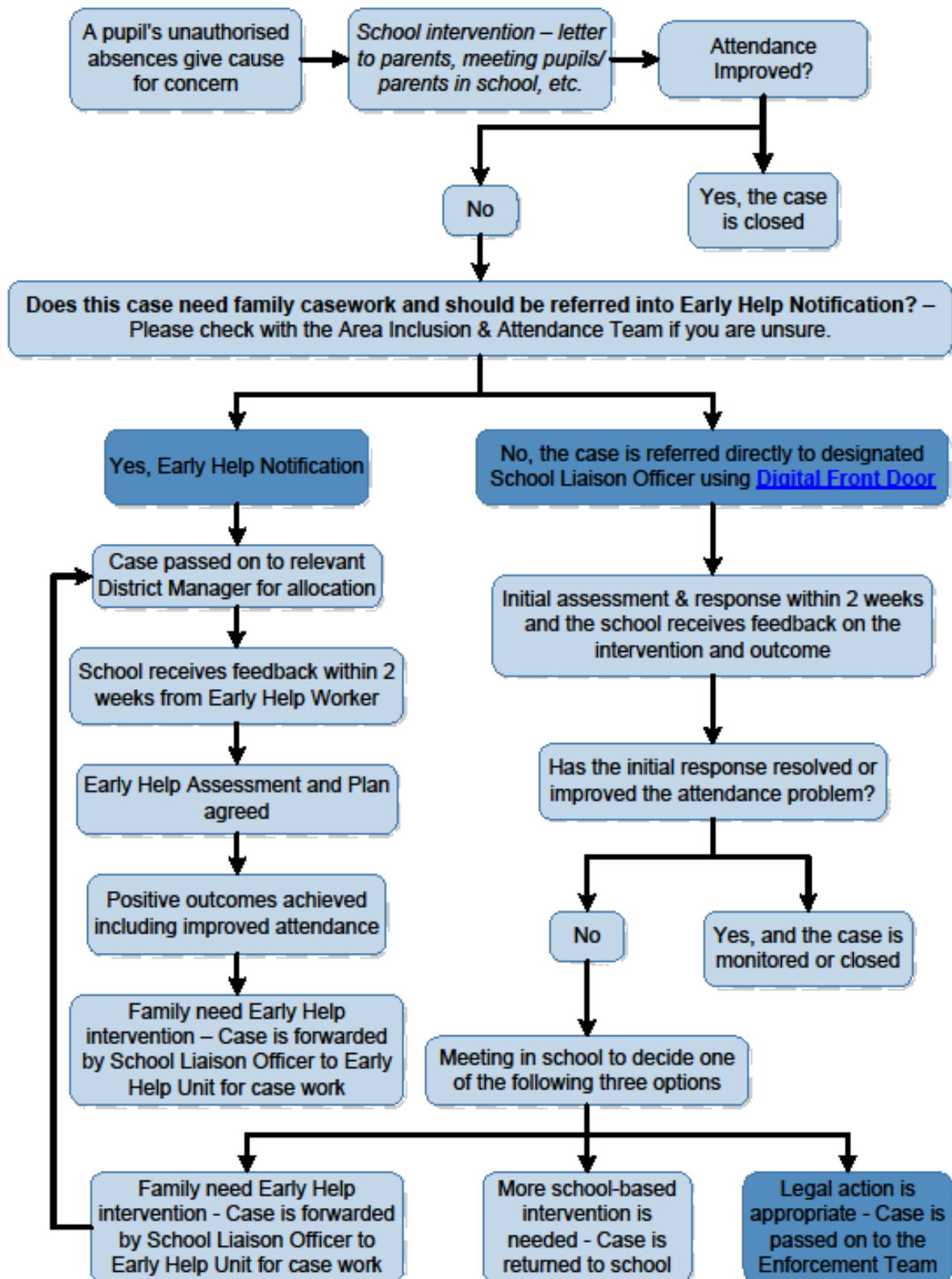
Being late also adds up to a loss of learning

- If you are 5 minutes late every day that adds up to over 3 days lost over each year.
- 15 minutes late is the same as being absent for 2 weeks each year.



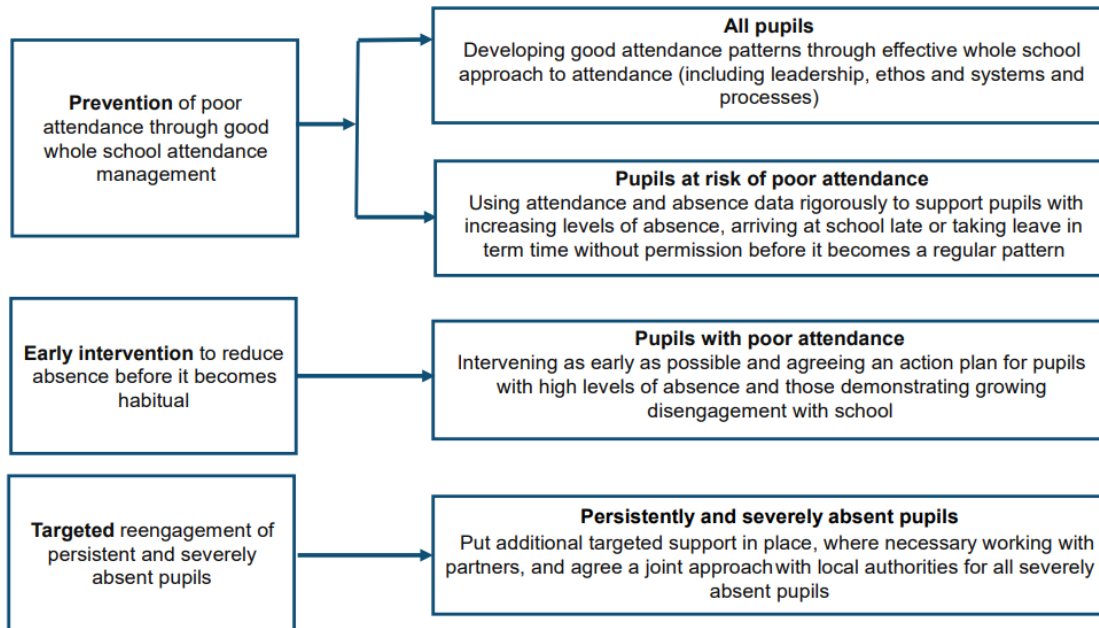
"Do everything in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

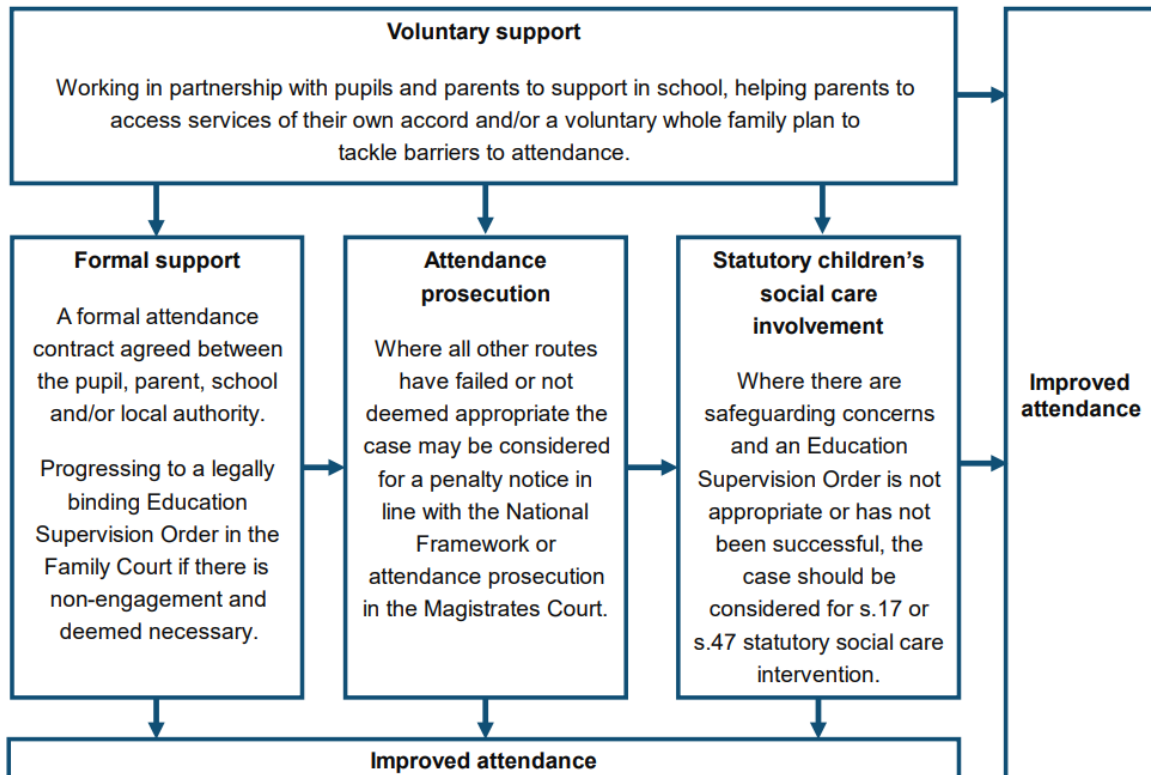


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Effective school attendance improvement and management



Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



"Do everything in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14

Other relevant legislation and guidance

Relevant legislation

[The Education Acts 1996 and 2002](#)

[The Children Act 1989](#)

[The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)

[The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Sentencing Act 2020](#)

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)

[The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)

[The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963](#)

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

Relevant government guidance

[Children missing education](#)

[Keeping children safe in education and Working together to safeguard children](#)

[Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)

[Elective home education](#)

[Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

[Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England](#)

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

[Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)

[Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#)

[Preventing and tackling bullying](#)

[Providing remote education](#)