Courtney Primary School
Nurture, Inspire, Flourish.

Attendance

Policy

Working together to develop lifelong learners with a strong sense of self who are active participants in their communities.

This version dated	Summary of changes	Next review date
Jan 2026	South Glos intervention added	Jan 2027

Rationale

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils and their parents / carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning.
- Enable pupil to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school. Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities

Being at School

School education lays the vital foundations of child's life. It has been proved that regular non-attendance can severely impede academic and social development. Parents / carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making educational success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all the school has to offer. We create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence and for our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly - on time, every day.

1. Expectations

We expect the following from all our parents/carers and pupils:

- School is attended regularly.
- Children arrive on time and are appropriately prepared for the day.
- Any problems at home which may affect their school experience are shared with us.
- The Office staff are contacted by the close of registration whenever a child is unable to attend.
- Medical appointments are made out of school hours wherever possible.

Parents/carers and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason. Support with any ongoing attendance issues.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

In order for the Attendance Policy to be successful, attendance must be a high priority for all and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education. In addition, there are specific responsibilities allocated to individuals:

Governing Body

- To attend attendance meetings as requested.
- To set an annual target for attendance and monitor progress towards it.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

Family Link Worker

- To meet with and support parents/carers to improve attendance on advice from Headteacher.

Headteacher:

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to monitor attendance, including lateness and broken weeks.

- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To ensure that the Attendance Policy is put into practice across the school.
- To meet with and support parents/carers to improve attendance as necessary.
- To liaise with the EWO or attendance officer.

School Office:

- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To follow-up immediately on any unexplained absence by contacting parents/carers.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To report to the Headteacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with the EWO.

Class Teacher

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform Headteacher of concerns in a timely manner.

Parents/Carers:

- To contact school ***on each day*** of absence. If the absence will clearly be for longer, an agreement to forego contacting school each day must be agreed with the Office staff.
- To support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.
- To make sure their child is on time.

Education Welfare Officer/attendance officer

- To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
- To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.
- To work with specific families at the request of school.

3. Procedures

- The school doors are opened at 8.40 am. Registration is taken at 8.50am. Pupils arriving between 8:50am and 9:15am will receive a late mark. Any pupil arriving after 9.15am will have been marked as absent and a relevant absence code will be recorded in the register.
- The afternoon register is taken at 1.00pm.
- Parents/carers should telephone the school before 9.10am on each morning of a child's absence.
- If no explanation for absence is received, the school will phone the parents/carers.
- Pupils who arrive late (after 8.50am or 1.00pm) must report to the school office to be signed in.
- Pupils who are leaving school before the end of the day must report to the school office to be signed out.

Illness

- Pupils are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some pupils will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We will support pupils in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on their education.
- When a student is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, a meeting will be arranged with the parent or carer to discuss this with the either the Family Link Worker or Headteacher.

Medical or Dental Appointments

- We monitor the amount of time missed due to medical appointments carefully.
- We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a student having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from parents where a whole day is missed for this reason. Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school.
- Routine, non-urgent appointments must be made after school time and during the 14 weeks of school holiday.

4. What you can do to help improve Attendance

What you can do at home

- Ensure your child attends school every day and on time.
- Make sure your child knows that they cannot have odd days off school – 'Every Lesson Counts'!
- If your child is unwell, inform the school each day they are absent unless a special arrangement has been made. Seek medical advice if your child is frequently too ill to attend school.
- Don't keep your child off longer than necessary. The Office staff can provide you with the recommended times infection may spread for the common illnesses.
- Don't take family holidays in term time.
- Keep the school informed if there is anything worrying your child.

5. How to make a request

Requests for leave for a child during term time must be made in advance and in writing to the Headteacher by the adult with whom the pupil normally resides. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all.
The Headteacher will only approve the request in ***exceptional circumstances*** (see below).
Unauthorised leave of absence will be reported to the Local Authority and may lead to prosecution under The Education Act 1996 (see Section 11 below).

6. Term time leave of absence

From September 2013, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 removed provision for Headteachers to grant term time leave of absence in ***'special circumstances'*** and only allow leave to be granted in '***exceptional circumstances***'.

The government has not defined the 'exceptional circumstances' referred to in the 2013 regulations other than it is a 'one off' life time event - this does not include family holidays.

Each case will be considered on an individual basis but, as a guide, the following will not be considered as 'exceptional':

- Relatives coming to visit.
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad.
- Family day trips.
- Visiting family/friends who have different half terms or holidays.

If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorised.

Examples of Authorised Absence

Sickness (if absences are excessive, a doctor's note will be required).
Emergency medical/dental appointments.
Days of religious observance.
Exceptional family circumstances (e.g. bereavement).
Approved sporting or musical activity/competition/examination.
Fixed term exclusion.
Attending a close family member's wedding (the day itself), a funeral or bereavement

Examples of Unauthorised Absence

Frequent absences attributed to minor ailments
Shopping
Birthdays
Day trips
Looking after siblings or sick parents.
Holidays

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance data will be collected twice termly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with:

- broken weeks;
- Monday and Friday absences;
- lateness;
- periods of extended absence;
- periods of un-authorised absence;
- all children with attendance between 85% and 95%.

This data will be discussed with the EWO/attendance officer as part of the regular termly meetings.

The Headteacher and EWO will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend an Attendance Target to the Governors.

(See appendix below)

Attendance which is Cause for Concern

At the start of each term parents/carers of all children will be sent a standard letter informing them of their child's attendance for the preceding term(s), and, where appropriate, include the number of broken weeks and lateness. If a child's attendance is giving cause for concern the Family Link Worker will be asked to discuss with the parent /carer the reason for poor attendance and discuss support strategies which could be implemented to improve the attendance of the individual pupil. If, following the meeting, attendance does not improve the Headteacher with the support of the Education Welfare Officer/attendance officer may call the parents to an Attendance Panel Meeting and Educational Welfare Support procedures may be implemented.

Punctuality

- Pupils who arrive late to registration are recorded as L (late before registration closes.) Pupils should be in school for the start of Registration at 8:50am.
- Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the school and letters sent to parents/carers. Persistent late arrival will result in parents and pupils being asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher.

- If a student arrives after the register has closed at 9:15am, this will be recorded as U (unauthorised late arrival.)

Unauthorised sessions can result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

Broken Weeks
Broken weeks can be equally as damaging to your child's education as poor attendance. For us, this will become a cause for concern as follows:-
From September to Term 2 & 3 - 4 broken weeks, **From September to Term 4 & 5** - 6 broken weeks, **From September to Term 6** - 8 broken weeks

8. Reporting to Parents and Carers

As well as the termly Attendance letter, there will also be a statement in each child's Annual Report about attendance for the end of the academic year.

9. Penalty notices

What is a Penalty Notice?
Penalty Notices were introduced under Section 23 (1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to address unauthorised absence from school. It is a fine issued by South Gloucestershire Council to parents/carers of a child who has failed to attend school regularly and whose absence is unauthorised.

It does not require the parent to attend court but is an alternative to prosecution in the magistrate's court. Parents/carers who pay the fine in full within the time limits cannot later be prosecuted for the offence to which the Penalty Notice relates (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Why have Penalty Notices been introduced?
Reducing absence from school is a key priority of the government and local authority because missing school may limit a pupil's attainment, disrupt school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour.

When might a Penalty Notice be issued?
A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent/carer when more than 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised holiday are recorded and:

a) the parent has not informed the school, **or**
b) the leave was not authorised, **or**
c) the child did not return on the agreed date

The final decision about when to issue a Penalty Notice will rest with the Head Teacher who will take individual circumstances into account.

Penalty Notices may be issued to one or both parents/carers regarding each of their children if more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence accumulate in a 7 week period (i.e. 70 sessions of possible attendance at school). A session is a morning or an afternoon. Any person with day to day care of the child may be issued with a Notice; this could include grandparents, step-parents and partners.

If a child is absent for 10 sessions, we may request the parents/carers supply a sickness certificate.

Penalty Notices cannot be issued:

- If the request does not comply with the South Gloucestershire Code of Conduct.
- If the child is not of statutory school age.
- If the child is in the care of the local authority (unless the pupil is still living at home).
- If there is no evidence that the school made the parents aware that a Notice may be issued.

Courtney Primary will request South Gloucestershire Council issue a Penalty Notice if:

- a child is absent from school for over 5 school days, and
- the absence has not been authorised

Courtney Primary will advise South Gloucestershire Council to issue a Penalty Notice if a child is absent from school for over 5 school days and the absence has not been authorised.

How much is the fine?

This fine equates to **£160 per child** if paid within 28 days of issue. For a first penalty notice issued in relation to absences taken on or after 19th August 2024, the amount will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21days.

If a second Penalty Notice is issued, within 3 years of the date of issue of the previous Penalty Notice, to the dame parent in respect of the same child, the Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160. There will be no reduction if the Penalty Notice is paid within 21says. This will apply even if the previous Penalty Notice has been issued by another local authority.

If the threshold for issuing Penalty Notice is met for a third time (or subsequent times), within three years of the first Penalty Notice being issued, a third Penalty Notice cannot be issued. Instead, alternative action will be considered, which may include prosecuting a parent for the offence of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. This will apply even if one, or both, of the previous Penalty Notices were issued by another local authority.

NB None of this money goes to the school.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal against the Penalty Notice but if you believe it to be incorrectly issued to you, you should contact the Senior Education Officer immediately. If you believe you are not guilty of the offence and therefore decide not pay the Notice, you have the right to represent your case at the Magistrates Court but you should seek legal advice before making this decision.

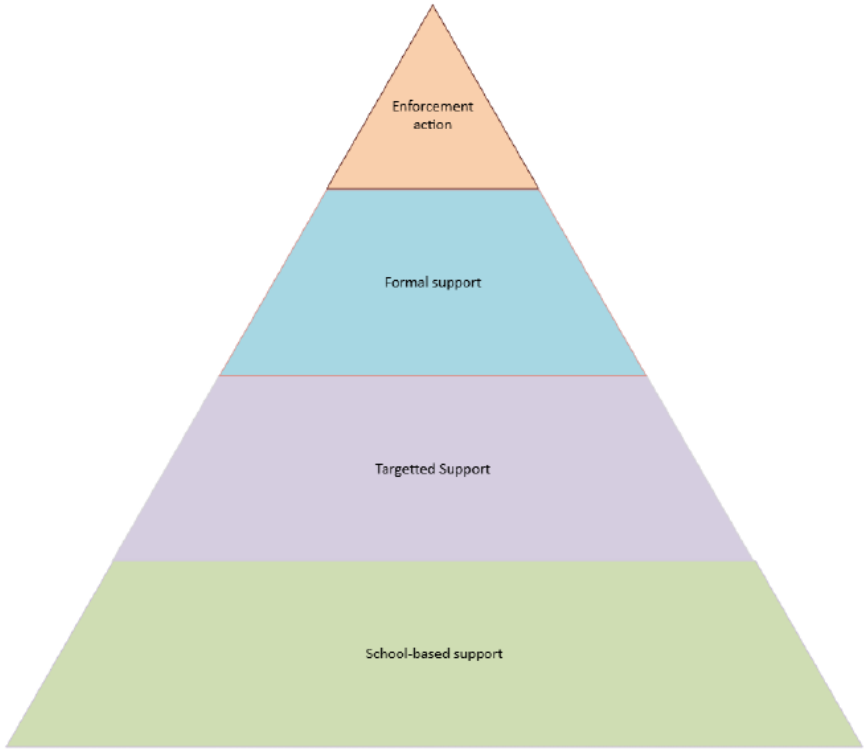
What happens if I do not pay?

If you have not paid the Penalty Notice in full before the 21 days allowed, the authority is required to commence legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

If proven, this could result in a fine of up to £1,000 under Section 444 (1), a Parenting Order or other sanctions at the Magistrates disposal. You are strongly urged to seek legal advice if you are considering not paying the Penalty Notice.

Appendix

South Gloucestershire Staged Intervention Approach



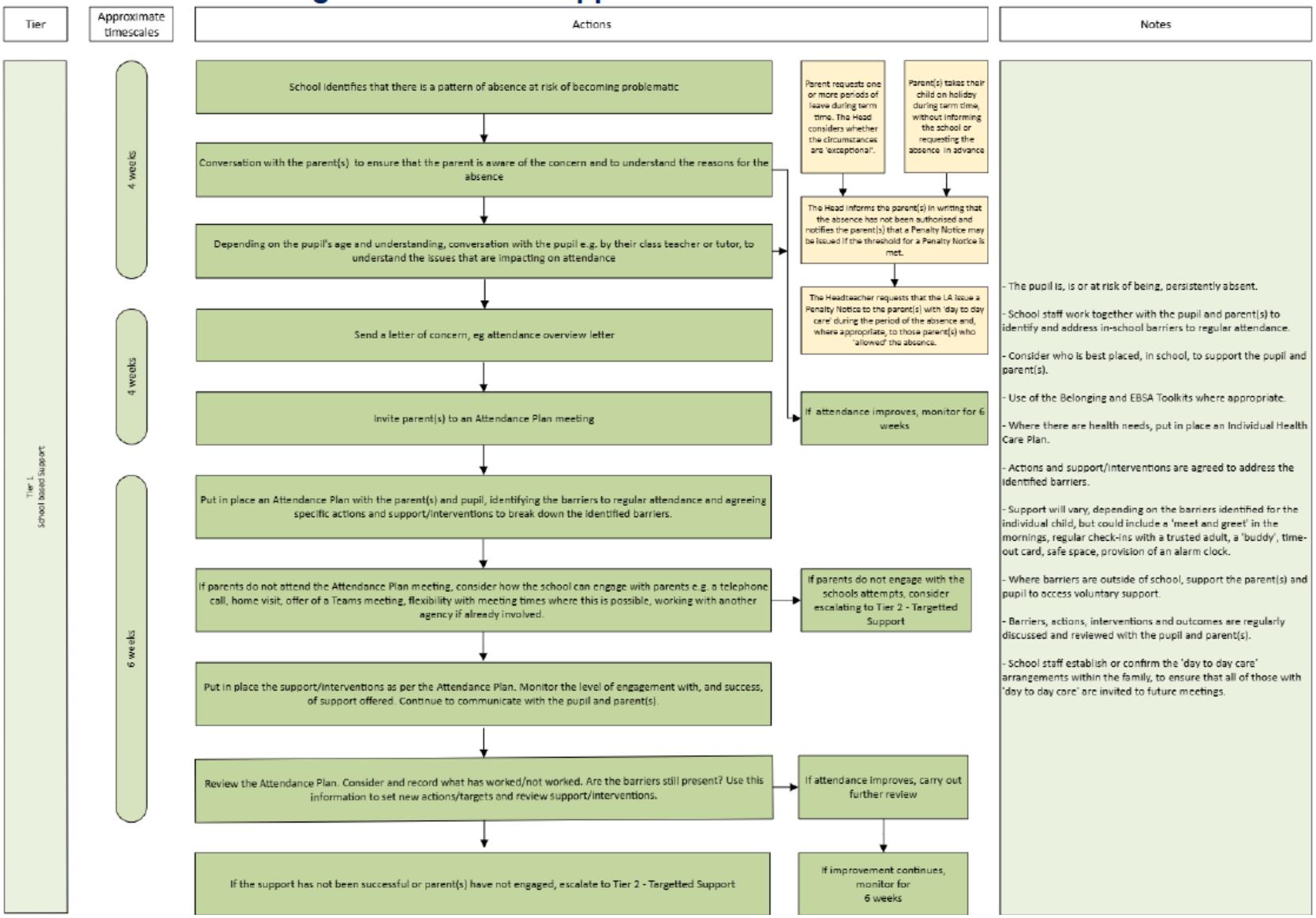
Tier 4 - Enforcement Action
Statutory enforcement action taken by the LA.
This may include:
An application for an Education Supervision Order
Prosecuting parents for failing, or knowingly failing, to ensure their child's regular attendance at school

Tier 3 - Formal Support
Use of formal processes to improve school attendance.
This may include:
Attendance Contract (and review)
Education Welfare Officer intervention (traded or private arrangement)
Consideration of a Notice to Improve (where the threshold for a Penalty Notice has been met and appropriate support has been offered and either not been engaged with or has not been successful)

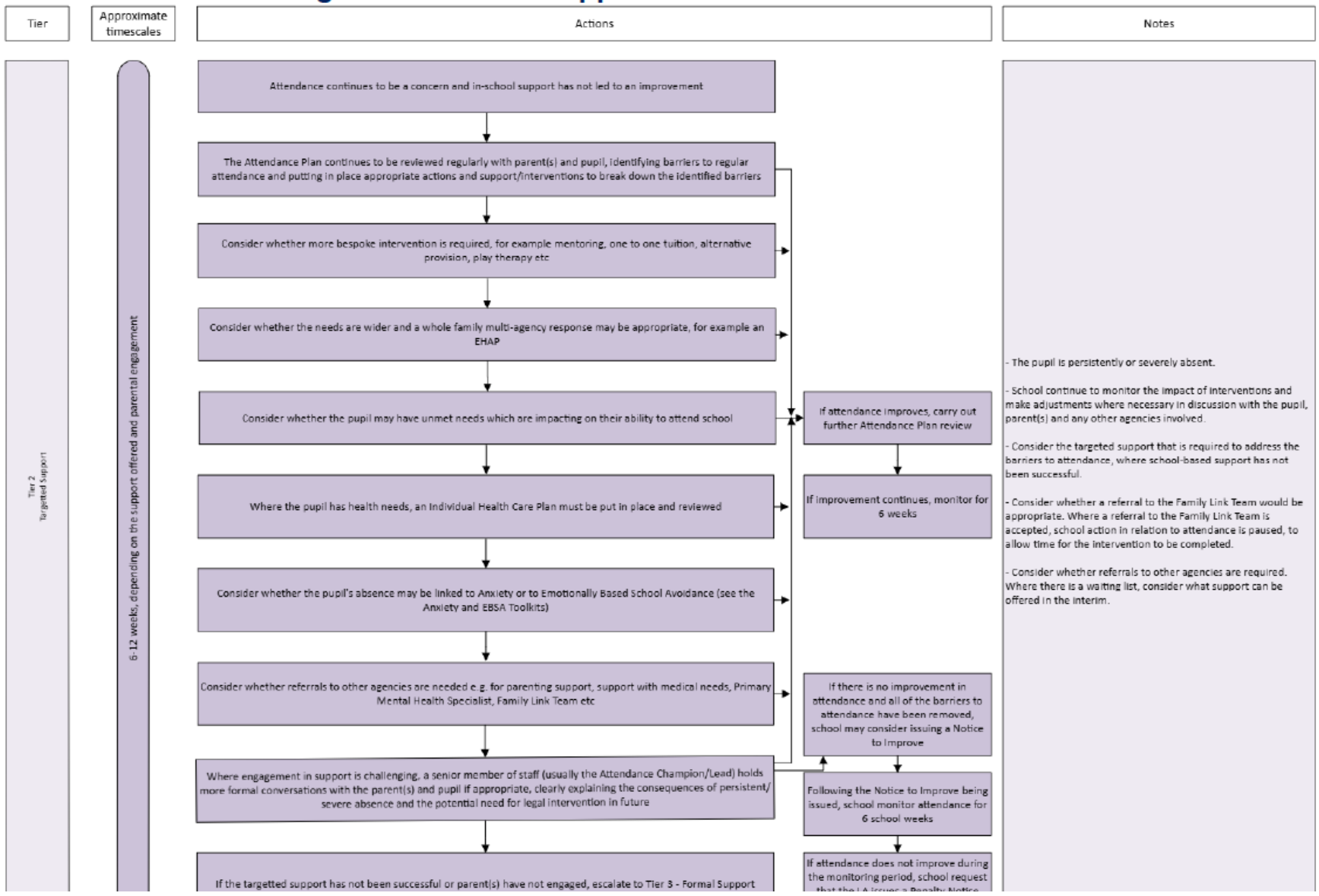
Tier 2 - Targetted Support
Specific targetted support to address the barriers to attendance.
This may include:
Attendance Plan and review(s)
Intervention from Education Welfare (whether traded or private arrangement)
Where there are health needs, an Individual Health Care Plan
Consideration of an EHAP where more than one agency is involved
Referrals to outside agencies, which may include the Family Link Team

Tier 1 - School based support
Early identification of patterns of absence or lateness, identification of barriers to attendance and school-based support to address barriers and improve attendance.
This may include:
Early conversations with the pupil and parents to establish the reason for absence and barriers
An attendance overview letter identifying the issue and offering support
An Attendance Plan and review(s)
Signposting to outside agencies, where the barriers are outside of school
Use of the Belonging and EBSA toolkits
Consideration of a request for a Penalty Notice where the threshold for a Penalty Notice has been met and support is not appropriate (e.g. in the case of an unauthorised holiday in term time)

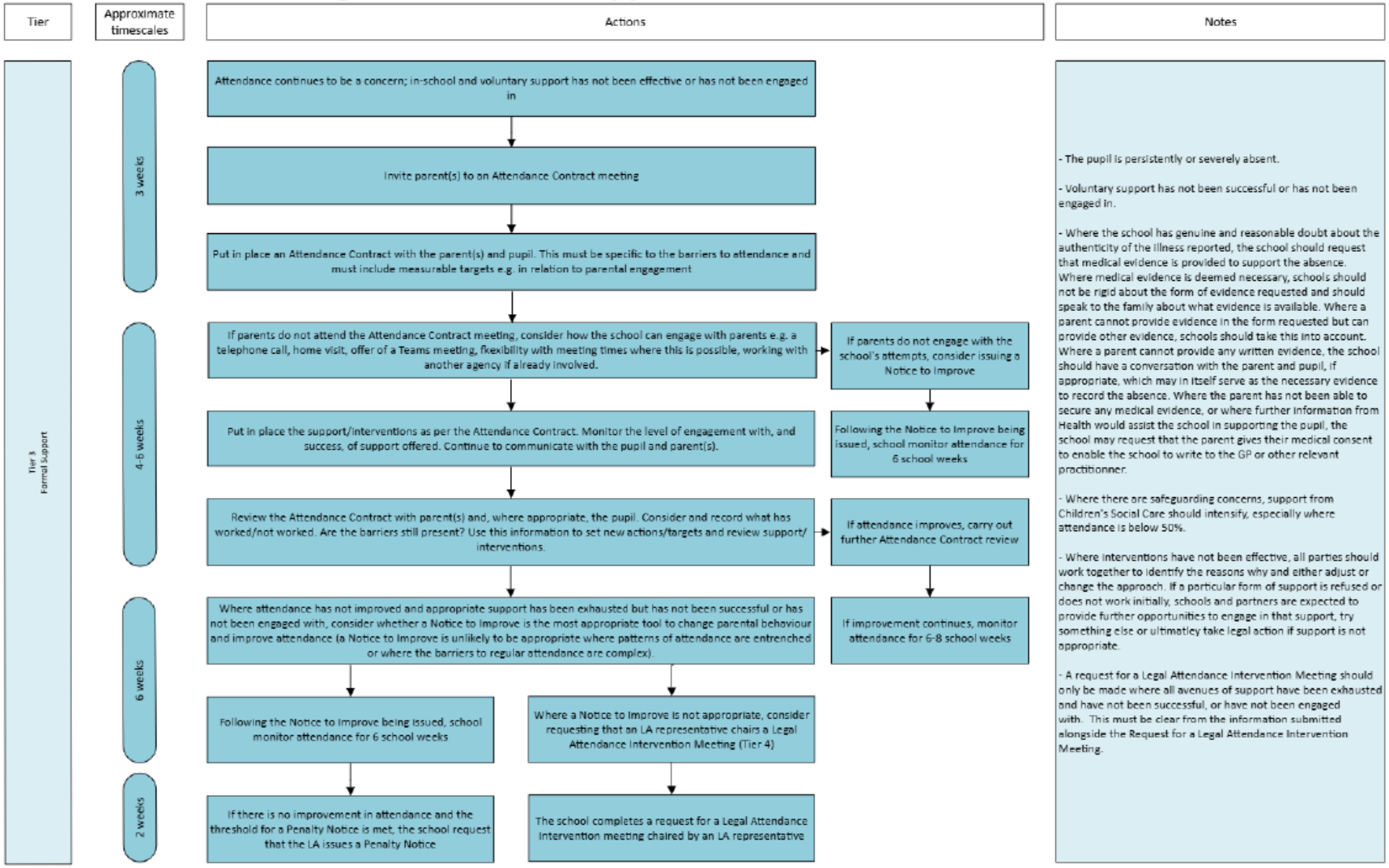
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