



Attendance & Punctuality Policy (Primary)

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1 Aims

- 1.1 The Constellation Trust seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each of them to realise their true potential. The Constellation Trust will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the individual schools' community feels valued and secure.
- 1.2 Our aim is to provide an outstanding provision for all our pupils. At the core, lies an expectation that pupils will come to their school regularly and on time. All our staff will work with pupils and their families to support parents/guardians in helping them meet their legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- 1.3 The attendance policy and practice will ensure that children are kept safe and ensure their welfare needs are met in accordance with current safeguarding practice.
- 1.4 This policy will include encouraging good habits of school attendance and support for families with children in the Early Years Foundation stage.
- 1.5 The word parent will be used, in this policy, to define any adult that has legal parental responsibility for the child.
- 1.6 The Constellation Trust will meet and respond to its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty, April 2011.

2 Legislation and Guidance

- 2.1 This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
 - The Education Act 1996
 - The Education Act 2002
 - The Education and Inspections Act 2006
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
 - The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- 2.2 This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.
- 2.3 The policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.
- 2.4 DfE statutory guidance document on attendance states '*Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child aged 5-16, if registered at a school, attends that school regularly.*'
- 2.5 A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn five between 1 January and 31 March, they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn five between 1 April and 31 August, they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn five between 1 September and 31 December, they are of compulsory school age on 31 December.
- 2.6 Refer to EYFS Attendance and Punctuality Statement for a child prior to compulsory school age.
- 2.7 The Trust would like all our pupils to aim for 100% attendance each term. However, for the purpose of this policy, regularly will be defined as being a minimum of 96%.

3 School Procedures

3.1 Attendance Registers

3.1.2 By Law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

3.1.3 The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day (am) and once during the second session (pm). It will mark whether every pupil is

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3.1.4 Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

(This is automatically done by the Management Information System)

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

3.1.5 Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

3.1.6 The timings for the school days are as follows:

- Appleton Primary School from 8:55am to 3:30pm
- Bricknell Primary School from 8:50am to 3:20pm
- Francis Askew Primary School from 8:50am to 3:20pm
- Paisley Primary School from 8:45am to 3:15pm
- Rokeby Park Primary School from 8:45 am to 3.15pm
- Stoneferry Primary School from 8:45am to 3.15pm
- Victoria Dock Primary School from 8:45am to 3:15pm

3.1.7 If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes. However, to ensure that effective safeguarding practices are in place it is essential that the pupil's details are recorded in schools as being signed out by a member of staff. (Each school will have a clear system for doing this).

3.2 **Unplanned Absence**

3.2.2 Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health by 9am or as soon as practically possible.

3.2.3 Absence due to illness will usually be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

3.2.4 If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

3.2.5 If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or Dental Appointment

3.3.2 Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

3.3.3 Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

3.4.2 A pupil who arrived late (up to 30 minutes after register has opened) but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (Code L).

3.4.3 Parents should note that the Trust believes that lateness is a lost opportunity for learning time; therefore, if a child has a significant number of lates within a term, the individual school does reserve the right to not present 100% attendance recognition.

3.4.4 A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (Code U).

3.5 Following Up Absence

3.5.2 Individual schools will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.5.3 As part of individual schools' first day absence procedures contact will be made. This may be by a phone call, text, or other means.

3.5.4 Each school will endeavour to contact first day absentees' parents. However, if they cannot, and the parent has not responded by the beginning of the next school day to explain the absence, then the absence code shall be altered from N to O signifying that the absence is unauthorised. When possible, attempts may also be made to visit the parents' home.

3.6 Children Missing from Education

- 3.6.2 A child who is absent from their school for 10 consecutive school days without notice from home is regarded as a 'child missing from education'. As a serious safeguarding concern, schools will have sought to identify the location of the pupil by not only using the contact details it has but also by engagement with external agencies.
- 3.6.3 It should be noted that, the changes to Pupil Registration Regulations 2016 schools have had to notify the Local Authority and work cooperatively to investigate the child's location. This is further reinforced by Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2020.
- 3.6.4 Hull City Council Children Missing from Education protocol is designed to support professionals across CYPFS, partners and stakeholders in their combined efforts to safeguard children who are missing in education. Its aim to identify the practical steps to be taken by professionals to locate and track children and young people missing from education. Refer to Hull City Council protocols (updated July 2020)
- 3.6.5 Refer to EYFS Attendance and Punctuality Statement for children who are not yet of statutory school age.

3.7 Alternative Provision

- 3.7.2 Each school is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Where this is the case, they will have reciprocal arrangements in place with the alternative provider, to provide attendance information. This should be provided daily or at the least weekly. All unexplained and unexpected absence will be followed up by the provider and if necessary, the school in a prompt and timely manner.
- 3.7.3 Pupils may be present at an off-site activity, which has been approved by the school. The appropriate code (B) will be used thus showing that the school has certified that the education is supervised, and appropriate measures are in place to safeguard the children.
- 3.7.4 A pupil may be dual registered at more than one school. Where this is the case, the appropriate code (D) will be used to show that the pupil was not expected to attend the school as they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

3.8 Reporting to Parents

3.8.2 Schools are expected to report regularly to parents regarding the attendance of their child. Attendance will be included in the end of year report information.

4 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

4.1.1 Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence, including those for holidays, to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

4.1.2 It should be noted that leave of absence is not a parental right.

4.1.3 The Trust defines 'exceptional circumstances' (for leave of absence that are **not** holiday) as 'being of unique and significant to the child's emotional, educational or spiritual well-being that it outweighs the loss of teaching time'.

4.1.4 The Trust will not authorise term time holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. This will be extremely rare, and any requests **must** be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance.

4.1.5 The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teachers' discretion.

4.1.6 Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- An immediate member of the family is seriously/ terminally ill and there are compassionate grounds for absence.
- The recent death of an immediate family member has been traumatic, and it is felt that, on balance, a child having time away from school would be of emotional benefit.

- Any arrangements for access determined by a court order
- Service personnel where annual leave is dictated by an employer (evidence will be required)

This list is not exhaustive.

4.2 Legal Sanctions

4.2.1 As a child's regular attendance at school is a legal requirement, subject to section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the Trust schools have to consider if legal intervention is deemed necessary.

4.2.2 As this point, referrals are made to the Local Authority (LA) who have the delegated authority to arrange the issue of each stage of the process.

4.3 Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letters

4.3.1 Through the Penalty Notice Regulations, the LA issues the parent with a penalty notice warning letter, this requires the child to improve their attendance for 15 consecutive school days (the penalty notice warning period). By deploying this measure, it is hoped that attendance improves, and further action is not required.

4.4 Fixed Penalty Notice*

4.4.1 The LA undertakes the issuing of a penalty notice but acts upon the recommendation of the individual school. The school will have satisfied a number of requirements by providing relevant evidence.

4.4.2 The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days; however, this can rise to £120 to be paid within 28 days. All payments are made direct to the LA. Local Authority protocol allows parents the right of appeal against a penalty notice. However, it should be noted that, if the penalty notice were not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority would decide to either prosecute or withdraw the notice.

4.5 Court Warning Letter & Summons

4.5.1 On some occasions, a court warning letter will be issued to parents. The ac will have substantial evidence demonstrating the child's failure to attend on a regular basis. The school will refer this matter to the LA, who will issue the summons. A fine up to £2500 and/ or 3 months' imprisonment can occur for case convictions.

4.5.2 The Trust schools will, however, have attempted to engage with the child's family prior to this and will have explored all ways of trying to remove barriers to regular attendance and supporting the child and their family. (See section 6)

**It should be noted that schools and the Local Authority can issue a fine separately as a result of absence incurred due to an unauthorised holiday.*

See Appendix 2a flowchart of steps taken to improve attendance.

5 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- 5.1 The Constellation Trust seeks to recognise and celebrate regular attendance.
- 5.2 Each school will have its own bespoke set of rewards and way of implementing this, examples may include:
 - weekly celebration within assemblies
 - weekly certificates for both classes and individuals
 - weekly/termly prizes
 - individual praise and acknowledgement (e.g., stickers) for those pupils who are working with a key worker to improve their attendance
 - termly acknowledgement of those students with 100% attendance
 - letters to parents acknowledging success and support.

6 Monitoring Attendance

- 6.1 An audit of registration will be undertaken, by the Trust, annually in all academies to provide quality assurance of attendance practice.
- 6.2 The Trust would like every child to aim for 100% attendance each term.
- 6.3 The expectation, however, is that during the course of an academic year a child's attendance will be at least 96%.
- 6.4 Schools will use a traffic light system to monitor individual, class and year group attendance.

Category	% attendance	Comment – for pupils (information for parents)
Excellent	100%	Perfect!
Good	98 – 99%	You are doing amazingly well – keep it up!
Average attendance	96 – 97%	You are in line with other children your age – let us see if we can go higher.
Below average	90 – 95%	We need to improve – what can we do together?
Persistent Absence	<90%	What have we done to try to help you improve? Do we need to get others to help? (Multi Agency)

- 6.5 Regular monitoring will allow schools to intervene quickly and keep parents informed formally if attendance is becoming a concern.
- 6.6 If a child's attendance does not improve, the school will employ a graduated response:
- Contact will be made by a key worker within the school (initially this is likely to be verbally via informal face to face contact or by phone)
 - Contact will be made by a key worker within the school formally (appendix 2b – letter 1)
 - Formal contact will be made requesting a parent to attend an attendance review meeting and a partnership (child/ parent/ school) action plan completed. (Appendix 2c letter 2 & appendix 2d action plan)
 - Formal contact highlighting progress not made since attendance review meeting (appendix 2e)
- 6.7 It should be noted that failure for improvements to have taken place during this period might then lead to the beginning of legal sanctions (see section 4).

See Appendix 2 flowchart of steps taken to improve attendance.

7 Roles & Responsibilities

7.1 The Trust Board

- 7.1.1 The Trust Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole Trust. It also holds the Trust Leaders to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Local Governing Body

7.2.1 The Local Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the individual schools on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher (or nominated senior member of staff) to account for the implementation of this policy within their individual school.

7.2.2 Each individual school will have a named link Governor for attendance.

7.3 Strategic Leaders for Attendance

7.3.1 All schools should identify a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who has overall responsibility for attendance. They should ensure that clear systems are in place to:

- monitor attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher (or Senior Lead)
- works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- advises the Headteacher (Senior Lead) when to issue fixed penalty notices

7.4 Class Teachers

7.4.1 Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information.

7.5 Office/Reception Staff

7.5.1 Office/Reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system or report it to the relevant person.

8 Monitoring Arrangements

8.1 This policy will be reviewed annually as required by the Board of Directors.

8.2 Minor changes will be made and approved internally when required however, at every review, if more substantial amendments are required, the policy will be shared with the Board of Directors and then with Local Governing Bodies.

9 Links with other policies

9.1 See individual schools Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10 Useful Links

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance
- www.hull.gov.uk/resident/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-and-absence
- www.childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/school-attendance-and-absence/

Appendix 1

DfE Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

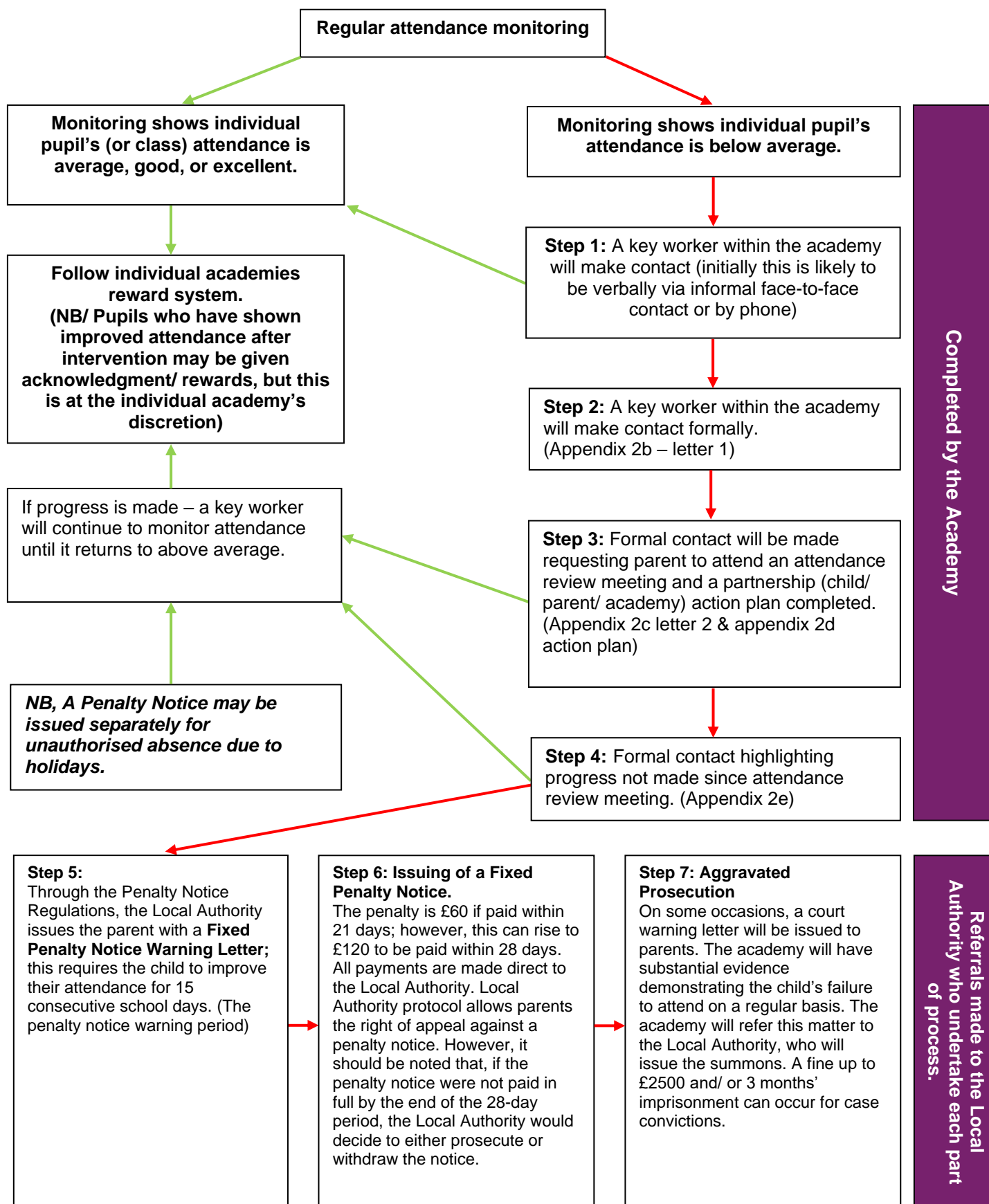
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2a: Flowchart of Attendance Interventions



Appendix 2b: Letter 1

Date

Name

Address

Dear parent/carer

Re: D.O.B

Child's name attendance is currently at insert%. This is below the School's and the Government's minimum expectation of 96%, therefore we need his/her attendance to improve.

When a child's attendance drops significantly below the expectation, there is a risk that they will be flagged up on our systems as a persistent absentee. It is important to be aware that if a child's number of unauthorised absences becomes significant this may result in a fine.

Regular attendance is essential and as a school, we wish to work in partnership with parents to ensure your child makes the best possible progress.

If you need any support with your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Insert name and title of senior person with responsibility for attendance.

Appendix 2c: Letter 2

Date

Name

Address

Dear parent/carer

Re: D.O.B

I wrote to you on # expressing my concern about your son/daughter's level of attendance.

Due to the lack of significant improvement in (child's name) attendance, I would like to invite you to a meeting at # School on # at # , to discuss how working together could enable your son/daughter's attendance to improve which in turn would have an impact on his/her attainment.

It is important that you attend this meeting, however if this date and time is not convenient, please contact me on the above number to rearrange.

Yours sincerely

Insert name and title of senior person with responsibility for attendance.

Appendix 2d: Action plan



INSERT
SCHOOL
LOGO

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW MEETING

Action Plan

Pupil:	DOB:
School:	Date:
Present	

Summary of discussion and action:

Action
If targets met, extend for a further period or supervision of Key Worker:
If targets not met, consider referral to SEWO and/or Request for Fixed Penalty notice:

Agreed Attendance Targets			
	Week commencing	Target %	Actual %
Week 1			
Week 2			
Progress reviewed with pupil at week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			

Agreed by:	Review date:
Parent:	Pupil:
School:	

Appendix 2e: Letter to be sent with copy of action plan

Date

Name

Address

Dear parent/carers

School Attendance Enforcement Procedure

Re:

D.O.B

I am writing regarding the meeting held at # School on # to discuss (insert child's name) poor school attendance. Attendance targets were set for the following four weeks, with additional targets and support. A copy of this action plan is enclosed for your information.

The attendance target is #% attendance for the next 4 weeks and will be reviewed on # .

At the review, if (child's name) has met the targets set, these will be reviewed and extended, and you will be informed of the new target. However, if (child's name) has not met the targets this case may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

I must remind you that you have a legal responsibility, as a parent, to ensure your son/daughter attends school regularly. Please make every effort to ensure that (child's name) does so in the future otherwise the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and any further unexplained absence from school may lead to the matter being placed before the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) A of the Education Act (1996).

Yours sincerely

Insert name and title of senior person with responsibility for attendance.