



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

---

|   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| THIS POLICY WAS APPROVED:                       | JANUARY 2023                   |
| POLICY VERSION:                                 | VERSION 1.4                    |
| THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED:                   | JANUARY 2026                   |
| MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW: | MIKE FISH                      |
| THIS POLICY WAS CONSULTED WITH:                 | LOCAL GOVERNING BODY           |
| THIS POLICY WAS DISTRIBUTED TO:                 | MARLEIGH PRIMARY ACADEMY STAFF |

---

# CONTENTS

|    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 1  | Introduction .....   | 3  |
| 2  | Statutory Framework.....   | 3  |
| 3  | Parental responsibilities .....  | 4  |
| 4  | Authorised absence .....   | 4  |
| 5  | Unauthorised absence .....   | 5  |
| 6  | Requests for exceptional leave of absence.....                             | 5  |
| 7  | Registration & Lateness .....  | 5  |
| 8  | What happens when a child is absent.....                                   | 6  |
| 9  | Repeated absences .....  | 6  |
| 10 | Penalty Notices for Non Academy Attendance.....                            | 7  |
| 11 | Children Missing from Education (CME).....                                 | 7  |
| 12 | Elective Home Education .....  | 9  |
| 13 | Procedure for taking children off the admission register.....              | 10 |
|    | Appendix 1: Attendance codes.....  | 10 |
|    | Appendix 2: Process for dealing with requests for exceptional absence..... | 11 |
|    | Appendix 3: Request for Pupil(s)' Exceptional Leave of Absence .....       | 12 |
|    | Appendix 4: 3 Letter system template letters .....                         | 13 |
|    | Appendix 5: Parenting Contract Meeting.....                                | 15 |

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Marleigh Primary Academy (MPA) aims to work in partnership with parents and carers to maximise attendance rates to ensure that all students can participate fully in the life of the academy.
- 1.2 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the academy is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so and there are no exceptional circumstances. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. The most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards the academy. To this end we strive to make each and every academy day a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to the academy.

## **2 Statutory Framework**

- 2.1 Under *The Education Act 1996*, parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends regularly and punctually at the academy where he/she is a registered pupil.
- 2.2 MPA is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the academy is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised, (see below).
- 2.3 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006* the governing body is responsible for making sure the academy keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the academy day. This register will also indicate the reason for an absence and whether it was authorised or unauthorised.

### 3 Parental responsibilities

3.1 The document: *Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance*, DfE, 2022, cites the following expectations of parents/carers:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g., sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the academy day where possible.

### 4 Authorised absence

4.1 An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from the academy for a legitimate reason (see appendix 2) and the academy has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell (in line with: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school)) and the parent contacts the academy to explain the absence. Only the academy can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority.

Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

4.2 Department for Education (DfE) guidance, October 2014, states, “Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from the academy. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher’s discretion.”

4.3 There are national attendance codes (see appendix 1) used by academies when absence can be authorised. Leave of absence can be authorised for the reasons set out in appendix 2.

4.4 Proof of good reason for absence may be asked to be seen. For example, a

wedding invite, doctor's letter, medical or dental appointment card, letter from employer or work-schedule. The number of days authorised in such situations will be decided by the head teacher on a case by case basis, and will only rarely exceed 5 consecutive days.

## **5 Unauthorised absence**

- 5.1 An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is/or has been absent without good reason, as defined by the list in appendix 2. These absences will affect the child's overall attendance record.

## **6 Requests for exceptional leave of absence**

- 6.1 The *Request for Exceptional Absence* form is available in appendix 3 or from the academy office. This should be completed by the parent or carer and returned to the academy office at least one week before the first day of requested absence.
- 6.2 Requests for exceptional leave will always be looked at on an individual basis and a decision will be made based on whether it is considered to be exceptional. The headteacher's decision regarding authorisation will be returned in writing to the parent or carer as soon as possible. Taking additional leave than that which has been agreed will be marked as unauthorised, unless later agreed.

## **7 Registration & Lateness**

- 7.1 The academy gates open just before 8.45am, at which time we expect children to arrive. They are locked again around 8.55am. Class teachers then electronically mark children as either present or absent and office staff then enter the appropriate code relating to their reason for absence.
- 7.2 Pupils who arrive after 9.00am but before 9.15am are recorded as Late (L) on the register. Pupils who arrive after 9.15am are recorded as Late (U) on the electronic register. This is classed as unauthorised absence. A (U) late counts as an absence for the whole session. (one academy day is counted as 2 sessions, am and pm). If a pupil is persistently late (e.g., once a fortnight or more) the classteacher or headteacher will contact the parents/carers in order to discuss how the situation can be improved.

## 8 What happens when a child is absent

8.1 After 9.15am each morning, office staff check class registers and begin contacting parents/carers of any child who is absent for unknown reasons. If no contact is made with the parent/carer and there are concerns about the child's well-being, a home visit may be made or contact made with outside agencies, such as social care.

## 9 Repeated absences

9.1 The headteacher monitors attendance weekly. A proactive approach will be taken to improve the attendance of pupils who are repeatedly absent. This approach will prioritise working with parents and pupils to understand and work to remove any barriers to attendance, whether these are based in or out of school.

9.2 The academy uses a three letter system, as explained below.

9.2.1 If, when attendance figures are monitored, a child's attendance has fallen below 96% since the beginning of September, the parent(s) or carer(s) will be informed via **Letter 1** (Appendix 4). The letter reminds parents/carers about the importance of regular academy attendance. The letter also points out that regular attendance is a legal requirement. Should the pupil's attendance improve but the improvement fails to be sustained, a further copy of **Letter 1** may be sent at a later date.

9.2.2 If attendance does not improve, **Letter 2** is sent to the parent(s)/carer(s). This letter will include an invite for parent(s)/carer(s) to meet with the headteacher. From this point on, a greater level of evidence will be requested from parent(s)/carer(s) in order for any future absences to be authorised; e.g., a copy of a medical appointment card or a prescription.

9.2.3 Letters 1 and 2 may be repeatedly sent during the year, if the headteacher deems necessary.

9.2.4 If there is no significant improvement in attendance and no satisfactory explanation for the absences, parent(s)/carer(s) are informed by **Letter 3** that their child is now at risk of becoming a

persistent absentee pupil.

- 9.3 If attendance falls below 90% over an 8 week period, and this is largely unauthorised and without adequate and proven explanation further action may be taken, as detailed below, and informed by the document: *Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance*, DfE, 2022.

## **10 Penalty Notices for Non Academy Attendance**

- 10.1 Repeated or prolonged unauthorised absence may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice, in line with appendix 2 and the [CCC Penalty Notices for Non academy Attendance Code of Conduct](#). In the case of term-time holiday (which will be unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances) a penalty notice will be triggered regardless of prior attendance records.

## **11 Children Missing from Education (CME)**

- 11.1 The academy will inform the Local Authority Attendance Officer if any child is absent without authorisation for more than 10 days.

- 11.2 DfE guidance regarding CME was updated in September 2016:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>.

This document sets out parents' and academies' responsibilities:

### **Parents' responsibilities**

*13. Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education. Some parents may elect to educate their children at home and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so, unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order.*

*Paragraph 14 not included due to newer DfE guidance: Elective Home Education, Departmental advice for local authorities, April 2019 (see 9 below).*

*15. Children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans or statements of special educational needs (SEN) can be home educated. Where the EHC plan or statement sets out SEN provision that the child should receive at home, the local authority is under a duty to arrange that provision. Where the EHC plan or statement names a school or type of school as the place where the child should receive his or her education but the parent chooses to home educate their child, the local authority must assure itself that the provision being made by the parent is suitable. In such cases, the local authority must*

*review the plan or statement annually to assure itself that the provision set out in it continues to be appropriate and that the child's SEN continue to be met.*

#### *Schools' responsibilities*

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

*17. Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.*

*18. Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.*

*19. Schools must also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England statutory guidance.*

*20. Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils. Further information about schools' safeguarding responsibilities can be found in the Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance.*



## 12 Elective Home Education

12.1 DfE guidance: [Elective Home Education, Departmental advice for local authorities / Parents](#), April 2019, states:

*1.1 Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time.*

*4.6 Although most local authorities encourage parents who withdraw a child from school for home education to notify the school and/or the authority, (and DfE guidance to parents also encourages this) there is no legal obligation on parents to provide such notification, either in writing or otherwise, or indeed to provide any reason for withdrawal. The only exceptions to this are (a) that a child may not be removed from the roll of a special school without the consent of the local authority if enrolled there under arrangements made by the local authority, and (b) in cases where a child is enrolled at a school in accordance with a school attendance order, when the authority must revoke the order (or amend it to replace the school with a different school) before the child can be removed from the roll. However, it should be noted that until a child is removed from the school roll (which can only be when one of the trigger points specified in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended is reached), the parent is at risk of prosecution for not securing attendance at the school even if suitable home education is being provided. This means that it is in a parent's interests to notify the school in writing of withdrawal for home education.*

12.2 When the headteacher becomes aware that parent(s) / carer(s) wish to educate at home, this will be communicated to the local authority. Only when permission from them is obtained will the child be removed from the academy roll.

### 13 Procedure for taking children off the admission register

13.1 Children will remain on the academy's admission register until either:

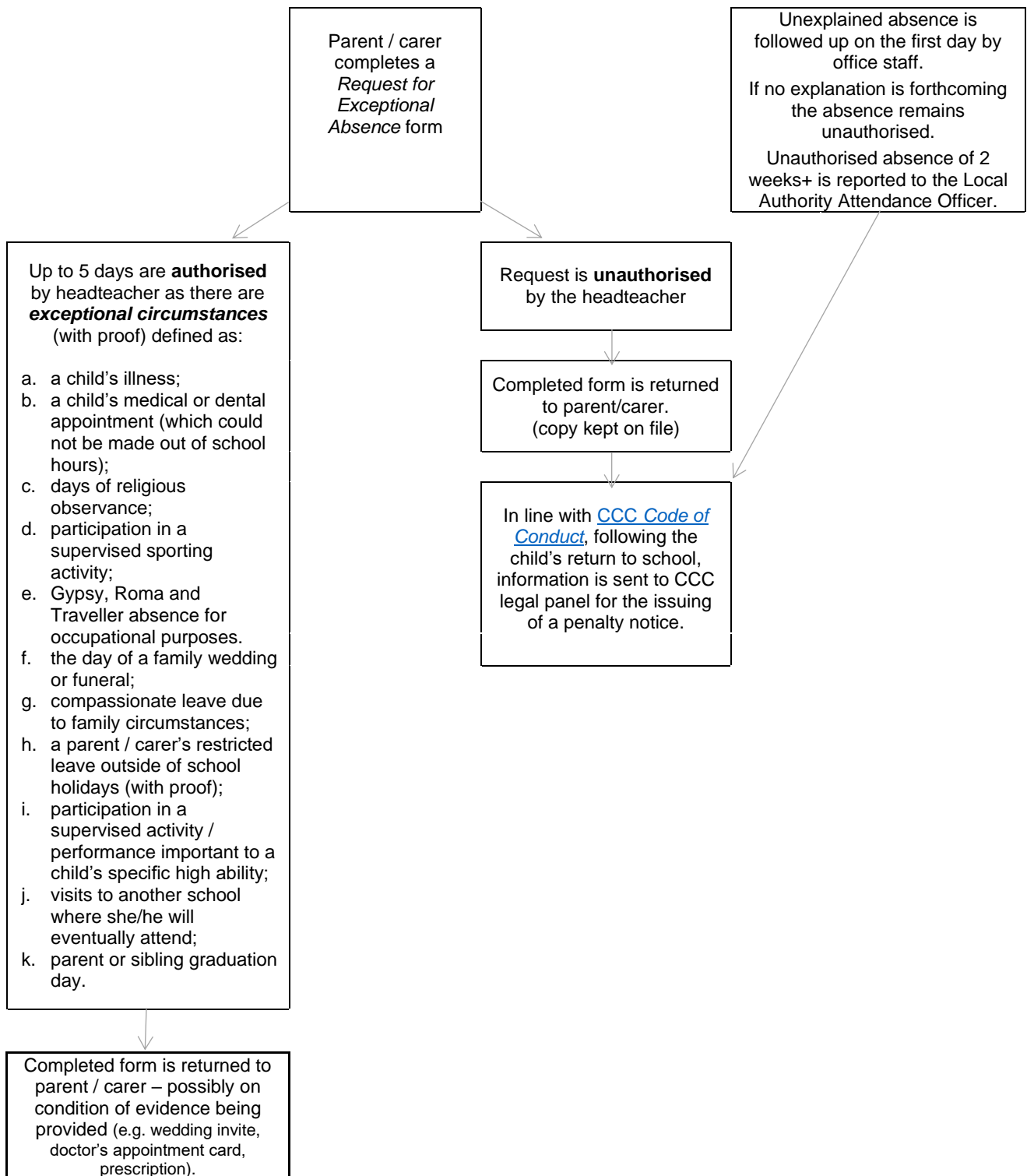
- a written request is obtained from parents to remove a child, as they wish to pursue elective home education; or
- a request is received by another setting for a child to be added to their admission register, and this has been discussed and understood with parents.

#### Appendix 1: Attendance codes

| Key to Codes                         |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| / Present (AM)                       | P Approved sporting activity                        |
| \ Present (PM)                       | R Religious observance                              |
| B Educated off site (not Dual reg.)  | S Study leave                                       |
| C Other authorised circumstances     | T Traveller, Gypsy, Roma absence                    |
| D Dual registration                  | U Late (after registers closed)                     |
| E Excluded                           | V Educational visit or trip                         |
| G Family holiday (unauthorised)      | W Work experience                                   |
| H Family Holiday (authorised)        | # Planned whole or partial school closure           |
| I Illness                            | X Non-compulsory school age absence                 |
| J Interview                          | Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances |
| L Late (before registers closed)     | Z Pupil not on roll                                 |
| M Medical/Dental appointments        | - All should attend / No mark recorded              |
| N No reason yet provided for absence |   |
| O Unauthorised Abs                   |   |

[School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#), DfE, May 2022

## Appendix 2: Process for dealing with requests for exceptional absence





### Appendix 3: Request for Pupil(s)' Exceptional Leave of Absence

This form should be completed and signed by the parent or person having charge of the child(ren). Please return to Marleigh Primary Academy office at least one week before the commencement of the period of absence. A child's absence during term-time can seriously disrupt his or her continuity of learning, as well as disrupting the learning of others when additional catch-up support is required upon their return. When a child is absent he or she misses not only the teaching provided on the days when he or she is away, but is also less prepared for subsequent lessons following his or her return. For this reason, in accordance with national guidance, the CCC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and our Attendance Policy (see website) absence from school for the purpose of a family holiday will not usually be authorised. Only exceptional circum-stances will be authorised. These include, for example, the serious illness or bereavement of a close family member or a family trauma. The financial factor of taking holidays at a cheaper time of year will not be regarded as exceptional circum-stances. **Unless exceptional circumstances apply, absence will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised and puts you at risk of being issued a penalty notice. Search: *Cambridgeshire non-attendance* for more info.**

I request that \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child(ren))

Class(es) \_\_\_\_\_ be granted leave of absence

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (inclusive dates).

It is necessary to take my child(ren) out of school because:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Headteacher response:

This leave of absence is *authorised / unauthorised* as these *are / are not* considered exceptional circumstances.

If, based on an unauthorised decision, you no longer intend to remove your child(ren) from MPA on the requested dates, please inform the office as soon as possible.

Headteacher signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4: 3 Letter system template letters

### Letter 1

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

This is a procedural email to alert you to the fact that \_\_\_\_\_ overall attendance since September is lower than 96%: the level below which attendance is considered 'not good'.

You can see a breakdown of your child's attendance by clicking 'more' within the attendance window in My Child At School.

We fully appreciate that contributing factors, such as illness, are out of your control, and only wish to bring this to your attention now so that we can aim for an upward trend over future weeks. If there is anything you feel we, as a school, could do to support your child's attendance, or if you would like to discuss this further, please contact me or your child's teacher via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

### Letter 2

Dear

I previously wrote to you on \*\*\*\* informing you that \*\*\*\* attendance was at the low rate of \*\*\*\*. Since then, the situation has not significantly improved and his/her attendance is currently \*\*\*\*. (You can see a breakdown of your child's attendance by clicking 'more' within the attendance window in My Child At School.)

This is still causing a concern and we are worried that it is affecting his/her progress. Please contact me to arrange a discussion about this when possible. Medical evidence will be required from now on for any future absences to be authorised.

As parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Should \*\*\*\*'s attendance remain irregular, this could result in the county council issuing a Penalty Notice.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support you in this matter. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via the academy office.

Yours sincerely

### Letter 3

Dear

I previously wrote to you on \*\*\*\* informing you that \*\*\*\* attendance was at the low rate of \*\*\*\*. Since then, the situation has not significantly improved and his/her attendance is currently \*\*\*\* (please find attendance record enclosed).

As parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually.

The government's Department for Education (DfE) sets the Persistent Absence (PA) threshold at 10%. This means that if a child has an overall attendance of 90% or less over a given period, they will be classified as a persistent absentee pupil.

I am therefore writing to inform you that if attendance fails to improve during the next **(4)** weeks, the case may be referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for a Penalty Notice fine to be issued.

Yours sincerely

**Appendix 5: Parenting Contract Meeting**

**PARENTING CONTRACT MEETING**

PARENTING CONTRACT BETWEEN SCHOOL, PARENT(S), and CHILD

DATE AND TIME OF MEETING:

VENUE:

SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE:

OTHER PEOPLE PRESENT & JOB ROLES:

NAME:

JOB ROLE:

NAME:

JOB ROLE:

APOLOGIES:

NAME:

JOB ROLE:

-----

Pupil:

DOB:

Ethnicity:

Address:

Postcode:

School:

Year Group:

Parent's Name:

DOB:

Gender: M/F

Ethnicity:

DOB:

Gender: M/F

Ethnicity:

Sibling[s]

Names:

Dates of Birth:

School:

Att. %:

Names:

Dates of Birth:

School:

Att. %:

**PURPOSE OF AGREEMENT:**

To improve the above pupils schools attendance record and avoid legal action being taken.

**SUMMARY OF SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS:**



Medical Needs: Has this been investigated thoroughly by school? Please provide further details:

SUMMARY OF PARENTS ENGAGEMENT/CO-OPERATION:

MULTI-AGENCY INVOLVEMENT                      YES/NO                      EHA: YES/NO

Are any agencies involved currently with Family    YES/NO  
*Example: Target Support, Social Care, SEND, external agencies*

If Yes please give details:

SUMMARY OF AREAS OF CONCERN:

Attendance in last \_\_\_ school weeks \_\_\_ out of possible sessions \_\_\_ = %.

Unauthorised Absence =  
 (\_\_\_ Week period: Date to Date)

| Issues Raised<br>(please detail below) | YES | NO | Issues Raised (please detail below) | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|-------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1.Alleged Bullying                     |     |    | 5.Peer/Staff relationships          |     |    |
| 2.Medical                              |     |    | 6.Academic                          |     |    |
| 3.Home related difficulties            |     |    | 7.Behaviour/Attitude                |     |    |
| 4.Transport                            |     |    | 8.Community/other                   |     |    |

Alleged Bullying:

---

---

---

---

Medical:

---

---

---

---

Home related difficulties:

---

---

---

---

Transport:

---

---

---

---

Peer/Staff relationships:

---

---

---

---

Academic:

---

---

---

---

---

Behaviour/Attitude:

---

---

---

---

Community/other:

---

---

---

---

Agreed Action: - I/We the parent[s] agree to address the following target areas for improvement in attendance and/or punctuality and to co-operate fully within these aims:

Attendance Target over the next 6 weeks – Minimum 90% (amend to suit school)

Medical information needs to be provided in order for school to authorise any future absences.

Parent to contact school every day child does not attend.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

If I am concerned about my aspect of the delivery of the plan I will contact (school contact) without delay.

Timescale: - The Attendance will be reviewed within \_\_\_\_\_ school weeks from the date of this meeting:

If the targets are met then this contract will be reviewed and monitored. However, if the targets are not met / unlikely to be met you will be at risk of a Penalty Notice or face legal proceedings in Court without further warning.

It is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

Parents Signatures:

Name: ..... Signature: .....

Name: ..... Signature: .....

I have received an explanatory leaflet “Non School Attendance and Prosecution of Parents - Guide for parents” regarding PACE Interviews and accept that this is an accurate summary of this meeting. Copy of meeting notes provided to parent.

Also Present:

Pupil: ..... Signature: .....

School Rep: ..... Signature: .....

Others: ..... Signature: .....

Date: