



Policy: Attendance Policy

Date: November 2017

Review date: November 2018

Authorised by: Governing Body

Updated by: Head Teacher and Inclusion Lead

Introduction

“If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend school then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.”

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive an appropriate education. Parents who have chosen to send their children to Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School are asked to sign a Home School Agreement, indicating they will do their best to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.

The school evaluates attendance at least termly and compares attendance data with national figures. These figures are reported termly to the governors. Evaluation of attendance and the effectiveness of strategies to increase attendance forms part of an OFSTED Inspection. High levels of absence will limit the ability of pupils to make the progress they are capable of and this will lead to the schools effectiveness being down-graded. High attendance will lead to an increase in progress and will assist in the school reaching a better grading by OFSTED.

This policy has been written after researching advice from Gloucestershire County Council and reading the Attendance Policies of other schools.

i) Expectations

Children are expected to attend school each day unless they are unwell or in exceptional circumstances, authorised by the Head Teacher.

Parents are responsible for securing regular attendance as identified in the statutory guidance; ‘School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures’. More information available at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

School will encourage children to attend regularly, following up unexplained absences and requesting reasons from parents for these. Both admission and attendance registers are kept daily. In addition, returns are made to the Local Authority detailing every registered pupil of compulsory school age who; fails to attend school regularly or has been absent from school, where the absence has not been authorised, for a continuous period of not less than 10 days, specifying the cause of absence if known.

Awards are given for attendance. Class Attendance Awards are given weekly for the class with the best Attendance that week. The class then gets entered into a termly tombola to win a prize for each member of the class. Individual pupil Attendance Awards are given on a termly basis (3 times a year) for children whose attendance is 97% or more. Children with 100% attendance receive a Head Teacher certificate & badge and have the opportunity to apply to become an ‘Attendance Ambassador’. The school may also recognise children whose attendance would be at 100% were it not for known legitimate absence such as attending a medical appointment, funeral or following a period of illness.

Local Authorities (and all schools) have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. In addition to using these powers, Local Authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance.

The Governors of Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School actively promote the aims of the school and recognise that children must attend school regularly if they are to make the best of the opportunities they have to learn and make progress.

ii) Regular Attendance

Attendance is measured by the number of sessions for which a child is present. There are two sessions in each school day. Registration is taken at the start of each session to determine a child's presence for that half of the day.

Regular attendance within our school is defined as 'no unauthorised absence within the last six months'.

The expected level of attendance is 100%, unless there is a long term illness.

Parents are given feedback on the level of their child's attendance on their annual report, or earlier should there be a concern.

iii) 'Authorised' and 'Unauthorised' Absence

Unauthorised absence is when a pupil is absent from school when they should have been in school, or school have not been given an acceptable reason for the absence. Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. To do this a reason for the absence is required, for example, illness or a family funeral. If parents feel there are other genuine reasons to request a child's absence, this must be put in writing to the Head Teacher. Once received, the Head Teacher will make a decision regarding the request dependent on circumstance, the child's attendance and the child's academic levels. This decision will be made following consultation with the school 'attendance panel', comprising at least two members of the governing body and members of the Senior Management Team.

Having time off for no real reason is an *unauthorised absence*. Examples of absences that are not legitimate include:

Absences for day trips;

No-one to provide a lift;

Staying home because a sibling is ill;

Cheaper holidays in UK or abroad;

Visiting family/friends who have different school term dates/holidays

Without an acceptable reason given, the Head Teacher cannot authorise absences. On such occasions, absences will be recorded as unauthorised. If we do not receive a phone call or a letter, we will follow this up on the day with a telephone call asking why your child is not in school. This is also to make sure that all children who attend Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School are safe and well. If we are unable to speak to a parent, a message will be left asking for contact to be made.

iv) Absence due to illness

If your child is unwell we ask that you contact the school by telephone no later than 9.00am on the first day of illness. It is unnecessary to contact us daily if your child is going to be off due to the illness but we do ask that you keep in touch so that we remain aware of the situation and can offer help if appropriate. In certain circumstances, we reserve the right to ask for evidence of this illness; for example a doctor's appointment card. If this evidence cannot be provided we may record the absence as 'unauthorised'.

If your child is not 100%, but not necessarily ill, we would ask that you do send them into school, but making us aware so that we can keep an eye on them and contact you if necessary.

If children have vomiting and/or diarrhoea, they must stay home from school for 48 hours after the last episode. This is to ensure children are free from infection, and are well enough to attend school. This also helps to stop the spread of an infection and should make sure we avoid any 'epidemics'.

v) Medical Appointments

We ask that all dentist and doctor appointments are made outside of school hours unless it is absolutely necessary. We are aware that this is not always possible, but would ask that you let the school know beforehand if you do need to take your child out of school for an appointment and be aware that we may ask for proof of this.

vi) Lateness

Lateness arriving: The school day begins at 8:50am. **Children who arrive after 8:50am are late** and must come into school via the main entrance. They must be accompanied to the school office and parents must advise as to why they are late.

Children arriving after 9:15am are considered absent and this will be marked as an unauthorised lateness absence in the register and will affect your child's attendance level.

If a child is persistently late, this will lead to further action being taken to discuss the reasons and offer help and support to overcome this. If lateness continues after this point, the LA have advised that a fixed term penalty may be applicable and the following steps will be taken;

- A letter will be posted to your home address (see Appendix D), via first class post, advising that you are at risk of a penalty notice from the Local Authority due to persistent lateness.
- If there are any further unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days after receipt of this letter, a penalty notice will be issued for each child.
- The letter will also draw your attention to the fact that you may receive a Penalty Notice if your child has any more unauthorised absence during the next twelve months.
- The penalty notice allows a parent 21 days to pay a fine. If the parent pays after the 21 day period but within 28 days, the fine increases. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority would initiate legal proceedings against the parent for their child's non-attendance.

For our school this will be initiated when a child has been late on 20 days or more, during the same term.

Lateness collecting: The school has a duty under the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, to protect children and act in their best interests. The school takes persistent lateness in collecting a child very seriously, although we understand that occasionally, delays are unavoidable.

In the event of a child not being collected, the school will make every effort to contact the child's parents/carers, and if this proves to be impossible, will try to get in touch with an alternative emergency named contact, authorised by the child's parents to collect them on their behalf. If no contact can be reached, school staff will inform Social Services.

vii) Time off during term time

"Amendments to the 2006 Education Regulations (Pupil Registration, England, 2013) removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted."

Therefore at Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School: The Head Teacher authorises absence, only under exceptional circumstances after taking into account the child's attendance and academic levels. This decision will be made following consultation with the school 'attendance panel', comprising at least two members of the governing body and members of the Senior Management Team.

We ask that parents bear in mind that the reason which may seem good to them, may not fall within the exceptional circumstances guidelines and that there is no automatic right to go on holiday each year during term time and that there is no entitlement for leave of absence for your child for a family holiday or break.

If you believe you do have a genuine reason which is an exceptional circumstance, then you need to write a letter to the Head Teacher giving as much notice as possible and stating all details as to why this is an exceptional reason. Once a decision has been made you will be contacted regarding the decision. This will all be done via the school administrator.

In reality, there are very few circumstances in which absence for a holiday or break will be authorised. The Head Teacher will respond to your letter within two weeks, confirming if the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Please remember it is only the Head Teacher who can do this.

However, if the holiday is booked or you decide to go away regardless, please be aware that the following process will begin on the child's first day of absence:

- On the 10th session (5th day) of absence a letter (see Appendix D) will be posted to your home address, via first class post, advising you are at risk of a penalty notice from the local Authority due to unauthorised absence from school.
- If there are any further unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days after receipt of this letter a penalty notice will be issued for each child taken out of school.
- The letter will also draw your attention to the fact that you may receive a Penalty Notice if your child has anymore unauthorised absence during the next twelve months.
- The penalty notice allows a parent 21 days to pay a fine. If the parent pays after the 21 day period but within 28 days, the fine increases. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority would initiate legal proceedings against the parent for their child's non-attendance.

For more information regarding this please visit www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolattendance
Please be advised that the above applies to any time taken off school regardless of whether the school has been informed.

viii) Collection of Children

School Staff need to know who are collecting children at the end of the day. When a child starts school details of parents/carers are collected and kept on file in the school office.

Pupils who are in Foundation Stage and KS1 should not walk to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school. Children in KS2 may walk home alone given parents/carers have completed and signed the relevant consent form obtainable from the School Office/Website. Please see our policy on 'Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from School Alone'.

Details of who is authorised to collect children will be kept on file. Parents/carers must inform staff of any changes in person or by letter.

Any after school clubs will make sure a record of children attending each time is kept and of who is collecting the child.

For off-site activities, parents/carers should complete details of collection arrangements on the permission slip.

ix) Dealing with Unauthorised Attendance or Poor Attendance

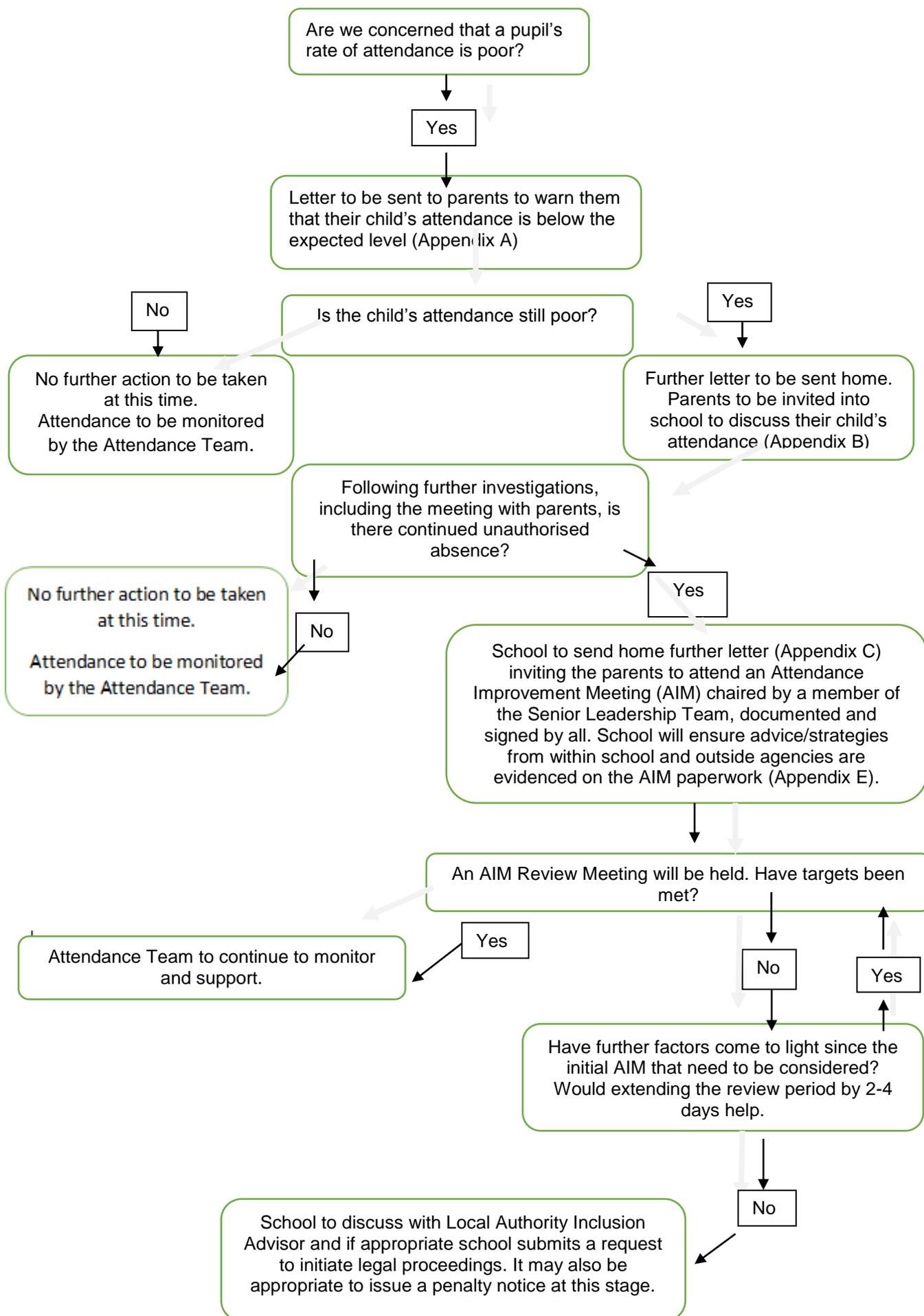
Our school takes a pragmatic approach to dealing with unauthorised or/and poor attendance.

A genuine illness will be recorded as an authorised absence. However, we reserve the right to ask for evidence of this illness, for example a doctor's appointment card. If this evidence cannot be provided we may record the absence as 'unauthorised'. If we believe that the evidence is lacking or unsatisfactory, we will inform the parents that this absence will be deemed unauthorised.

We will work collaboratively with families to get the pupil back into the habit of regular attendance. If reasonable efforts to resolve unauthorised absence do not result in an improvement, the case can then be referred to the Local Authority to either initiate legal proceedings or issue a Fixed Term Penalty. Please see section vii-'Time off during term time'. The Local Authority fully supports schools in their aim to achieve 100% attendance.

After 10 or more days of continued unauthorised absence, we will inform the Local Authority of the absence.

Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School take the following approach to dealing with unauthorised or poor attendance.



x) Penalty Notices

The Local Authority has permitted us to issue a penalty notice at our discretion under **any** of the following circumstances;

- Unauthorised holidays- please see section vii for further information
- Persistent lateness of a pupil after the registers have closed - see section vi
- Any other unauthorised absences from school - see section ix

Useful Definitions

Parent: As per section 576 of the Education Act 1996, all natural parents whether they are married or not and includes any person who, although not a natural parent;

-Has a responsibility for a child or young person

-Has care of a child or young person

School: Includes all educational providers – for this policy school will always refer to Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School.

Compulsory School Age: This is the start term following a child's fifth birthday.

'We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.'

The Attendance Team: Miss Sarah Daly (Inclusion Lead, Member of Leadership Team), Mrs Jo Childs (Attendance Officer) and Mrs Karla Weale (Pastoral Support Worker).

The Attendance Panel: Mr Mark Allen (Head Teacher), Mrs Melanie Cordall (Deputy Head Teacher), Mrs Sara Morris (School Business Manager), Miss Sarah Daly (Inclusion Lead), Mr Neil Eley (Chair of Governors) and Mrs Jane Bullingham (Vice Chair of Governors)

Head Teacher: Mr Mark Allen

Appendix A- Warning Letter 1

Dear

Attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school.

Parents who have chosen to send their children to Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School are asked to sign a Home School Agreement, indicating they will do their best to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.

At Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School, we evaluate attendance at least termly and compare attendance data with national figures. These figures are reported termly to the governors. Evaluation of attendance and the effectiveness of strategies to increase attendance forms part of an OFSTED Inspection. High levels of absence will limit the ability of pupils to make the progress they are capable of and this will lead to the schools effectiveness being down-graded. High attendance will lead to an increase in progress and will assist in the school reaching a better grading by OFSTED.

As you can see from the enclosed printout, *NAME* attendance is %, which is below our expected attendance rate.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. However, pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment. We would therefore appreciate your support in ensuring your child attends school regularly.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Mark Allen
Head Teacher

Appendix B- Warning Letter 2

Dear

Invitation to discuss your child's Attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school.

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At Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School, we evaluate attendance at least termly and compare attendance data with national figures. These figures are reported termly to the governors. Evaluation of attendance and the effectiveness of strategies to increase attendance forms part of an OFSTED Inspection. High levels of absence will limit the ability of pupils to make the progress they are capable of and this will lead to the schools effectiveness being down-graded. High attendance will lead to an increase in progress and will assist in the school reaching a better grading by OFSTED.

As you can see from the enclosed printout, *NAME* attendance is 86.25%, which is below our expected attendance rate.

We would like to discuss how we can jointly support *NAME* to improve her lateness/attendance. A member of our School Attendance Team will therefore be contacting you over the next few days to arrange an appointment in order to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Mark Allen
Head Teacher

Dear

Invitation to AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting)

At Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School, we evaluate attendance at least termly and compare attendance data with national figures. These figures are reported termly to the governors. Evaluation of attendance and the effectiveness of strategies to increase attendance forms part of an OFSTED Inspection. High levels of absence will limit the ability of pupils to make the progress they are capable of and this will lead to the schools effectiveness being down-graded. High attendance will lead to an increase in progress and will assist in the school reaching a better grading by OFSTED.

As you can see from the enclosed printout, NAME attendance is %, which is below our expected attendance rate.

We would therefore like you to attend an AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting) at school ondaydate attime to discuss how we can jointly support NAME to improve his/her attendance. Miss Daly (Inclusion Lead) and Mrs Jo Childs (Attendance Officer) will attend this meeting.

It is very important that you attend this meeting. Please can you sign and return the slip below to confirm that you will attend. I must inform you that if you decide not to attend, this meeting will proceed in your absence and we will then send you a letter to inform you of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Mark Allen
Head Teacher

*I will/*will not be able to attend the AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting) onday
date attime

Child's name

Signed

Date

*Please delete as necessary

Appendix D- Penalty Notice Warning Letter

Dear

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
Warning of Penalty Notice

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

(Name) has been absent from school for () sessions in the previous () weeks without prior authorisation or an acceptable reason being given to the Head Teacher. Please note there are normally 2 sessions in each school day.

This absence has therefore been recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

I need to inform you that the level of (Name's) unauthorised absence places you at risk of a penalty notice and/or court action by the Local Authority.

Providing there are no further unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days, which will start 2 days after the date of this letter, to allow for postage, a penalty notice will not be issued on this occasion.

I must also draw your attention to the fact that should (Name) have more unauthorised absences within the next 12 months, you may receive a penalty notice without further warning.

Yours sincerely

Mr Mark Allen
Head Teacher

Appendix E- Aim Review Meeting



Education Performance and Inclusion

Education Act 1996 and Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

Attendance Improvement Meeting

Name of School: _____

To be completed as a contemporaneous record of the meeting and a copy given to all attendees at the close of the meeting. If parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend a copy of this record should be sent to them by post.

Name:	Year:	D.O.B.
Date Plan Drawn Up:	Where AIM is held :	
Present:		
Current Attendance % sessions absence authorised sessions absence unauthorised		
Background information provided by school		
Reasons for absence given by parent/carers, student/ pupil		
Please tick and date any of the following that have been previously offered/completed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre arranged home visit to discuss how to improve attendance <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to other agencies (please state) <input type="checkbox"/> Communication with tutor, head of year, head of house , attendance officer, other, to discuss attendance concerns, e.g. telephone call, e-mails, letters, meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced timetable Any other relevant intervention offered (please detail):	Date	
Plan to Improve Attendance This should detail any new intervention that either school, parent or pupil feel would be beneficial.		

<p>Student/Pupil agrees to:</p> <p>See guidance notes</p>	
<p>Parent(s)/Carers(s) agrees to:</p> <p>See guidance notes</p>	
<p>School agrees to:</p> <p>See guidance notes</p>	
<p>Please give details of any other agencies currently involved and the work they are undertaking</p>	

Agreed Attendance target for the next 4 school weeks % *

.....

Review Date

*NB This can be a target of no unauthorised absence during the review period.

As Parent /Carer of I understand that failure to meet these targets may result in legal proceedings taken against me.

Signed:

Parent **Parent**

Date:

Pupil **School** **Other**

Date:

For use if parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend

Date plan posted to parent(s)/carer(s):
(This should be within one day of plan being drawn up)

Signed: **Date:**