

Giffards Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

This policy was developed in the Spring Term 2009 through a process of consultation.

Our Academy works in collaboration with the schools, academies and governing bodies in the North East Cluster and The Inspiration Learning Trust to have a common approach to attendance management. This is supported by Thurrock Local Authority.

Agreed by Governors

May 2009, reviewed May 2012, May 2014, September 2016

Next Review Date

September 2018

Signed By Chair of Governors _____ Date _____

Introduction

This document is a statement of aims, principles and strategies for Attendance. Government guidelines on attendance and punctuality have been taken into consideration in its foundation.

Giffards Primary School is a successful school which aims to provide the best available learning opportunities for children living in the local community. Without the help and support of parents, some children will find it difficult to adjust to the structured environment that schools have to be in order to achieve their objectives. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their time at school it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

This policy sets out the information we think will help you to explain to your child what is important to their future success and how, with your support, attending school regularly will help them to achieve their full potential.

The effect of absence on progress					
<i>A whole year has 365 days; a school year has 190 days. That leaves 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.</i>					
No absence	10 days absence	12 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence	38 days absence
190 days of education	180 days of education	178 days of education	171 days of education	161 days of education	152 days of education
100%	95%	94%	90%	85%	80%
<p>Very Good</p> <p>Your child has the best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start and is in line with National attendance and OFSTED expectations</p> <p>Well done and keep going!</p>		<p>Worrying</p> <p>Your child has less chance of success. Makes it harder for your child to make progress and is below National attendance and OFSTED expectations</p> <p>As a school we are very concerned and will closely monitor your child's attendance.</p>		<p>Serious Concern</p> <p>Your child will find it very difficult to make progress as they have very poor attendance. Any attendance under 90% is classed as persistent absence.</p> <p>Significant learning has been missed and this is below National attendance and OFSTED expectations</p> <p>As a school we are seriously concerned and at 80% are required to refer your child to the Education Welfare Service</p> <p>May result in court action!</p>	

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning

Any absence that a child has from school affects them as their learning becomes disrupted and social interactions can also be affected. Regular absences will have a serious effect on their academic progress and can affect a child's confidence within school.

Ensuring your child attends school regularly is your legal responsibility and allowing absence from school without good reason is an offence and may result in a prosecution.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety, access to the Curriculum and anti-bullying.

Your child may be at risk of harm if they are frequently absent and fail to attend school regularly. This will be considered as a safeguarding matter and could be referred to Social Care.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regularly attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

First Day Contact

It is vital that you tell us as early as possible if you know your child is not going to be attending school. We have a 24hr answer phone service and absence link on our website to help parents. If you don't contact the school, we will have to try to contact you, so it is important that you regularly notify us of your latest contact telephone number or any change of address. If you don't contact us and we can't make contact with you we will have to make a home visit and may have to report your child as a 'missing person'. This is for safeguarding reasons
Failure to give the school an acceptable reason for an absence will result in an unauthorised absence mark

Understanding types of absence:

A register is taken in the school every morning and afternoon (each classed as a 'session') and every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required by the school.

AUTHORISED absences are sessions away from the school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time), emergencies or other unavoidable situations. Obviously children do need to be kept off school if they are too ill to

attend, however, if they are simply ‘not feeling right’ or are just tired then this will not be authorised. It is also important that a child returns to school as soon as possible after feeling unwell, for example, it is not acceptable not to send a child back to school on Friday simply because they have been unwell Monday-Thursday

UNAUTHORISED absences are sessions away from the school which the school deems unreasonable. This type of absence can lead to referral to the Education Welfare Service which may result in legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absences include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is classed a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason, both authorised and unauthorised absences. Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to any child’s progress and educational prospects. Any case that is at the PA level or is moving towards it is given priority and you will be notified immediately and if attendance does not improve you will be asked to attend an Attendance Panel meeting where an Action Plan will be drawn up. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully in terms of both attendance and academic progress and most PA cases are also referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent from school you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and inform us of the reason for the absence.
- Provide us with appointment card/appointment letter if taking your child out of school for a medical appointment; your child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- Provide the school with medical evidence of any absence lasting more than 5 consecutive days (i.e. medical note, medical appointment card, medicine bottle)
- Provide the school with medical evidence for all future illness if your child has poor attendance - you will be notified if your child reaches this level.

If your child is absent from school we will:

- Text you then telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Write to you to inform you of our concerns regarding your child’s attendance if it falls below 95%.

- Write to you again to inform you of our concerns regarding your child's attendance if your child's absence continues to fall.
- Invite you to an Attendance Panel meeting should your child's attendance not improve after the previous letters have been sent
- Refer your child to the Education Welfare Service if attendance falls below 90% (PA)

The Education Welfare Service

The school aims to work pro-actively with parents to ensure attendance for each child is as high as possible and, unless there are extenuating circumstances, never falls below 95%. We will contact parents at an early stage if your child's attendance starts to fall towards concerning levels (i.e. 95% attendance or less) and continuing concerns will be reported back to parents. In this way the school and parents can work together to resolve any issues without Education Welfare or Social Care involvement.

However, if difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way then the school may refer a child to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). The EWS is the statutory service responsible for enforcing attendance where the efforts of the school have been unsuccessful. Referral to the EWS will result in a home visit from an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will try to work with parents to improve attendance. If the issues cannot be resolved in this way then these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the EWS.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable in the school. If your child misses the start of the day it can have a detrimental effect on their progress as they find it hard to settle and they will inevitably miss vital introductions to lessons. It also disturbs the class routines, which has a negative effect on other children's learning.

The school doors open at 8:45am and children must be in class for registration by 8:55am. If a child arrives at school after 8:55am they will need to come via the school office for their details to be recorded on the class register. If a child is up to 30mins late they are marked in the register as 'late' (L), pupils arriving more than 30 minutes after the close of registration will be regarded as absent from the morning session and will be given an unauthorised absence mark (U).

Obviously there are times when your child may be late into school due to an appointment; this type of lateness is marked accordingly, although the school does need to be notified prior to the lateness. If an appointment is later in the morning or afternoon it may be possible to send your child into school to obtain their 'present' mark and then collect them nearer to the appointment time. Ideally, where possible, appointments should be made for your child outside of the school day.

A letter will be sent home if your child is frequently late and lateness will continue to be monitored from that point. Further lateness will result in a 'persistently late' letter and if the problem continues this will result in an Attendance Panel meeting where an Action Plan will be put together.

If you are having problems getting your child to school on time you can approach us at any time to support you and help resolve the problem.

Holidays in Term Time

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations **remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days**. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Examples of Circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:

- Holidays taken in term time due to lower costs/parental work commitments
- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative
- Pilgrimages by parents
- Holidays booked as a surprise by relatives etc

Examples of Exceptional Circumstances where leave of absence MAY be granted:

(Evidence may be requested for the following situations)

- Funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling
- Wedding of parents or sibling – up to a max of 3 days for weddings abroad
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence – up to max of 3 days
- A close relative is terminally ill and the absence is likely to be the last such absence
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA –as appropriate
- Absence relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by the Education Welfare Service
- Religious Observance –The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states ‘on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parents belong

Parents must apply for leave of absence in advance of taking it, failure to do so will result in the absence being marked as an unauthorised absence code ‘O’ rather than an unauthorised holiday code ‘G’. All applications need to be made **at least 4 weeks** before the period of absence and before personal and travel arrangements are made.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday taken, the case may be referred to the EWS who may issue a Penalty Notice (See below). If a leave of absence is taken, staff will **not** set extra work for children to do during their absence or on their return.

Penalty Notices

The EWS have issued a 'Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for Unauthorised Absence from School,' which came into effect on 1st May 2014. This complies with the relevant law as regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils.

Parents will be given at least 15 days warning of an impending Penalty Notice in order to give an opportunity to improve attendance, the exception to this is where a Penalty Notice is in respect of an unauthorised leave of absence during term time.

Circumstances in which a Penalty Notice can be issued (a letter warning that a Penalty Notice could be issued must be sent first for points 1-3 below):

1. At least 19 sessions of unauthorised absence within the previous 12 weeks (one session is half a day)
2. A parent is not willing to take responsibility for securing their child's attendance.
3. The EWS believes that issuing a Penalty Notice could avoid further absences.
4. If the Head Teacher does not authorise a request from a parent for term time leave of absence and the parent takes the leave. **No warning letter will be given.**
5. Where a pupil of compulsory school age who has been excluded from school, either for a fixed period or permanently, is found to be present in a public place during school hours in the first five days of the exclusion, without reasonable justification.

Penalty Notices will be issued by Authorised Local Authority Officers, in Thurrock these are members of the EWS; Headteachers may make an application to the EWS to issue a Penalty Notice in respect of pupils registered at their school; Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers can issue a Penalty notice in the cases of excluded pupils in a public place.

Once a person is issued with a Penalty Notice a fine must be paid, this is set by regulation at £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the Notice applies.

Penalty Notices can be issued in respect of each child and to each parent in relation to each instance of unauthorised absence.

Those responsible for attendance matters in this school:

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the following staff have specific attendance related responsibilities

- **Class Teacher** – To complete electronic registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily; to be alert to early signs of issues which may result in non-attendance; to inform the attendance officer of any attendance concerns.

- **Receptionist** - To ensure children who are late or absent are added to the electronic register including recording reasons and first day absence calls are made when parents have not notified the school of an absence; to alert the Attendance Officer if unable to make contact as a home visit may be necessary or the child may need to be reported as missing; to notify the Attendance Officer of any issues concerning pupil absence.
- **Attendance Officer** – To oversee the registration process and liaise with class teachers over attendance concerns; to alert parents over attendance concerns and/or for frequent lateness and to closely monitor all identified children; to consult and liaise with EWS and refer PA children to them; to promote good attendance within the school with assemblies, achievement certificates and rewards. Particular focus will be on monitoring the attendance of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium as it has been identified that this group of children have lower attendance than non-Pupil Premium children and this negatively affects their academic progress and results can therefore be lower.
- **Head Teacher and Governors** – To ensure all attendance procedures are carried out in accordance with the Attendance Policy and to work with the Attendance Officer to raise the profile of attendance within the school and deal with the attendance issues that arise.

Engaging Parents

The school will use standard letters for information. Standard letters will be sent out by the attendance officer when:

- Attendance has fallen to 95% and subsequent letters sent if attendance does not improve
- There is a high incidence of late marks
- To warn parents of an impending Penalty Notice (15 days prior to issuing the PN)
- The school has referred the child to the EWS due to consistently poor attendance

We will do our best to help you with any problems which affect your child's attendance, but we cannot help you if you do not tell us. In fact, where parents consistently fail to cooperate with the school, the absences will be unauthorised and will result in us asking the EWS to take action. However, before we get to that point, we will invite you to an Attendance Panel meeting, please see below:

Attendance Panel Meetings

- This is a supportive measure by the school to address poor attendance and prevent the involvement of the EWS.
- The purpose of this meeting will be to give you the opportunity to discuss the reasons for your child's poor attendance/persistent lateness and for us therefore to support you in ensuring your child gets to school where possible and attendance improves.
- The Attendance Officer and Inclusion Manager will be present at the meeting. If necessary the Head Teacher/Class Teacher/EWO will also attend.
- At the meeting an Action Plan will be drawn up with targets for your child to meet with respect to their attendance as well as a review date set to discuss improvements.
- Failure to attend the first meeting will result in the meeting being re-arranged.
- Failure to attend the second meeting will result in the initiation of a CAF followed by referral to EWS or MASH as necessary.

Re-integration programmes

Where children have been absent from school for some time, they may need to return on a gradual basis. Individual cases will need to be discussed with the relevant member of staff and agreement reached as to the pace and time scale of any return.

Incentives and rewards

The following incentives and rewards are used across KS1 and KS2 to promote good attendance:

- We reward good attendance by issuing certificates to pupils who have achieved 100% attendance each term
- Children with 100% attendance over the school year are given a certificate and prize in an assembly to celebrate their achievement.
- In recognition of the fact that having only 1 day off per academic year is also an achievement, pupils who achieve this also receive a certificate
- Individual pupil incentive schemes are used for pupils with low attendance, this is done sensitively to encourage and reward pupils for achieving their personal attendance target.
- The classes with the best attendance each term/school year are honoured in a newsletter and presented with a certificate and prize at the end of the term.
- The class with the best attendance in each key stage is mentioned in our weekly celebration assemblies and awarded a class certificate and a 'reward box' for class use during the following week.

Summary

Whilst we do understand that children are ill from time to time, individual pupil's academic attainment does suffer if they miss school on a regular basis. Also, coming in late to school can have a detrimental effect on a child's progress as they find it hard to settle and will inevitably miss vital introductions to lessons. It also disturbs the class routines, which has a negative effect on other children's learning.

The school has a responsibility to discourage parents from removing their children from education for any reason as absences may have a negative impact on a pupil's educational attainment and progress.

Particular focus will be on monitoring the attendance of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium as it has been identified that this group of children have lower attendance than non-Pupil Premium children and this negatively affects their academic progress and results can therefore be lower.

A pupil who takes 10 days absence a year will actually be spending more time at home than at school in that year and will only attain 94.7% attendance. 10 days absence means a child misses 50 hours of education.

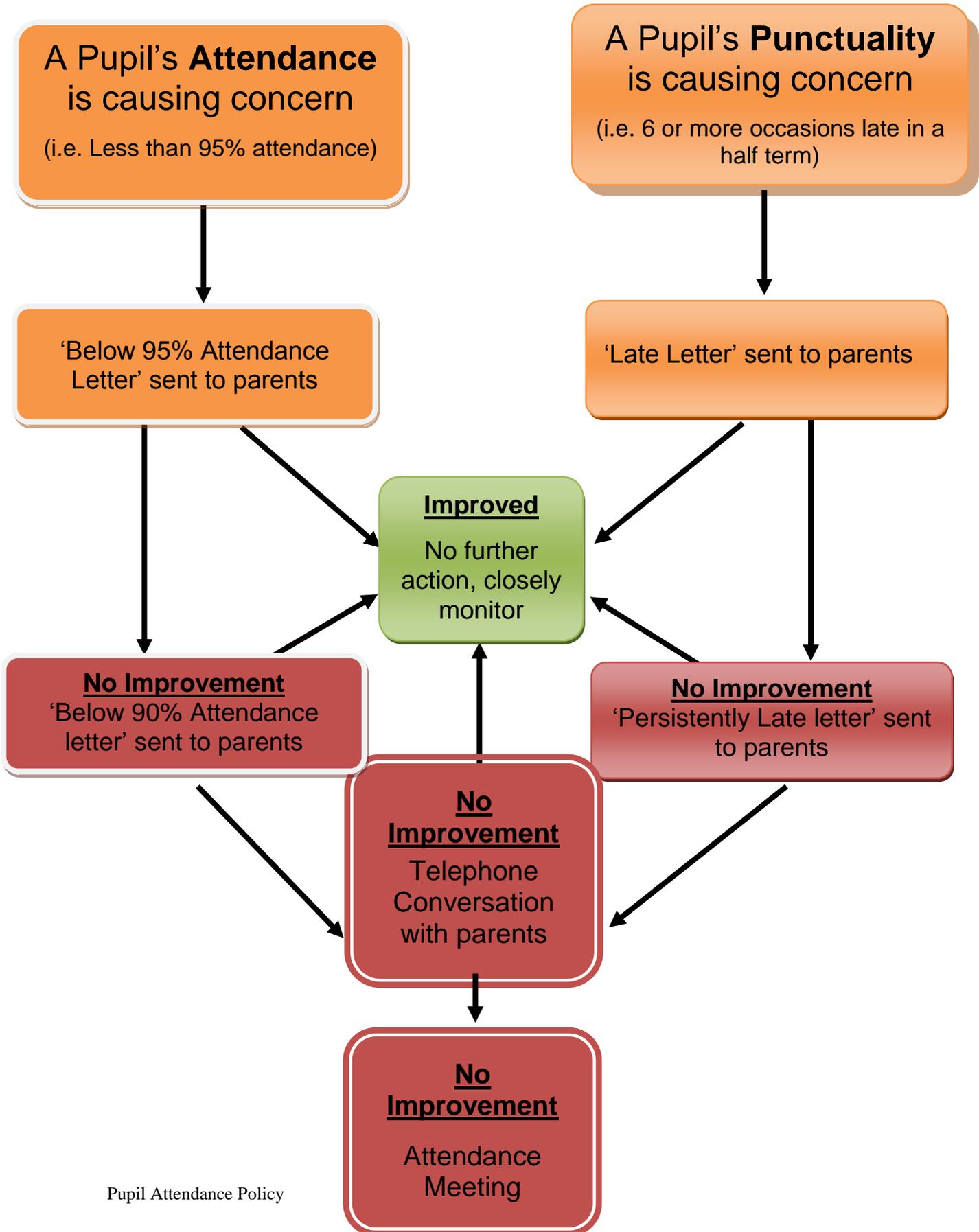
The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance; equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

All staff within the school are committed to working with both parents and pupils to ensure that attendance within the school is as high as it can be so that the pupils receive the best education that they can which will improve their life opportunities.

Appendices:

- A. Flow chart showing action school will take when attendance issues arise.
- B. Attendance Meeting Action Plan pro forma
- C. Flow chart around action that will be taken once an Attendance Panel meeting has been initiated.

Flow chart of School Action for Attendance Issues



Attendance Meeting Details and Action Plan

Date:	Child's Name:	Class:																																		
Present:																																				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Summary</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Sessions</th> <th style="text-align: center;">%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Attendances</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Authorised absences</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unauthorised absences</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Possible Attendances</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Including</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Approved Ed. Activity</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lates before reg closed</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lates after reg closed</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unexplained absences</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of minutes missed due to lateness</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Summary	Sessions	%	Attendances			Authorised absences			Unauthorised absences			Possible Attendances			Including			Approved Ed. Activity			Lates before reg closed			Lates after reg closed			Unexplained absences			Total number of minutes missed due to lateness			School actions: (letters, meetings phone calls etc.) Below 95% - Below 90% - Attendance Meeting – Referral –	
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		Previous Attendance:																																		
Sessions missed due to illness: <i>(Number and percentage)</i>		Sessions missed due to holiday: <i>(Number and percentage)</i>																																		

Date:

Action	By whom	By when	Impact (what it will look like)	Review (evidence of impact)	Review
Agreed attendance target: sustained improvement to bring attendance within the expected range	<i>Date</i>				
	<i>Attendance</i>				
	<i>Lates</i>				

As Parent/Carer of I understand that if my child's attendance continues to fall below 80% the school is required to make a referral to the Education Welfare Service. I also understand that failure to meet the discussed targets may result in legal proceedings being taken against me.

Signed:

Parent(s):

School:

Mrs V Teager
(Inclusion Manager)

Mrs V Partridge
(Attendance Officer)

Referral to other agencies was suggested/discussed (eg CAF/MASH):

Parental response:

Review:

Date of attendance review:

Copies:

- Parent(s)
- Attendance Officer
- Inclusion Manager
- Class Teacher
- Pupil File
- In Touch
- Add as an intervention on SIMs

Flow chart for School Attendance Meetings

