



Attendance Policy & Procedures

Date/Minute Ref: 7th Feb 2018

Reviewer/s:

Ms L Corrigan – Principal

Mrs S Williams – Assistant Headteacher



Attendance Policy & Procedures 2017-18

Current Academy

- Park Lane Academy (Secondary, 11-16)

References:

- *“School Attendance” Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, Department for Education, October 2014*
- *“School attendance parental responsibility measures” Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police, Department for Education, January 2015*
- Education Act 1996, Section 444
- *“Prosecution and Penalty Notice Advice for Academies and Maintained Schools who have decided not to buy into the Attendance and Pupil Support Service”, Directorate for Children and Young People, Kirklees Council, April 2015*

Attendance and punctuality

164. Inspectors will consider:

- Overall absence and persistent absence rates for all pupils, and for different groups in relation to national figures for all pupils
- The extent to which low attenders are improving their attendance over time and whether attendance is consistently low (in the lowest 10%)
- Punctuality in arriving at school and at lessons.

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Rationale

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary.

The Government expects Schools and Academies to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Encourage parent/carer(s) to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at the school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

Overall aims of the Park Lane's attendance strategy

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected
- To ensure Park Lane's attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, students and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of students and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Specific Responsibilities

Park Lane will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently
- Attendance targets are set for the school, year groups and individual students
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed

Children are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and be registered punctually
- Where able, inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences

The Parent/ Carers will:

- Ensure good attendance (97% and above)
- Inform school on each day of absence and give specific reason
- Discuss planned absences with school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time

Park Lane procedures:

- Parent/Carer(s) are asked to telephone school before the start of the Academy day to notify of their child's absence
- Authorised absence, e.g. illness, must be supported by a letter from the parent/carer(s) explaining the reason for the absence

- Children who wish to leave the premises during the day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents notifying us of the reason. Children will need to be collected by an adult and should not be sent home unaccompanied
- Children arriving at school after registration should sign in at Student Services
- Where parent/carer(s) fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the School's Attendance Officer will endeavour to contact them.

Unauthorised Absences

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- The school has not given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent
- The school does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for the absence
- Medical evidence requested by the school is not forthcoming
- No explanation of absence is received within two weeks
- If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parent/Carer(s) may not authorise any absence. In cases where parent/carer(s) seem to condone unauthorised absence, the school may involve the court officer
- The Governing Body have agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and/ or persistent lateness
- Parent/Carer(s) will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and will have 15 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and/ or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Legislation on Penalty Notices

The Education Act 1996 says that:

"If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence".

There are two offences relating to parental responsibility for ensuring regular attendance at school or alternative provision:

- 1) If a registered student is absent without authorisation then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. A conviction for this offence can result in a fine of up to £1,000.
- 2) If the parent knows that their child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. This is known as an aggravated offence. A conviction for this offence may result in a substantial fine up to a maximum of £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months and/or a community penalty.

Section 444 (1A) applies the offence to where parents fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the Local Authority or Governing Body has arranged alternative provision. There are specific defences in respect of these offences. Unless one of the defences listed in the Education Act 1996 applies, the offence is likely to be proven and the parent found guilty.

The defences are summarised below:

- The parent proves the child did not attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause
- The child is absent with leave (permission given by the school)
- The child is absent on a day specifically set aside for religious observation by the religious body to which the parent belongs
- The Local Authority has failed to make appropriate travel arrangements (where it is obliged to do so) to facilitate the child's attendance

- The child is of no fixed abode and the parent proves his trade or business requires him to travel from place to place

The Court may well have sympathy where the defence is given as 'bullying'. It is helpful therefore to demonstrate that where bullying has been cited, the school have put in measures to investigate the claims and support the student in the event of any subsequent allegation.

Where the Local Authority believes that a parent has a legitimate defence prosecution will not proceed.

Work to be undertaken by the Academy prior to considering a prosecution

It is expected that the individual Academies will have clear systems in place for managing attendance.

These should include:

- 1) Adopting an Attendance Policy in line with Department for Education expectations
- 2) Efforts made to support the child
- 3) Meetings in the Academy and clear plans agreed with parents/carer(s). These plans should clearly state what is expected from parents/carer(s). These expectations should be reasonable and achievable. Plans should also include what additional support will be provided by the Academy and where appropriate other agencies
- 4) Letters including a "final warning letter" advising parents that they have failed to co-operate and that the school intends to request prosecution by the Local Authority
- 5) The Academy must give consideration of the issues that may impact on attendance. This is by no means an exhaustive list but could include:
 - Parents/Carer(s) having mental health issues or being elderly or infirm
 - The child being beyond parents/carer(s) control
 - Any special educational needs the child may have
 - If a child has significant anxiety issues re: school attendance which indicates a mental health problem
 - Child safeguarding concerns
 - Poverty

None of these factors would by themselves prevent prosecution but may indicate that attendance concerns may be better addressed using other strategies such as:

- Multi-agency approaches (Early Help Assessment)
- Referral to appropriate agencies
- Referral to the Single Point of Referral (SPR) panel
- Support available from the Attendance & Pupil Support Service (APSS) as part of traded services

Schools will need to have considered these options prior to a prosecution taking place. Generally, prosecution should not be considered where parents/carer(s) appear to be making genuine and consistent efforts to improve their child's attendance.

Where there are other agencies involved such as Children's Social Care, Youth Offending Team (YOT) or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) the views of these agencies should be sought prior to prosecution.

It is expected that schools will ensure, where parents do not speak sufficient English, that the school makes provision for translating letters and other documentation and use interpreters for meetings. Careful consideration should be given to the benefits of prosecution for Year 11 students who are in their final two terms at school.

Penalty Notices for Non-School Attendance

Non-school attendance not related to leave can have many complex underlying factors related to the child, family and school, and is rarely simply a matter of parental culpability. Our experience has been that where there have not been significant efforts to engage with children and their parents with plans to improve attendance then if used in isolation the outcome of penalty notices is poor. Therefore the expectation is that the Academy will follow similar processes to those required for prosecution. The Academy may feel that a penalty notice is a more measured response than proceeding straight to court. For example the school may decide to use a penalty notice where it is the first time significant attendance difficulties have occurred and they feel that a penalty notice is likely to have an impact. This would allow the Academy to retain court proceedings as a future option.

Prosecution for Irregular School Attendance

Where a school wish to request the Local Authority issue a penalty notice for irregular school attendance they must refer to the Code of Conduct which states there must be evidence available to demonstrate that:

- The child has had more than 15% unauthorised absence within a continuous six week period;
- Support has been offered by the school (Academy);
- All reasonable attempts have been made to engage the parent/carer(s) and to provide opportunities for the parent to address the poor attendance;
- Parenting or similar contracts have been offered which were clear in the expectations of the parent and the support that would be offered;
- DfE guidance on the use of parenting contracts has been followed;
- Parents have been made aware of the legal sanctions available including the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued

Statutory Services provided by local authorities

Local Authorities have a duty to enforce the legal responsibility upon parents to ensure that their compulsory school aged child receives a suitable education at school or otherwise.

The Attendance & Pupil Support Service carries out that function on behalf of the Local Authority:

Legal responsibilities:

- Provides advice and guidance around the legal consequences of non-attendance at school
- Issues formal warnings and Penalty Notices
- Carries out legal action in respect of section 444 of the Education act 1996 and sections 437 and 443 in relation to School Attendance Orders
- Acts as Court appointed 'Responsible Officer' for Parenting Orders and Education Supervision Officers
- Provides Court with sworn statements and case chronologies
- Records, monitors and reports to Government Office

Attendance:

- Monitoring and analysis of school attendance data
- Monitoring of the school roll

Children Missing in Education and Elective Home Education:

- Follows up all enquiries where children are missing from education with a view to providing a school place
- Carries out initial visits and checks for parents wishing to home educate and undertakes follow up visits to ensure parents are fulfilling their legal duty

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance

Aims:

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across The Academy
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality through rewarding good attendance and punctuality in line with targets set by Park Lane and national expectations

Celebration Assemblies - Whilst the delivery may differ in its nature, Park Lane will use assemblies to publically recognise, celebrate and reward children/form groups/year groups with excellent and/or 100% attendance.

Academy Newsletters - Newsletters will highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. In particular it will include the Academy's performance against target as well as initiatives to promote, reward and recognise excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

Rewards - Rewards are specific to each Academy within Park Lane and are appropriate to the age of the children. These will be reviewed at least on an annual basis for their impact on promoting good levels of attendance and/or punctuality.

Breakfast Club - This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off before the start of the day, ensuring they are on time. The club is supervised by Academy staff.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers and other Academy staff regularly promote good attendance and punctuality with their classes/year groups. Good levels of class attendance and punctuality is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

Daily procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Ensure children arrive at the Academy on time every day	Parents/Carer(s)	Children are punctual and have good attendance
Inform the Academy before the start of school day if their child will be absent	Parents/Carer(s)	Office/Support staff update registration codes
Children arriving late to the Academy are registered at Student Services	Attendance Officer	Absence mark on SIMS amended to a late mark
Named social worker informed of absence for LAC and / or other vulnerable children	Attendance Officer	Safeguarding procedures are followed to ensure safety of vulnerable children

Teachers record attendance This is done at the start of each session	Teachers/Supply staff	Staff use a paper register, if required. Teacher takes responsibility for promptly informing main office if any concerns
1 st day absence phone calls are made to ask parents about their child's unexplained absence for that day. Attendance lead member of staff informed of attendance/punctuality issues	Attendance Officer	Attendance codes updated
Provide a written note, including dates of and reason for absence upon the child's return to the Academy	Parent/Carer(s)	Office staff/Teachers collect these and pass on for filing
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced by year group and for the whole Academy	Attendance Officer	Entered into Attendance Overview spread sheet to allow for monitoring and analysis

Identified staff in Park Lane Academy will be responsible for leading on attendance.

This will include:

Leadership Team Member – responsible for overseeing all attendance matters at the Academy. **Attendance Officer** – Ensure attendance of all children

is accurately recorded and first day calling. **Heads of Year** – Deal with day to day attendance matters within their cohort. Where appropriate engage with parent/carers through meetings and/or parental contracts.

Form/Class Teacher – Ensure attendance is recorded and good attendance and punctuality is promoted.

Designated Safeguarding Leads – Oversee attendance matters for Looked after Children (LAC) and other vulnerable children decided by the school (likely to be at Section 17 and 47). Where appropriate engage with parent/carers through meetings and/or parental contracts.

SENCO - Oversee attendance matters for those children with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Need. Where appropriate engage with parent/carers through meetings and/or parental contracts.

Parent/Carer (s)-Teacher consultation evenings - This provides an opportunity for Academy staff to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where appropriate these evenings can be used to meet with parent/carers where there may be issues around attendance.

Specific Responsibilities:

Weekly procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced and shared in Assemblies Statistics placed on newsletter/website	Attendance Officer	Children are able to see which class(es) have been successful with their attendance and punctuality
Absence codes for individual pupils are updated using SIMS to show reason for absence	Attendance Officer	Information provided here is used to provide targeted interventions as appropriate

Fortnightly procedures	By whom	Outcomes/ action
Attendance Panel to include the relevant staff: e.g. SLT Attendance Lead, Attendance Officer, Heads of Year, Medical, Additional Needs	SLT Attendance Lead	Panel review and agree minuted actions for all children under 93%
Half termly and termly procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Analyse attendance/punctuality data to monitor trends and progress	Attendance SLT Lead	SLT/Teaching staff are able to target year groups and implement appropriate strategies
Assemblies to promote attendance/punctuality and share term's data and progress	Attendance SLT Lead	Allows students to understand importance and ensures attendance has a high profile within school
Discussions as required in response to specific attendance/punctuality concerns of a particular cohort of children	Attendance Lead and/HOY	Strategies produced
Individual attendance/punctuality discussed with children and families, at parents' evenings	Class Teachers	Mentoring and advice on attendance/ punctuality issues provided to all families
Analyse attendance/punctuality data and information to identify cases of concern and develop appropriate interventions	Attendance Lead	Support Plans offered/used.
Meeting to discuss individual cases, monitor progress and refer new concerns. Support and meeting provided for students and families	Attendance Lead/SLT/HOY	Targeted intervention for individual concerns
Review success and impact of attendance/punctuality strategies for the term	Attendance Lead and SLT	Amend and refine interventions as appropriate

External Agencies who maybe engaged to support improving attendance for children where significant barriers maybe present

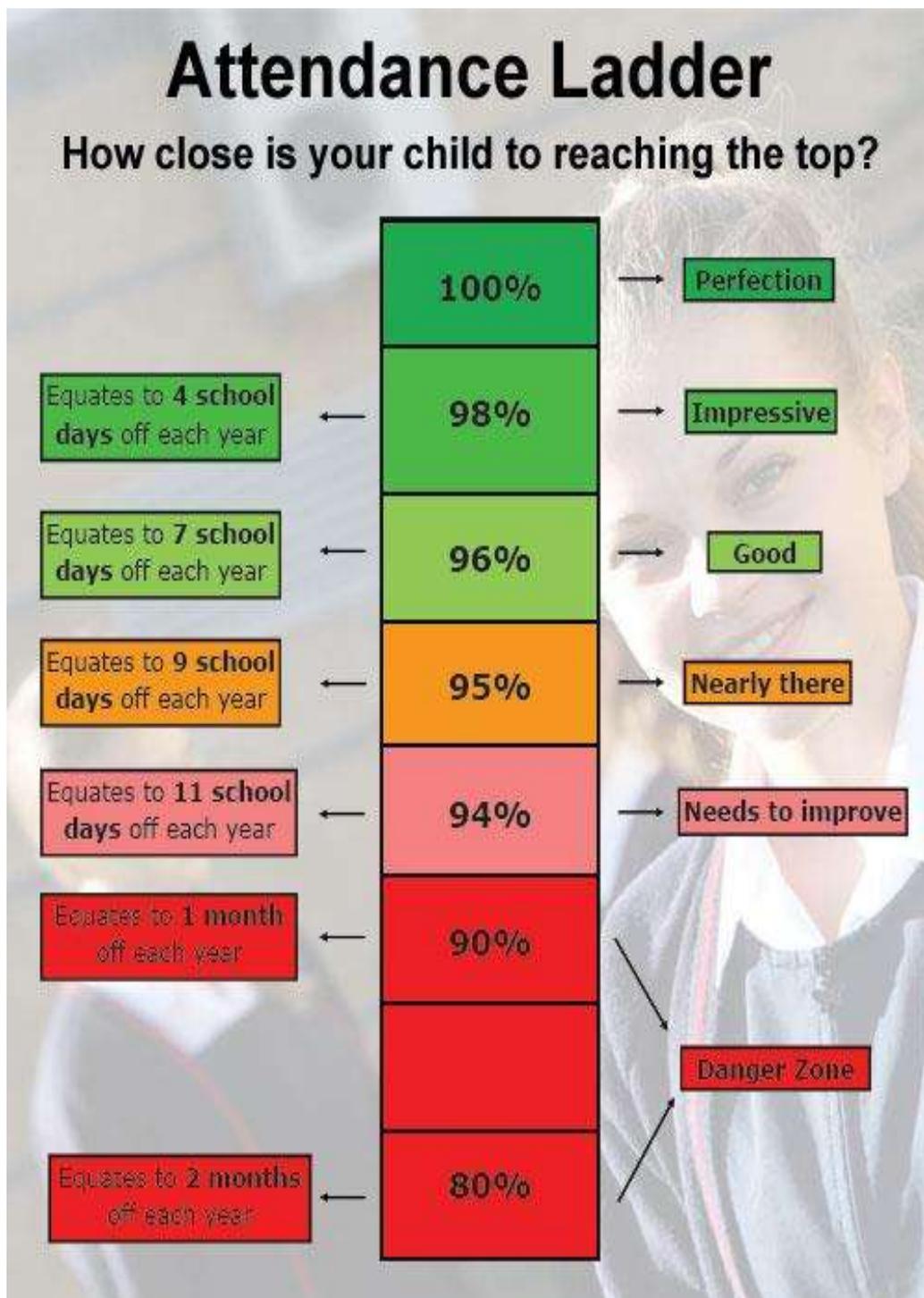
Local Authority through the single point referral (SPR) process
School Nurse Service
Mental and Emotional Health – CAMHs
Social Care
Family Support
Integrated Youth Support Service
Targeted Youth Support
West Yorkshire Police

Returning to school after a long term absence

Children who are returning after a long term absence will be supported by each Academy through a variety of strategies/interventions which may include the following: Parental Contracts, part-time timetables, home tuition, Health Care Plans, joint working with external agencies. A meeting will be held involving a representative from the school and parent/carer(s) to decide on the level of support which will be required.

Promoting good attendance for children who are not yet of compulsory school age

Excellent levels of attendance will be promoted in all phases of education in all Academies within the Park Lane. In some this may include some children who may not be of compulsory school age. This will be done in a supportive manner and parent/carer(s) will be given opportunities to engage with the school through parental meetings and either the school's or at parent/carer(s) requests. Park Lane will ensure that it follows the relevant legislation in regards to the children within its particular setting.



Appendix B - Half Termly Attendance letter – Under 93%

Dear Parent/Carer(s)

RE: Attendance & Punctuality- «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»

Attending school on a regular basis is key to your child achieving well at Park Lane Academy. Unfortunately, we are writing to you as your child is one of the students whose attendance is below Academy Target and expectations for **Term 1 2017-18**.

«chosen_forename»'s current attendance is «percentage_attendance»%

The government expectation for 'good' attendance is for your child to be to be **96%** or above. This still equates to seven days absence a year. There is a clear link between poor attendance and low achievement and it is therefore vital that we promote and ensure good levels of attendance to ensure positive academic outcomes for your «son_daughter».

Attendance and punctuality is being closely monitored within the Academy. Please see the below cohorts, as to which bracket your «son_daughter» attendance falls into. And who you will be contacted by should we feel that there is an issue in the current academic year.

- 95-100%- Personal Tutor
- 90-95%- Head of Year
- 80-90%- Attendance Officers
- Less than 80%- Education Welfare Officer

As an Academy we are taking positive steps to encourage and celebrate the already good attenders that we have at the school. As well as promote and inspire good attendance with others.

We hope, the issue(s) affecting attendance during this term can be resolved. If the issue persists you may be invited into school to meet with one of the above professionals depending on which cohort your child falls into.

If your «son_daughter» attendance does not improve we will have to consider taking steps towards penalties and legal action. Please see below for further details of this.

Legal penalties for not ensuring regular attendance at school and parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996: *Section 444 has two separate but linked offences: Section 444(1): where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly, and fails to ensure the child does so. Section 444ZA7 applies the offence to where parents fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision.*

In terms of the possible consequences for poor attendance:

The fines available to the courts if parents are found guilty of the section 444 (1) offence include a level 3 fine of up to £1,000. If they are found guilty of the section 444 (1A) the fine is at level 4, up to £2,500 and the court can also sentence them to imprisonment for up to three months. Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents of pupils found in a public place during school hours after being excluded from school. The fine is a level 3 fine of up to £1,000.

Alternatively the Academy may decide to issue a fixed term penalty notice for irregular or non-attendance to school.

Remember, persistent absence and/or low attendance can limit future life opportunities. However, we would prefer to work in partnership with you rather than pursue penalties.

Please let the Academy know, by telephone or in writing (you may wish to use your child's Planner), if your child is/ or is likely to be absent, in accordance with the guidance set out in the Student Planner.

For further information or to discuss any particular attendance issues, please contact the Academy to discuss further.

Thank you, in anticipation, for your support.

Yours sincerely,
Ms D Hartley and Miss C Tracey
The Attendance Team

Chloe Tracey
Attendance Officer
Park Lane Academy
Park Lane
Halifax
HX3 9LG

01422 362215



Appendix C – PROSECUTION - Initial invite letter

Parent/Carer(s)

RE: Attendance at Park Lane Academy – (Pupil name) (DOB)

We are concerned about the attendance of your child (name). I have enclosed a copy of his/her attendance certificate for you to see.

If children are to make good progress in school and achieve good outcomes then it is important that they attend regularly and punctually. On average, attendance at this school is (x %). As you can see, your child's attendance is currently (y %).

In order to discuss this further and consider whether there is any support we or another service may be able to offer we would like to invite you to a meeting at school on (day/date/time).

If this date or time is not convenient please contact the school to rearrange.

I hope this will be a positive meeting where we will have the opportunity to improve your child's attendance with support from school.

Yours sincerely

Appendix D - PROSECUTION - Second invite letter

Parent/Carer(s)

RE: Attendance at Park Lane Academy – (Pupil name) (DOB)

You were recently invited to a meeting at school to talk about improving (name)'s attendance. Unfortunately you did not attend this meeting and did not contact school to discuss this.

(Child's name) attendance remains a cause for concern. For your information I have enclosed a copy of your child's current attendance certificate. A further meeting has been arranged for (day/date/time).

It is important that you co-operate with efforts to improve (Child's name) attendance if legal proceedings are to be avoided. I have enclosed an information leaflet "Regular School Attendance – Advice and Information for Parents and Carer(s)" which advises you of the legal penalties that can apply for failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

We would like to avoid referring to the Council to request legal proceedings and hope that you will now co-operate with efforts to meet to discuss the situation.

Yours sincerely

Appendix E - Final warning letter regarding possible legal proceedings

Parent/Carer(s)

RE: Attendance (*Pupil name*) (*DOB*) Year

Unfortunately you have failed to co-operate with recent efforts to meet with you to discuss your child/children's attendance.

OR

Unfortunately you have failed to co-operate with recent plans to improve your child's attendance.

You may wish to consider any of the following:

It is now our intention to ask the Local Authority to start legal proceedings against you under Section 444(1) (or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 as you are failing to ensure the regular school attendance of your son/daughter (name).

OR

Before making this request I am prepared to offer you one last opportunity to discuss this matter at a meeting with (name of school personnel) , at (venue) on (date and time). If this date and time is inconvenient please contact (name) at the above office to rearrange a mutually convenient time. If you do not attend this meeting without good reason then the matter will be referred to the Local Authority for prosecution.

OR

This Service will monitor your child's attendance for the next four weeks and if there is no significant improvement then legal proceedings will begin. We remain available to offer you any support and if you require this, then you should contact us as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Appendix F - Notification of the intention to request prosecution

Please note – it is important that parents have been notified of the intention to request prosecution which clearly indicates the penalties. This notification should be signed by the Principal.

Dear Parent/Carer(s)

I am writing to inform you that (name of Academy) is now recommending to the local authority that legal proceedings against you are instigated under Section 444(1) (or Section 444 (1A) * delete as appropriate of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of your son/daughter (name).

If you are found guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of Education Act 1996 then you are liable to a fine of up to £1000.

If you are found guilty of an offence under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 this may result in a substantial fine up to a maximum of £2,500 and/or a community penalty which may require you to undertake a number of hours of unpaid community work for the benefit of the community or be subject to a curfew. The Court also has the power to impose a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months.

Where a parent is found guilty of this offence then the Court also has a duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider making a Parenting Order, if they believe this would support you in ensuring your son/daughter's regular school attendance.

Your child may also be brought before the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order under Section 36 of the 1989 Children Act.

In all cases you may also be required to contribute to the cost of the Court proceedings.

May I suggest that you make every effort to ensure that your child(ren) attend(s) school regularly and punctually from now on as this may be taken into consideration when this matter is heard by the court.

Yours sincerely

Miss Corrigan
Principal

Appendix G - Penalty Notice for Unauthorised Absence from school – Letter 1

Dear Parent/Carer(s)

RE: (name of child)

(DOB)

I am writing to inform you that a Penalty Notice is being considered against you due to your child's poor school attendance. I enclose a leaflet that gives advice on the use of Penalty Notices.

Before issuing a Penalty Notice, and in accordance with the local Code of Conduct, I am required to offer you the opportunity to sign a parenting contract. The aim of this contract is to work together to improve school attendance and hopefully avoid having to issue the Penalty Notice.

A meeting has been arranged at, **on****at**, to draw up and sign such a parenting contract. Unless there is satisfactory improvement in your child's attendance, a Penalty Notice may be issued **4 weeks later**.

Yours sincerely

Appendix H - Penalty Notice for Unauthorised Absence from school – Letter 2

Dear Parent/Carer(s)

RE: (name of child)

(DOB)

I wrote to you on **(date)** to inform you that a Penalty Notice is being considered against you due to **(name of child's)** poor attendance.

I have arranged meetings with you to draw up a contract and hopefully avoid having to issue the Penalty Notice. Unfortunately you have not attended any meetings or contacted me to inform me why.

In case there was a genuine reason why you were unable to attend, I would like to offer you a final opportunity to meet on **(date)** at **(time and place)**. Please contact me at the Academy if this is not convenient.

If you fail to attend this meeting I will arrange for a Penalty Notice to be issued in respect of your child. Please note that this will amount to **£60** (or **£120** not paid within **21 days**). Once again I am enclosing a leaflet that gives advice on Penalty Notices.

Yours sincerely

Appendix I - Penalty Notice for Unauthorised Absence from school – Letter 3 Final review of parenting contract

Dear Parent/ carer(s)

RE: (name of child) (DOB)

At the final review held recently we were very disappointed to note that there has been no improvement (in your child's school attendance).

We have therefore decided to request that the Local Authority proceed with a Penalty Notice. You will receive an Invoice and details of how this can be paid in the near future. Please note that a Penalty Notice is issued separately to each parent.

Once again I have enclosed a leaflet that provides information on Penalty Notices.

Park Lane Academy remain available to offer you any help and support you may require in improving your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Miss Corrigan
Principal

Appendix J - Final review of parenting contract – Improvement

Dear Parent/ carer(s)

RE: (name of child) (DOB)

At the first / final (delete as appropriate) review held recently we were pleased to note a real improvement (in your child's school attendance). We have, therefore, decided not to request the Local Authority issue you with a Penalty Notice on this occasion. We will, however, continue to monitor your child's attendance and if this should deteriorate then we will once again consider whether a Penalty Notice should be requested.

If your child does experience difficulties, please inform the Academy as soon as possible so that we may help you to resolve any issues.

Yours sincerely

Miss Corrigan
Principal

Appendix K – INITIAL PARENT CONTRACT 1 – SCHOOL ABSENCE

The aim of this contract is for home and school to work together to improve school attendance, the child's general wellbeing and to avoid any legal action resulting from poor attendance.

Child's Name:		Meeting Date:	
Academy:		Meeting Location:	
Form/ Year Group:		Head of Year/ Lead:	
Name of Parent (s)			

Issues identified/ Why is this child not attending school regularly?	
•	
•	
•	
Attendance % this academic year	
Unauthorised absence % this academic year	
No. of lates this academic year	
Attendance % during previous 6 school weeks:	
Unauthorised absence % during previous 6 weeks:	
No. of lates during previous 6 weeks	

Academic Overview:

Subject	Target Grade	Current Grade	Predicted Grade
English			
Maths			

Form Tutor/ Class Tutor Comment:

AGREED ACTION/S

The Parent/Carer(s) will:

Date

The Child will (if appropriate):

Date

The Academy will:

Date

Referral/s to external agency/agencies (where appropriate)

Date

Progress will be reviewed after 4 school weeks

Date:

The final review will be held after a further 4 school weeks

Date:

Signed on behalf of Park Lane Academy:

Signed

Date:

Name

Position

This Parenting Contract has been discussed with me and I understand the purpose of this. I understand that if I do not carry out the actions agreed in this contract that a Penalty Notice may be issued against me. (Note: Penalty Notices (fines) are issued to each parent).

Signed (Parent/Carer) Date:

Signed (Parent/Carer) Date:

(where appropriate)

This contract has been discussed with me. I understand the agreement and that my parent/carer may be fined if I do not attend school.

Signed. (child) Date

Appendix L - PARENT CONTRACT REVIEW 2 – SCHOOL ABSENCE

Child's Name:	
Academy:	
Attendance % since contract signed	
No. of lates since contract signed	

1. Have Parents/Carers carried out actions agreed in the contract? YES / NO If no, please explain below.
2. Has the school carried out actions agreed in the contract? YES / NO If no, please explain below.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS AGREED	
The parents/carers will:	Date
The Child will:	Date
The Academy will:	Date
Referral/s to external agency/agencies (where appropriate)	Date
Final Review Date (in 4 weeks time):	
If satisfactory improvement has not been reached by this date, a Penalty Notice will be issued.	
Signed on behalf of Park Lane Academy:	
Signed	Date:
Name	
Position	
Parental Signatures:	
Signed	Parent/carers Date
Signed	Parent/carers Date
Signed.....	Child (where appropriate) Date

Appendix M - FINAL PARENT CONTRACT (3) REVIEW – SCHOOL ABSENCE

(This meeting does not involve the parent/carer/s)

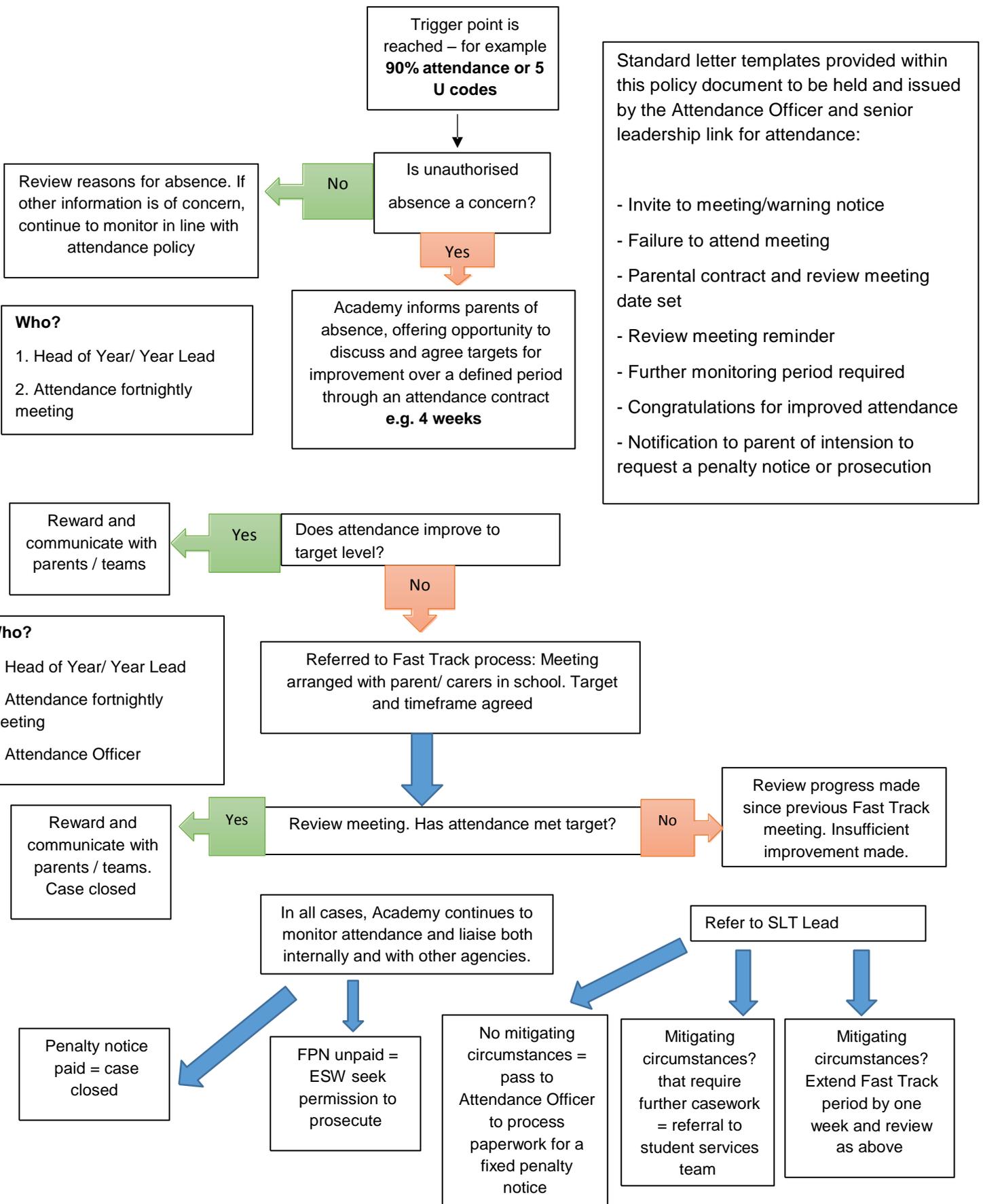
Child's Name:	
Academy:	
Attendance % since last review:	
No. of lates since contract signed	

<p>1. Have parents/carers carried out actions agreed in the last review? YES / NO If no, please explain below.</p>
<p>2. Has the Academy carried out actions agreed in the last review? YES / NO If no, please explain below.</p>

REVIEW DECISION	
<p>Request for Penalty Notice to be issued? (please circle as appropriate)</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>If Yes, send out letter to parent/carer(s) informing them of the decision.</p>	

<p>Signed</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>Name</p>	
<p>Position</p>	
<p>Signed</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>Name</p>	
<p>Position</p>	
<p>(Member of staff – and Principal)</p>	

Appendix N: Penalty Notice flow chart



Standard letter templates provided within this policy document to be held and issued by the Attendance Officer and senior leadership link for attendance:

- Invite to meeting/warning notice
- Failure to attend meeting
- Parental contract and review meeting date set
- Review meeting reminder
- Further monitoring period required
- Congratulations for improved attendance
- Notification to parent of intension to request a penalty notice or prosecution

Who?

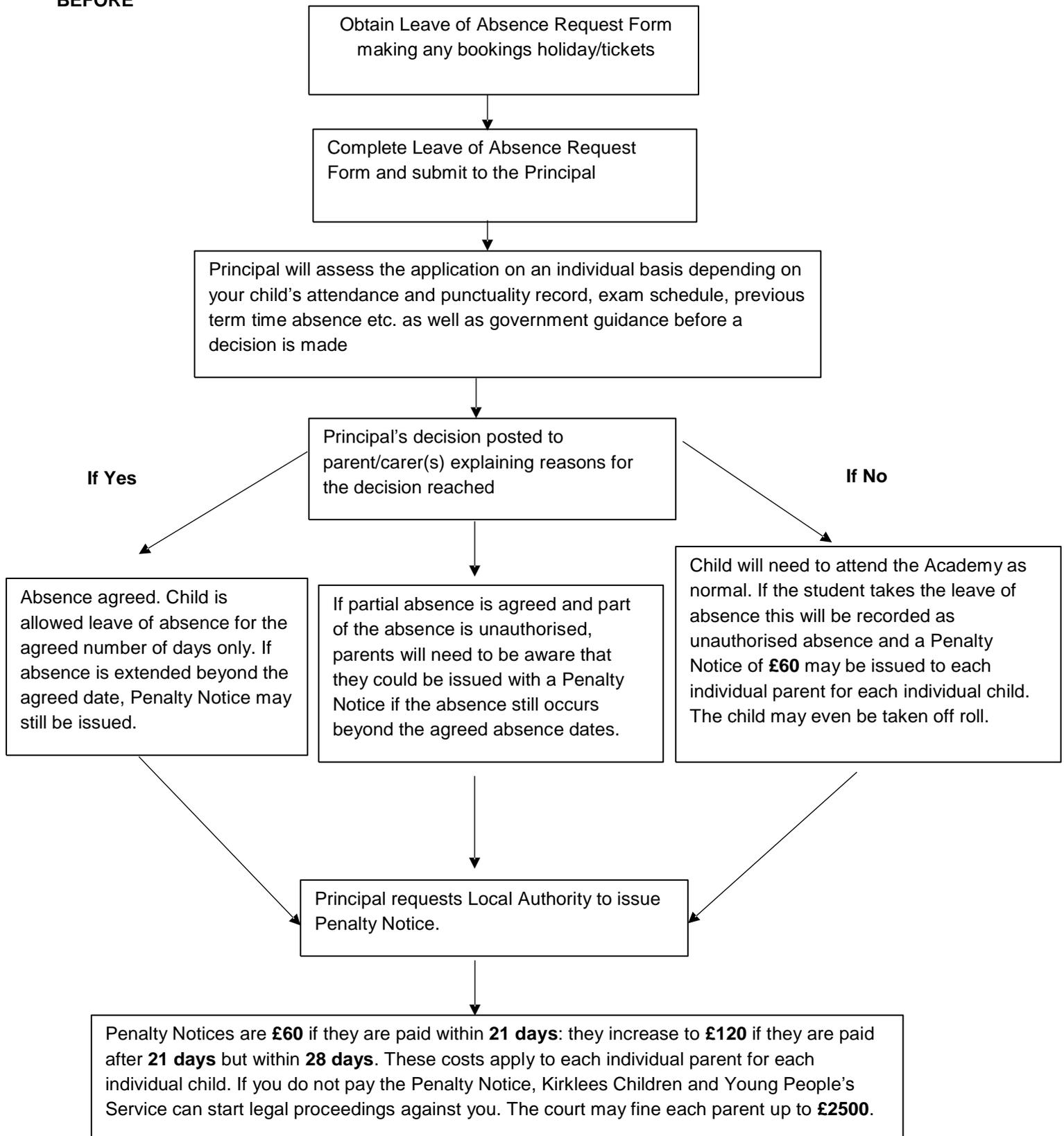
1. Head of Year/ Year Lead
2. Attendance fortnightly meeting

Who?

1. Head of Year/ Year Lead
2. Attendance fortnightly meeting
3. Attendance Officer

Appendix O: Application for a Leave of Absence during term time

BEFORE



**APPLICATION FOR STUDENT/PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE ACADEMY
DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Full name of child:

Form/Class:

Full holiday address (if applicable):

Contact number:

Reason for application:

.....

.....

.....

Absent from the Academy date:

Back at the Academy date:

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s): Date

Name of parent(s)/carer(s):.....

If your child has a brother or sister at another school/ academy please tell us the name(s):

.....

.....

.....

The Principal will consider the following points before authorising leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances:

- Guidance on term time holidays from the Department of Education
- The child's overall pattern of attendance.
- The likely impact on the child's education and the time of year (exams).
- The length, destination and purpose of the leave requested.
- The family circumstances and the parent's reasons for wanting to take their child out of the Academy during term time.

PENALTY NOTICE:

Where the Principal decides that authorisation cannot be given but the absence occurs, consideration will be given to the issuing of a Penalty Notice in line with Government guidance and there is a possibility that your child may be taken off the Academy roll.

Office use only

Current Attendance:.....% Number of late marks:.....

Number of days requested:.....

Would granting this request mean attendance would fall below 95%? Yes / No

Office use only

Seen by the Principal: Yes/No (please circle)

Agreement reached: Yes/No (please circle)

Other outcome:.....

Reason/s:.....

.....

Signed:.....Date:.....

Name:.....Position:.....

N.B. Please note that for extended periods of unauthorised absence the Academy may take your child off the role of the Academy. In some circumstances in addition to a fixed term penalty notice the child may not be allowed to return to the Academy as there may not be any places available in that particular year group.

Appendix P: Leave of Absence Request Letters

Date

Dear Parent/Carer (s)

RE: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» - «reg»

Following your request for «chosen_forename» to be allowed leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances, **I regret that I am unable to authorise this absence.** My reasons are mentioned in the leave of absence request form. I must point out that the Academy strongly discourages absences during term time, as this seriously affects the amount of progress made in an academic year. There are clear links between education progress and attendance.

The Academy's policy in relation to term-time absence is available in the Parent Handbook and Student Planner. The Policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission in writing from the Principal in advance should they wish to take their child out of the Academy during term-time, and that if a leave of absence is taken in term-time which has not been authorised, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Should you continue with your leave of absence plans and take «forename» out of the Academy, the Local Authority, in consultation with the Academy, will consider issuing a Penalty Notice against you.

The cost of a Penalty notice will be **£60** if paid within **21 days**, increasing to **£120** if they are paid after **day 21** but within **28 days**. These costs apply to each individual parent for each individual child. Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's attendance at school. Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this please contact the Academy.

Finally, you need to be aware that if your child fails to return to the Academy following 20 days of absence due to extended leave/holiday, «he_she» is at risk of losing «his_her» place at the Academy at could be taken off our Academy roll.

Yours sincerely

Miss Corrigan
Principal

Date

Dear Parent/Carer(s)

RE: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» - «reg»

Following your request for «chosen_forename» to be allowed leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances, I am writing to confirm that **I have authorised this planned absence, from (date) to (date)** and «chosen_forename» is expected to be back at the Academy on **(date)**. However, I must point out that the Academy strongly discourages absences during term-time, as this seriously affects the amount of progress made in an academic year. There are clear links between education progress and attendance.

Parents are expected to contact the Academy if anything delays the student returning to the Academy on their expected date of return. It is for the Principal to determine if this request is reasonable. Should you fail to contact the Academy, the Local Authority, in consultation with the Academy, might consider issuing a Penalty Notice against you.

The Academy's policy in relation to term-time absence is available in the Parent Handbook and Student Planner. The policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission in writing from the Principal in advance should they wish to take students out of the Academy during term-time, and that if a leave of absence is taken in term time which has not been authorised, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The cost of a Penalty notice will be **£60** if paid within **21 days**, increasing to **£120** if they are paid after **day 21** but within **28 days**. These costs apply to each individual parent for each individual child. Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's attendance at school.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this please contact the Academy.

Yours sincerely

Miss Corrigan
Principal

Date

Dear Parent/ Carer

RE: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» - «year_reg»

Following your request for your «son_daughter» «chosen_forename» to be allowed absence from the Academy from **DAY & DATE**, we wrote to you to inform you that this leave of absence request had been denied. Despite this you have continued with your plans and taken «chosen_forename» out of the Academy.

I am afraid you have not followed the correct Academy procedure for taking holidays in term time. It is clearly stated in the Parent Handbook and Student Planner that parent/ carers should avoid arranging family holidays during term time and if this is unavoidable then permission from the Principal must be sought by filling in a leave of absence request form before booking the holiday.

If we do not hear from you or «chosen_forename» is not back in school by **Day & date (20 school days)** then we will consider removing «him_her» from our school roll. If this happens and you would like «chosen_forename» to be re-admitted at Academy you will need to contact the Academy on your return.

If your child does return we will consider issuing a Penalty Notice against you for the unauthorised leave of absence taken.

The cost of a Penalty notice will be £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if they are paid after day 21 but within 28 days. These costs apply to each individual parent for each individual child. Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's attendance at school.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Appendix Q: Attendance Coding

(Taken from “School Attendance” Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, Department for Education, October 2014)

Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence.

The codes are:

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Consortia Schools

Pupils attending consortia schools as part of their course only need to be placed on the registers of their 'main' school rather than on all of the schools they attend. They should be treated as guest pupils at the other consortia schools. The consortia schools however, must ensure they have suitable systems in place for monitoring and reporting the attendance and absence of the pupils involved, which must be shared with the 'main' school.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised Absence from School

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Principal's 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 school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Appendix R: Attendance Calling Card

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Dear parent or carer of:

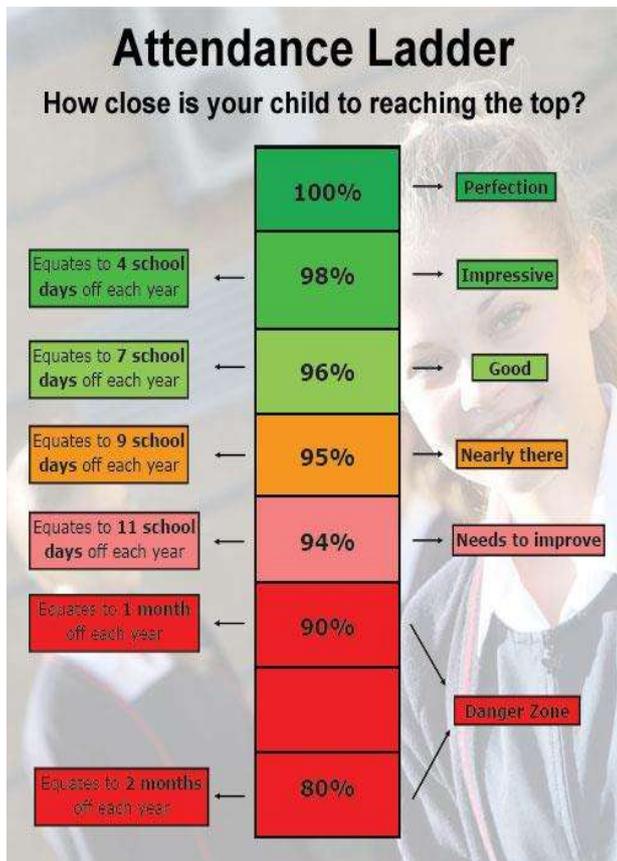
Name:.....Form:.....

We visited your home today but you were not available to discuss your child's attendance.

Your child's attendance is currently %

Please call on (*Academy Telephone Number*) to arrange a suitable time and date to come into the Academy or visit you again.

Staff Name:..... Date:.....



Appendix S: Information and advice for parents about Penalty Notices for school absence

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is a fine issued to parents or carers for their child's unauthorised absence from school. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to being prosecuted under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices are most often used for unauthorised holidays in term time.

Penalty Notices are sent through the post. The Penalty Notice contains information explaining how and where to pay.

All Penalty Notices must be issued within the local Code of Conduct. You can get a copy of the Kirklees Code of Conduct from the Attendance & Pupil Support Service - contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

Who is responsible for paying the Penalty Notice?

The parent/carer(s) named on the letter and on the invoice is responsible for paying the Penalty Notice. If Penalty Notices have been issued to two parents at the same address, each individual parent is responsible for paying their own Penalty Notice.

On most occasions, Penalty Notices are issued to each individual parent/carer(s) of each individual child separately.

Under **Section 576** of the **Education Act 1996** a parent is defined as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- And any person who, although not a natural parent, "has care" of a child or young person. "Having care" of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

What are the costs?

The Penalty Notice is for **£60** if paid within **21 days**, it will increase to **£120** if it is not paid within **21 days**. It must be paid in full within **28 days**.

You must pay the whole of the amount owing in one payment – you cannot pay in instalments and you cannot pay part of the Penalty Notice.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid in **28 days**, and it has not been withdrawn, you will be prosecuted (under **Section 444** of the **Education Act**) for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. You will receive a separate summons for this which will give you notice of the time and date of the court hearing.

Can a Penalty Notice be withdrawn?

A Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn if it is shown that it should not have been issued to you or has not been issued to you in accordance with the local Code of Conduct.

If you believe that a Penalty Notice has been wrongly issued to you as a result of a term time holiday, you should raise this with the school in the first instance.

If you believe that a Penalty Notice has been wrongly issued to you as a result of general poor attendance, you must contact the Attendance & Pupil Support Service in writing, stating why you

believe the Penalty Notice to have been incorrectly issued. We will consider your request and let you know whether the Penalty Notice will be withdrawn.

If a Penalty Notice is not withdrawn and you do not pay it, you will be liable to prosecution for the offence that your child has failed to attend school regularly.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Penalty Notice has been issued. A Penalty Notice may be withdrawn as described above.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

Yes. You should contact the school first to see if they can help you to resolve any issues that are preventing your child from attending regularly.

Appendix T: Attendance Information for Parents/Carer(s)

Introduction...

Our 'school attendance register' is taken twice daily.

If your son/daughter is ill and unable to attend school, please telephone the Attendance Team and follow up this call with a letter/note when your son/daughter returns to school. Tel: *(Insert Academy telephone number)*.

Attendance Team at *(Insert Name)* Academy

Attendance Officer -

Year ? –

Year ? -

Year ? -

Year ? -

Year ? -

ALL absences remain **UNAUTHORISED** unless a letter is received and is acceptable.

Leave of Absence

The *(Insert Name)* Academy will not authorise requests for leave of absence during term time except for exceptional circumstances. Holidays during term time will **NOT** be authorised.

Recent amendments to the 2006 regulations make it clear that the Headteachers MAY NOT grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Leave for these exceptional circumstances must be sent in advance to *(Insert name of responsible name of person and their title)*

At a glance...

Your child and school attendance

- Children who attend school regularly benefit in the short and long term. They stay on top of their education and learn how to get on with people better.
- As a parent, you have a legal responsibility to make sure your child receives a fulltime education between the ages of 5 and 16. For most people, this means registering a child with a school and making sure they attend regularly.
- You can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned if your child has a poor attendance record.
- If you have problems, your child's school and your local authority can help you get your child back into school.
- There will be times when your child cannot go into school, for example, if they are ill. However, taking time off for holidays and birthdays is not acceptable.

- Taking an active interest in your child's education and letting them know that you are not happy if they do not attend school will make them less likely to "bunk off" occasionally or play truant for longer periods.
- If your child won't go to school and you are struggling to deal with it, help is always available from school or your local authority.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every day 50,000 children of all ages miss school without permission. Don't let your child waste their potential too!

Is your child missing out?

We've all been there, woken up one morning not wanting to face the day ahead. Children feel the same, especially if they are teenagers and at the mercy of their hormones. Going to school may be the last thing they feel like doing.

The fact is, if your child doesn't attend school regularly, they are less likely to do as well as other children. That means fewer chances and fewer choices when they are looking for work and developing social relationships in later life.

Every parent knows how tough it can be to get their children to school each day but, by making sure they do turn up, you are also fulfilling a legal requirement as a parent. If you know your child is not turning up for school sometimes and are not sure what your legal responsibility is, this booklet is for you. It will tell you:

- Why your child needs to attend school regularly
- What the law says about your responsibility
- What happens if your child does not attend school regularly
- What are acceptable and unacceptable reasons for staying away from school
- How to deal with, and stop, your child skipping school

DID YOU KNOW?

If you miss just one lesson it takes FOUR lessons to catch up!

Going to school, why is it so important?...

Lots of people think that missing school here and there can't do them much harm, but even taking a short amount of time out can be a problem. Your child might fall behind in their work and not be able to catch up. If there are gaps in their knowledge, they will suffer when exams and school assessments come around.

There could be other problems too. Children who miss school are missing out on the social side of things, which affects their ability to make and keep friends, and if your child is "bunking off" can you be sure you know what they are doing during the day? If they are not in school where are they? Young people can easily become involved in anti-social behaviour and crime.

A child with a good school attendance record is setting themselves up for a better future once they leave school. Employers want staff who are reliable, and good attendance is a sign that your child can be trusted.

What the law says:

School attendance is also important because the law requires it. As a parent, you are legally responsible for ensuring your child receives a full-time education. For most people, this means registering a child at school and making sure they attend.

DID YOU KNOW? Missing five days of every term, every year is the same as missing one whole school year!

If your child doesn't go to school...

It is in your interest to make sure your child has a good attendance record. If they miss school regularly - even if you don't know about it - your local authority can take legal action against you.

If your child is missing school regularly, your local authority or the school will contact you to see what can be done. An Education Welfare Officer may visit or write to you to discuss the problem.

You may be offered a 'parenting contract'. This is a voluntary and formal agreement between you and your child's school or the local authority. It sets out things that you and the school (or local

authority) will do to help improve your child's attendance.

In some areas, schools have other workers, such as 'Connexions Personal Advisers' who might work with your child to improve their attendance and help with problems they might have.

REMEMBER... If you are having difficulties in getting your child to attend school, you do not have to struggle alone. See our tips further on in this booklet and work with teachers and Education Welfare Officers to encourage your child back into school.

Legal Consequences—what could happen if your child truants from school?

- You may be prosecuted and, if convicted, will have a criminal record.
- For more serious offences, you can be fined up to **£2,500** and/or sent to prison for up to three months.
- You could also be given a 'Parenting Order', which means you have to attend a parenting class.
- You may be issued with a penalty notice of **£60** (rising to **£120** if unpaid after **21 days**). If you do not pay, you will be prosecuted.

What is acceptable, and what is not?...

Of course, there will be times when your child has to miss school for a good reason. If your child needs time off, you must ask the school's permission as far in advance as possible.

When is it OK for your child to stay away from school?

Illness - follow the school's sickness procedures and let them know as soon as possible on the first day that your child is ill.

Medical Appointments - try to arrange appointments during the school holidays, at weekends or after school hours. Naturally, there will be times when this isn't possible, but try to give school as much advance warning as possible. Only half a day will be authorised for dental and medical absences.

Bereavements - let your school know as soon as possible if someone in your family dies. The school will want to make sure that staff and pupils act sensitively with your child in their return to school.

Exclusion - if your child has seriously misbehaved and the Principal issues a letter saying that your child is not permitted on school premises, either permanently or for a set number of days (up to 45). If the exclusion is permanent, your child will be offered alternative education.

Religious Festivals - ask your school well in advance for time off for religious reasons.

Special Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances - each request will be considered on merit.

When is it NOT OK for your child to stay away from school? Holidays - these will not be authorised.

Birthdays - your child should attend school, even if it is their birthday. Depriving your child of a chance to celebrate with classmates is not a 'treat'!

Shopping - or any other activity for which there is no serious reason for your child to be away from school.

Tuancy - skipping school is not acceptable and may well have serious consequences for both you and your child, Remember, parents can still be fined or prosecuted even if they did not know that their child was 'bunking off'.

Making sure your
child doesn't miss out...

Tips for preventing truancy:

- Let your child know that attendance is important and that it is not right for them to miss school.
- Is your child unhappy in school? Does your child have a school-based issue, for example? Then please contact your child's Head of Year as soon as possible to discuss any support, advice or guidance we can offer.
- If your child makes excuses to try and get out of going to school, take time to listen to them. There may be an underlying problem.
- Take an interest in your child's education, ask them about their day and praise them when they do well in school.
- Try to make sure they get to school on time. Arriving late can be disruptive and unsettling for your child. It also sets a bad example.

Parentline Plus for dealing with truancy:

- Tell your child how worried you are. Let them know that you are concerned about their future.
- Ask for help as soon as you know there is a problem. Speak to your child's school, an Education Welfare Officer, or the local authority and work with them to help get your child back into school.
- Talk openly with your child about any problems they have. They are more likely to open up if you understand rather than punish or blame them.

Children are required by law to attend school 190 days per year. The Government states that every pupil's attendance should be at least 95%. Being **LATE** after registration will also **LOWER** your attendance.

How does your child measure up?

Attendance during one Equals – days absent school year	Which is approximately weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95% - 9 days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90% - 19 days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons
85% - 29 days	6 Weeks	150 Lessons
80% - 38 days	8 Weeks	200 Lessons
75% - 48 days	10 Weeks	250 Lessons
70% - 57 days	11.5 Weeks	290 Lessons
65% - 67 days	13.5 Weeks	340 Lessons

