



Making a Difference

Phoenix Park Academy



Phoenix Park and Sevenhills Attendance Policy

<u>DATE POLICY WRITTEN:</u>	<u>April 2023</u>
<u>GOVERNOR RATIFICATION DATE:</u>	<u>03/05/2023</u>
<u>DATE OF REVIEW:</u>	<u>April 2024</u>

Mission statement

Phoenix Park and Sevenhills Academies seek to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education, which maximises opportunities in order for pupils to fulfill their true potential.

All staff are committed to working with the pupils and their families to ensure regular attendance and punctuality.

Phoenix Park and Sevenhills treat all pupils as individuals and appreciate that some find attending school worrying and demanding. However, we are confident with the support of families we can successfully overcome such barriers and ensure pupils receive the most appropriate education package.

It is the responsibility of pupils and their parent/carer(s) to ensure they attend their provision as required by law in accordance with the Education Act 2002.

Aims

- 1. To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.**
- 2. To ensure that we accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence.**
- 3. To ensure that pupils, parents and staff all understand the academies approaches to attendance.**
- 4. To set out how we will support pupils with attendance including identifying barriers, strategies for improving attendance and recognising progress with attendance**
- 5. To ensure parent/carers understand their responsibilities and feel supported and to ensure a consistent approach for addressing non-attendance**

1. To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance

The impact positive school attendance has on a young person's life is priceless and prepares them for their next step towards fulfilling their best achievements. All parents/carers want the best for their child(ren) and supporting regular school attendance is a huge step in ensuring they have strong foundations to support successful next steps in education. At Phoenix Park and Sevenhills we talk to parents about attendance as part of the admissions process for their child. This is to ensure that parents understand the importance we place on school attendance and the importance of good attendance to support a return to mainstream education. We promote good attendance through posters on display throughout the school.

2. To ensure that we accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence

Phoenix Park and Sevenhills academies will maintain the admission register and accurately record attendance in line with regulations. Registers will be retained for 3 years from the date of entry. Phoenix Park and Sevenhills academies will only grant leave in exceptional circumstances. There is a clear day to day process for following up

absences (**see appendix 1**) and this is shared with parents/carers at a pupils admissions meetings. We will regularly update parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence at Review days (3 times per year) or as required.

3. To ensure that pupils, parents and staff all understand the academies approach to attendance

It is important that all pupils, parents and staff understand the academies approach to attendance. The attendance policy will be shared with all parents at their child's admission meeting. It will be shared annually with staff in September as part of our safeguarding training. It can also be found on our school website. The expectation for attendance is 100%, however we take a supportive approach to address underlying reasons for poor attendance and invest in working with families to make a positive difference.. We will strive to achieve this target for all our young people, but we recognise that some pupils arrive with circumstances and difficulties, which may make this even more challenging for them to achieve, e.g. anxieties around school, difficult home circumstances etc. We will work with pupils and their families in order to improve their attendance and provide them with the most appropriate educational package.

4. To set out how we will support pupils with attendance including identifying barriers, strategies for improving attendance and recognising progress with attendance

Phoenix, Park and Sevenhills academies aim to offer a positive learning experience, in which pupils believe they are understood and can achieve success. We aim to ensure all our pupils and their families feel valued with regards to positive attendance, including consistent daily attendance and also those who have made a conscious effort to improve their attendance. We understand that many young people who are referred to our academies have had difficult and sometimes negative experiences. Many pupils have been on significantly reduced timetables at their mainstream school as a strategy to manage/support their SEMH needs. We therefore understand that pupils may have barriers to attendance and our Pastoral Team will discuss this with pupils/parents/carers at admissions meetings.

AtPhoenix, Park and Sevenhills we hold weekly Attendance & Safeguarding meetings where we discuss and monitor all pupils who are classed as PA (below 90% attendance) The Attendance and Safeguarding meeting is chaired by the Executive Vice Principal who is responsible for attendance and the DSL. The Attendance and Safeguarding meeting will also be attended by the Pastoral Team.

Where a pupil is causing concern with low attendance we will identify barriers to attendance and work with pupils and families to identify support strategies and develop a personalised plan to support the pupil to overcome any barriers. Parents will be invited into school or we will visit parents at home to complete. Any modified timetables or timings agreed to support re-engagement will be reviewed at regular intervals and the aim will always be to gradually increase the time in school and work towards a full time offer but taking into account the pupils needs and voice of the pupil and family. We will ensure that we recognise positive steps that pupils make rather than simply focus on % attendance and these will be monitored on our reduced provision tracker.

At Phoenix, Park and Sevenhills we recognise positive attendance and improved attendance. Every week pupils with improved attendance will be congratulated by the Head of Centre who may also contact home or send a letter or postcard to share this with parents/carers.

5. To ensure parent/carers understand their responsibilities and feel supported and to ensure a consistent approach for addressing non-attendance

It is vital the parents/carers understand that contact from the academy is in the best interest of their child(ren) and we want to support and work with families where school attendance is a challenge. We aim to create a positive and honest working relationship with all our families and we hope by offering a high level of support, together we can overcome any obstacles affecting school attendance. There must be an emphasis on teamwork, ensuring we work together, which will provide us with the greatest opportunity for success and positive change.

It is the parents/carers' responsibility to contact the Academy with regards to any absence on a daily basis and where required provide any medical evidence. The Academy has administration staff, who will make daily contact where a parent/carer has failed to contact the Academy. This will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Pastoral Team. If a pupil does not attend school and no explanation is given, contact will be made with the parents/carers on the first day of absence. Depending on the circumstances and vulnerabilities of the student a home visit will be prioritized before the absence reaches 3 days.

If a child/young person fails to attend School for 3 days, the Pastoral Team will conduct a home visit, also known as a 'safe and well' visit, to ensure that everything is ok. At this visit the team will need to see the child/young person so that they can report back to the DSL. During the visit the Pastoral Team will talk to you about the reason for the absence from school and will listen to any worries or concerns.

If the child/young person is not seen at the visit the Pastoral Team will attempt further contact via phone/text to explain how important it is that we see them. The Pastoral Team will visit again the following day and if they are still not able to see the child/young person they may contact the local Police and or Children's Services.

If attendance continues to be a concern the Pastoral Team will continue to complete home visits and will use The Attend Framework to identify reasons for absence from school and work together to draw up a plan to support the child/young person to attend school. Where students are dual registered home schools will be informed and collaborate with Phoenix, Park and Sevehills. Weekly attendance certificates are sent to all home schools where students are dual registered and the LA for those single registered students.

Whilst we will do everything possible to work with children/young people and families, if there is a lack of engagement with support plans put in place, the Executive Principal will continue to follow the attendance procedure, adhering to the DfE School Attendance Guidance. If a child/young person is not regularly being seen by at school this is also a safeguarding concern and therefore referrals to other agencies will be explored.

Expectations

We expect the following from our pupils:

- That they attend the academy every day as required
- That they arrive on time
- That they inform staff of any problem(s) that may prevent them from attending

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- To ensure their child(ren) attend school. The law states that this is the parents/carers' responsibility.
- To support their child(ren) in achieving maximum attendance. We request that a child is not allowed to remain at home for minor complaints or illnesses. If they are fit enough to be up and about, they are fit enough to be in school.
- To ensure that they contact the school giving an explanation for absence on the first day by 9.30am and then on any subsequent days, if necessary. Medical evidence (Prescription/letter from practice Nurse/Medical or Doctors written evidence) will be required for students absent for 3 or more days.

What the young person and parent/carers can expect from the school

Each academy is responsible for ensuring we provide pupils with the most appropriate educational package, as well as working in collaboration with our families and following DfE guidance in order to encourage positive attendance. In situations where it is identified that the most appropriate education package is not a full time offer, we will continue to work with pupils and families to make positive steps towards a full time offer.

Non-attendance procedure:

As already stated, if a young person is unable to attend their provision the parent/carer must notify the school by 9.30AM. If this has not happened, the relevant academy will attempt to make contact each and every day the child is absent. However, if a student's absence goes beyond 3 days, further support/action will be triggered in order to try and address any barrier(s).

As an academy we must ensure we are doing everything possible in encouraging pupils to attend their provision. We will always work with the pupil and their family in supporting their attendance. However, if this does not have the desired impact, we will challenge those pupils and their parents/carer(s) who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. The Academy will follow DfE guidance regarding non-attendance, which could result in legal action being taken. Each individual case will be assessed and further action will be taken based on the school attendance procedure and relevant collaboration with Home schools (Where students are dual registered). This procedure will incorporate letters home, meetings with pupils, meetings with parents/carers, home visits and/or 'Safe and Well' checks by the Pastoral Team. It is vital that we know your child is safe and well therefore we will involve other agencies if we are unable to make contact or see the child/young person.

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee if they have an attendance of 90% or less. This is whether or not absences have been authorised by the school.

Leave of Absence:

Section 7 of the Educational Act 1996 places upon parents/carers a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Where a child is a registered pupil at a school, their parents/carers are liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.

In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled, section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60 or £120 per adult per child.

Government regulations state that when it comes to dealing with requests for leave of absence, schools are no longer permitted to authorise family holidays or time off for other family occasions, as they are not classed as exceptional circumstances. The law also states that parents/carers do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for leave of absence during term time. Schools can use Section 444B of the Education Act 1996 to issue Fixed Penalty Fines for non-attendance. A Fixed Penalty Fine may be issued to each parent/carer with parental responsibility, for each child.

All requests for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Executive Principal at least six weeks before the absence is due to start, giving details, dates and a full explanation of why leave of absence is required. All requests are looked at individually and further evidence may be sought as required in school time.

We strongly advise that you apply or seek advice from the school before making any booking.

Any leave of absence taken without prior notification to the school beforehand will automatically be unauthorised, regardless of the explanation given after the event.

Categorising Absence:

From September 2006 all schools were required to use a common set of codes to record student attendance and absence.

Only the school, in the context of the law, can authorise absence, not parents. A note or explanation from parents/carers does not guarantee authorisation. If we do not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid or legal reason, then the absence will be unauthorised by the Executive Principal/Executive Vice Principal.

Schools are not obliged to authorise medical or dental appointments taken during the school day. Parent /carers are asked not to make these appointments unless vital or due to an emergency. Evidence will be required and, if not received, the absence will be unauthorised.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence:

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory. If a student's absence is persistent due to medical reasons, Phoenix, Park and Sevenhills may request documentation from the student's doctor or hospital if there is an ongoing condition. Failure to provide this will mean the school will be unable to authorise further absence.

The following activities will be authorised:

- Field trips and educational visits
 - Interviews with prospective employers, new schools and places at a higher or further educational establishment*
 - Students receiving approved education off site
 - YOS meetings*
 - Addaction*
 - CAMHS*
- * Official written evidence / appointment letters are required

Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstance:

- Shopping trips
- Leave of absence in term time where the permission of the school has not been given
- Minding the house or looking after siblings or family members
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be verified
- No reason given

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a pupil being absent from school. It is for the Pastoral Team, in liaison with the Executive Vice Principal, to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable.

Punctuality:

The school will actively encourage punctuality by challenging pupils who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.

Pupils not attending regularly:

Regular contact is made with parents and home schools, where appropriate. Safeguarding procedures are followed and home visits and safe and well checks are made where required.

If a child misses 10 consecutive school days this will be reported to the Local Education Authority as a "PNAR" – Pupil Not Attending Regularly.

Missing Children:

If a child is absent for a longer period than 20 days and Phoenix, Park and Sevenhills has received no notification as to why, and no contact has been made when home visits have been attempted they will be referred to as 'CME' and placed on the 'Child Missing in Education' register. This may result in them being taken off the school roll.

Liaising with various agencies wherever appropriate:

Research has shown that schools that work in partnership with a full range of support services have a greater impact upon school attendance than when they act alone or when support services are poorly coordinated.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with the young people to ensure that educational opportunities are maximised.

These are the main support services that the school may involve in order to support students and parent/carers in achieving the highest level of attendance:

- Educational Psychologist
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Children's Social Care
- YMM
- Police
- GP's and Nurse Practitioners
- School Nursing Service
- We Are With You

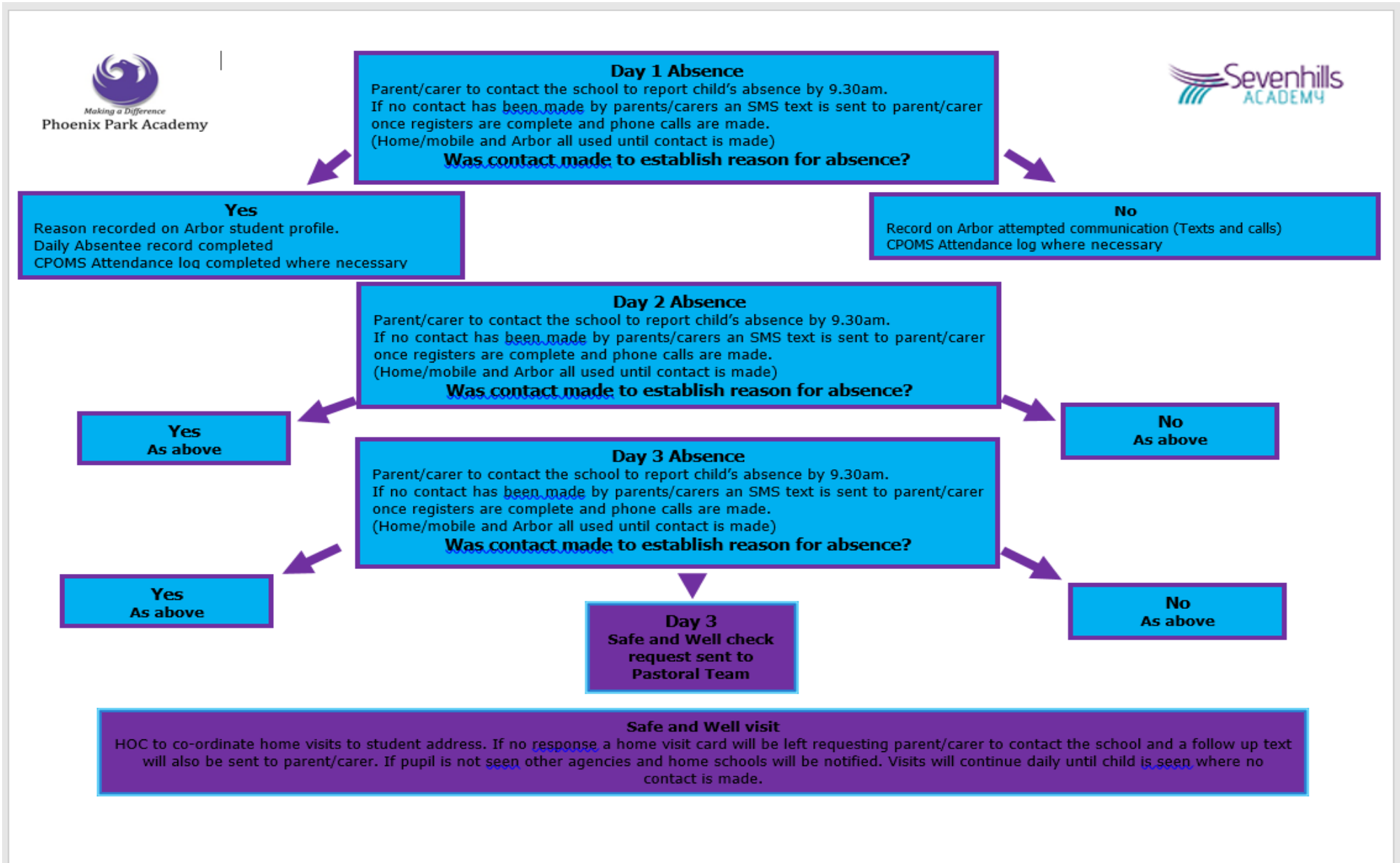
Legislation:

- The Education Act 1996 - Sections 434 & 458
- Human Right Act 1998
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- School Standards & Framework Act 1998
- The Education (pupil registration) (England) regulations 2006
- The Education (pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016
- The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) regulations 2007
- The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) regulations 2010

Appendices

The following pages show the appendices in the following order:

- Academy flowchart for non-attendance
- Guidance re. support for low attendance
- SAP template
- Attendance concern Letter



Appendix 2 - Advice support and guidance for those pupils who are persistently absent

Guidance, Support and Monitoring for students who are Persistently Absent

All actions/next steps are suggestions and will depend on individual pupil circumstances.

Attendance Concern	Action/Support	Monitoring
Pattern/regular missing day	Discussion with pupil/carers to establish whether there are any concerns or worries that can be identified.	Daily attendance procedure to be followed.
90%	Supportive letter to raise awareness of current attendance and offer phone conversation to discuss any concerns. Collaboration with home schools where appropriate.	Pupil to be monitored at weekly Attendance meeting. Continue to monitor at weekly attendance meetings.
Below 90%	Letter to inform parents child is now PA.	Continue to monitor at weekly attendance meetings.
Below 90%-70%	Further contact and requests to attend meetings and attendance reviews. Pastoral team to arrange home visits as required. SAP and GAP as necessary Collaboration with home schools where appropriate.	TAC meeting to involve HOC, SENDCO and consider intervention to be offered to support SAP/GAP targets.
50% and below	Attendance Reviews SAP and GAP Collaboration with home schools where appropriate.	Regular review of SAP/GAP Targets and continue to monitor at weekly meetings.
Further decline in attendance and refusal to engage in meetings and SAP processes	Consideration of further letters and collaboration with home schools where appropriate and relevant outside agencies.	Continue to monitor and share information.

Pupils absent for 20 days following home visits CME form completed

Pupils on reduced provision closely tracked and reviewed via Reduced Provision Tracker

Appendix 3: SAP template

Date

Parent/Carer of **<name>**
address

Dear **parent/carer name**,

We are concerned about your **<name's>** attendance which is currently at ...% of which ...% is unauthorised.

This means that your child has missed days of education. It is vital that **<name>** attends in order to be successful within school and to get the best education possible. This will improve their chances of achieving successful grades which is important for their chosen career path.

We are worried at this point that **<name>** may not be receiving the education that is needed for them to be able to progress academically and socially. We always try to encourage all pupils to attend so we are able to support them for their chosen career path and prepare for working life.

As per the school agreement document you signed at induction, average school attendance is 95-100% which is 180-190 days, to ensure your child is able to progress academically and socially.

We are holding an attendance meeting for **<name>** on **Date** at **Time** at **Academy**. Please attend with **<name>**.

If you require any support with attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Executive Vice Principal

School Attendance Panel Meeting

Date:

Time:

Chair:

Present:

Author:

Young Person's Name:

DOB:

Year:

Current attendance:

Authorised:

Unauthorised:

Introductions and purpose of meeting:

This meeting has been called to discuss the poor attendance of _____ to identify any reasons for the poor attendance. Under S.444 Education Act 1996 I must ask the following questions so that I can find out what issues, if any, prevent _____ from accessing his education and agree an action plan to support the parent/carers in improving their child's attendance.

<p>Parents/carers (parents/carers to confirm their legal names, dob, relationship to young person and PR status, and address)</p>	<p>Name: DOB:</p> <p>Relationship to young person: PR:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Name: DOB:</p> <p>Relationship to young person: PR:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Please delete as appropriate:</p> <p>Parent DID NOT attend the meeting Parent DID NOT send apologies</p>
	<p>Name: DOB:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>If the young person does not live with parent(s)/carer(s) at your home address, where does he/she live and with whom?</p>
<p>Travel to and from school (to parents/carers)</p>	<p>Is the distance from home to school more than 2 miles (child 7 years and under)?</p> <p>Is the distance from home to school more than 3 miles (child 8 years and over)?</p> <p>If yes, did you choose this school for your child (by way of parental preference)?</p> <p>Details:</p> <p>Details:</p> <p>Do you get help with transport from the Local Authority?</p>

<p>What are we worried about?</p> <p><i>(to school)</i></p> <p><i>(to parents/carers)</i></p> <p><i>(to school)</i></p>	<p><i>Worry or harm. What are we worried about and what is the impact on the child?</i></p> <p>What is the young person's overall attendance?</p> <p>Number of lates: before registers closed: after registers closed:</p> <p>How has the school informed parents/carers of absence(s)?</p> <p>Daily telephone calls when ... doesn't arrive in provision.</p> <p>Are you aware your child has not been attending school?</p> <p>Research shows that pupils with poor attendance are unlikely to attain their potential. The child's/young person's poor attendance is affecting their progress. (Present evidence for impact on academic/social progress)</p> <p>How is poor attendance and/or punctuality affecting the young person's academic progress?</p> <p>How is this affecting the young person's social development?</p>
<p>Complicating Factors: <i>(including historic poor attendance in the family)</i></p> <p><i>(to parents/carers)</i></p> <p>Complicating Factors: <i>(including historic poor attendance in the family)</i></p> <p><i>(to parents/carers)</i></p>	<p><i>What is making this situation harder to deal with? What don't we know?</i></p> <p>Does the young person work: (paid or unpaid), (with relative or any other employer)?</p> <p>The Chair explained the role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in issuing work permits to ensure that school aged children are legally and safely employed, and gave the parents a booklet giving guidelines on child employment.</p> <p>Does the young person undertake any performance/modelling/sports that would require a Performance Licence?</p> <p>The Chair explained the role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in issuing Performance Licence to ensure that school aged children legally and safely perform.</p> <p>Are any of the absences due to religious observance: if so, did you request leave of absence from the school? (If yes specify dates and reasons)</p> <p>Has bullying been a reason for your child not attending school? If so, what has been done to address the issues?</p> <p>Has your child and Special Educational Needs which prevent him/her attending regularly? If so, please explain.</p> <p>Are any other agencies/workers involved with you in respect of your child? If so,</p>

<p>(to school)</p> <p>(to school and parents/carers)</p>	<p>who are they and what work are they undertaking?</p> <p>Has a Single Assessment been completed? If 'Yes', what were the outcomes? If 'No', why not?</p> <p>Please detail any further complicating factors that may have an impact on the young person's attendance.</p>
<p>What is working well?</p> <p>(to parents/carers)</p> <p>(to school)</p> <p>(to school and parents/carers)</p>	<p><i>Previous/existing measures taken to improve attendance and reduce the worry.</i></p> <p>What actions have you taken to improve your child's attendance?</p> <p>What action has been taken by school to support the improved attendance of the young person?</p> <p>Please detail anything else that is working well for the young person and her family regarding school attendance.</p>

What needs to happen?
(attendance targets and action plan)

To support the improvement in your child's school attendance, we will agree an Action Plan, and ask everyone present to sign it. This includes attendance targets for at least 4 weeks. The Action Plan is designed to support you in improving your child's attendance.

It is agreed that the following targets will be set:

Week beginning	Attendance Target	Actual Attendance	Authorised absence %	Unauthorised absence %
	100% of agreed programme			
	100% of agreed programme			
	100% of agreed programme			
	100% of agreed programme			

(to all)

(to parents/carers)

If your child is ill, please obtain written proof, such as an appointment card from the child's surgery, prescription, prescribed medication, letter from GP, or attend drop-in GP or out-of-hours surgery etc.

If your child is absent for another reason allowed in law, as parents/carers please provide the school with written evidence, this will be taken into account when assessing whether the attendance targets have been met.

(to parents/carers)

As the young person's parents/carers you also agree to: (delete if not appropriate)

- 1. ensure that your child attends school regularly**
- 2. ensure that your child attends school punctually**
- 3. ensure that your child wears appropriate uniform**
- 4. provide the school with written proof to support absence**
- 5.**
- 6.**
- 7.**

(to young person where appropriate)

As the young person I agree to: (delete if not appropriate)

- 1. attend school regularly**
- 2. attend school punctually**
- 3. wear appropriate uniform**
- 4.**
- 5.**
- 6.**

(to school)

	<p>The school agrees to: <i>(delete if not appropriate)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. provide the parent with the name and telephone number of a person who will be available daily during school hours to discuss absence 2. monitor progress of all targets and agreements 3. review progress with parents 4. review progress with young person (if appropriate) 5. review progress with Education Welfare Officer 6. review progress with Other Agency 7. consider implementing SA 8. 9. <p>The Education Welfare Service agrees to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. review progress with school 2. review progress with parents, during home visit 3. consider with school what action is appropriate if attendance does not improve (includes Penalty Notice Warning Letter, Local Authority School Attendance Panel Meeting, Parenting Contract) <p>Copies of Minutes and Action Plan will be typed and sent out to all those invited to the Panel Meeting.</p>
<p>Worry/danger statement</p>	<p>If the school attendance of the young person does not significantly improve we are worried that he/she will not develop and achieve their academic and social potential, and that this could have a detrimental impact on their future success with further/higher education, employment, independence, economic well-being, and relationships with others.</p>

School Attendance Panel:

By signing this document you are agreeing to the Action Plan, in order to effect an improvement in the attendance of ...

Date:

SIGNATURE:

PRINT NAME:

_____	PARENT	_____
_____	PARENT	_____
_____	PUPIL	_____
_____	SCHOOL	_____
_____	EWO	_____
_____	OTHER	
_____	AGENCY	_____
_____	OTHER	
_____	AGENCY	_____
_____	OTHER	_____
_____	OTHER	_____

Appendix 4: Attendance concern letter

Date

Dear

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FORMAL WARNING

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

REGISTERED PUPIL AT:

I need to draw your attention to the fact that parents have a duty in law to ensure their child attends school regularly, unless they are unable to do so by reason of ill-health or other legally acceptable reason.

During the period , was absent from school on out of a possible half-day sessions and no valid reasons have been provided. This is an unacceptable rate of attendance and I attach for your information, a copy of the Pupil Absence Record Sheet.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure their child receives suitable efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or education otherwise. Section 444 (1)(a) of the same Act states that where a parent of a child who knowingly and without reasonable justification fails to ensure regular attendance of a registered pupil at that school, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section. The Local Education Authority may, where necessary, institute legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under this section of the Education Act 1996 against those parents concerned. Alternatively Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Education Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.

Please contact the school to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

Executive Vice Principal