



Garlinge and Parkside Schools
and Nurseries Federation

Attendance Policy and Procedure

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

The School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Executive Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents and carers have a duty to promote full attendance.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents and carers responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.45am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent or carer, where possible to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL STAFF

There is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the school administration team of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the school administration team to monitor attendance and ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents and carers are contacted on the first day of absence by text or phone call
- The school will telephone parents to make enquiries as to the child's health
- The FLO/Staff representative will make a home visit to check on a child's wellbeing

- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see [National Attendance Codes](#))
- Parents are informed regularly of their child's attendance figure

TIMELINE OF THE STAGED APPROACH FOR MANAGING POOR ATTENDANCE

- 96 - 100% attendance – the class teacher to investigate and/or notify the school administration team of concerns. If appropriate, a member of the school administration team will contact the parent or carer and/or attend a Home Visit (Appendix 12) (e.g. if the School is unable to make contact with the parent or carer or if there are safeguarding/attendance concerns).
- Below 96% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents (please refer to page 'Procedures for addressing irregular attendance and punctuality'.
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help referral

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head of School and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate them
- The parent or carer has notified the school that they are leaving the area and no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school

LATENESS

The register is taken at 8.45am and is closed at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after this time must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and carers and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in June 2020, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

AUTHORISING ABSENCE

Only the Executive Headteacher/Head of School can authorise absence using a consistent approach and are not obliged to accept a parent's or carers explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent or carers does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents or carers will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents and carers will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and carers and minutes of any meetings need to be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in June 2020.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent or carer will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break

No parent or carer will be penalised for any Covid-19 related absence.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Head of School can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent or carer of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents or carers are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent or carer)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head of School may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head of School, acting on behalf of the Executive Headteacher and the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head of School’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

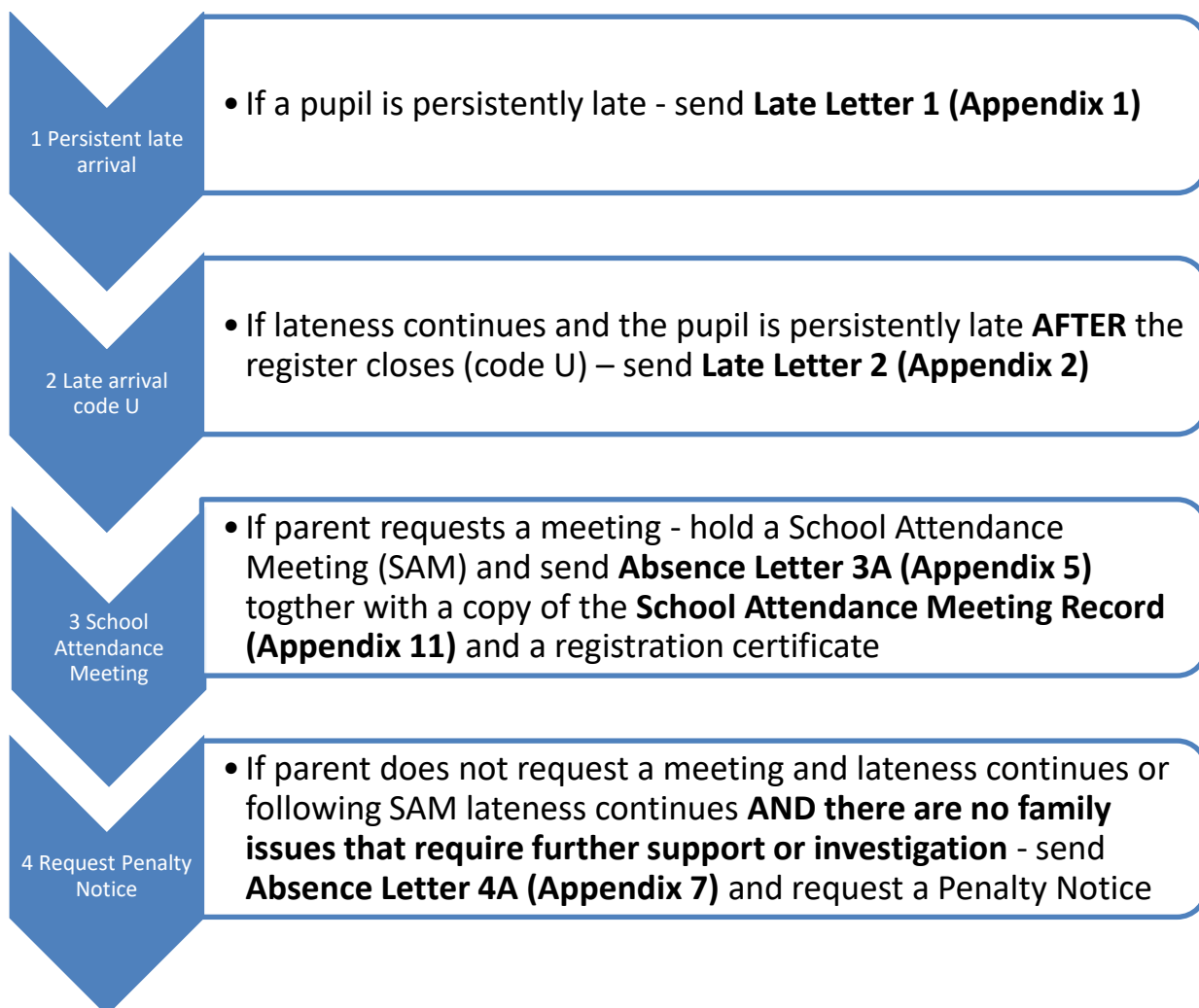
Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

ADOPTION ARRANGEMENTS AND DATE

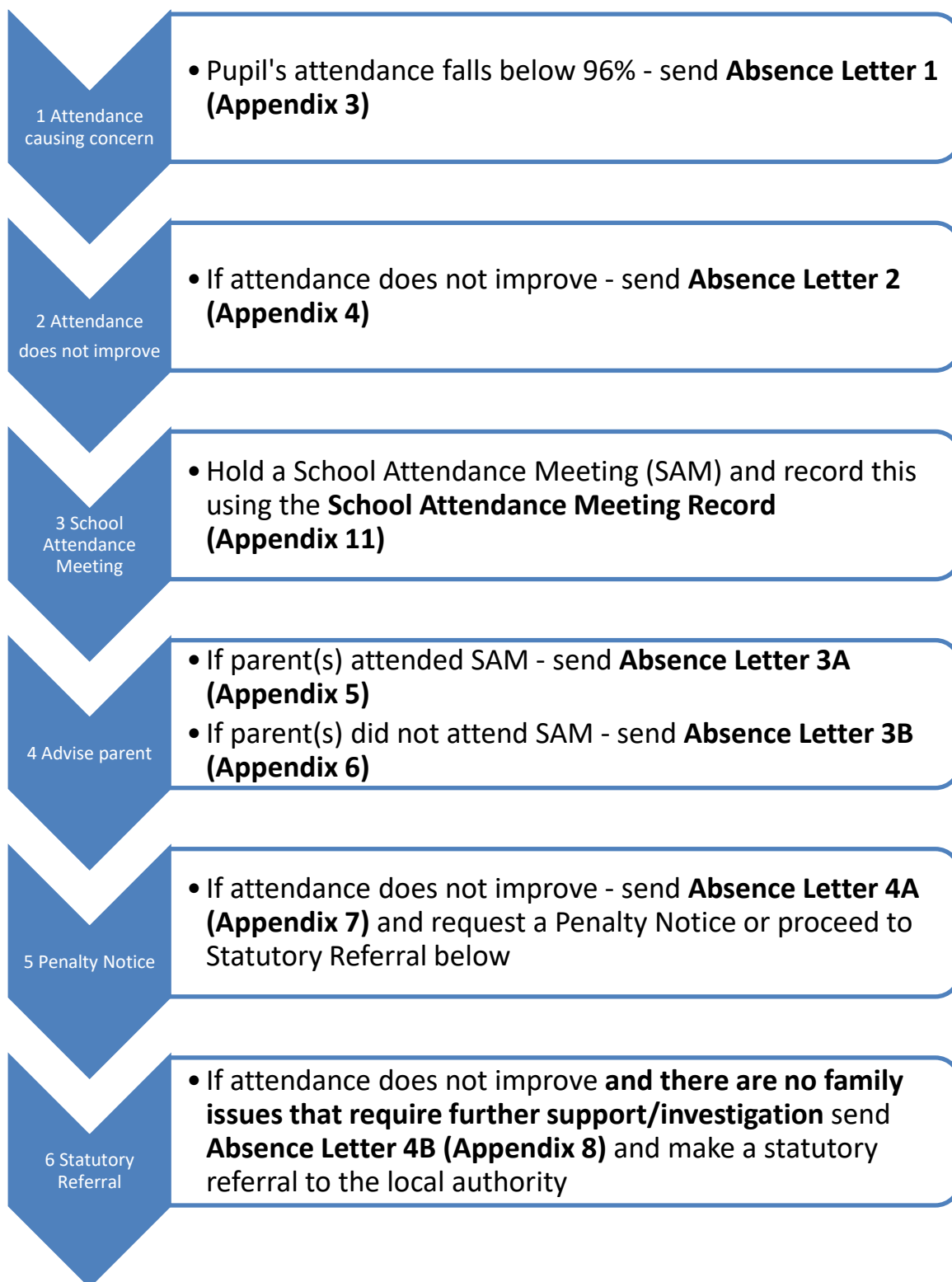
This policy was adopted by the Governing Body of Garlinge and Parkside Primary Schools and Nurseries Federation and supersedes any previous Pay Policy. This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body annually or earlier if there is a need.

PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Lateness Procedure



Absence Procedure



Absence for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Pupils

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils are expected to attend school in the same way as all other pupils and parents should aim for their child to achieve 100% attendance. If appropriate, send **GRT Absence Letter 1 (Appendix 9)**.

If a child has no fixed abode and the family are required to travel for the purposes of the parents' trade or business, adjustments can be made.

Requests for absence must be made in advance and a return date provided. If not, a pupil may be referred to the local authority as a Child Missing Education and could be removed from the school roll. If necessary, send **GRT Absence Letter 2 (Appendix 10)**.

Request for Leave of Absence

The Head of School may only authorise absence in 'exceptional circumstances'. If a pupil is absent without permission, a Penalty Notice may be requested in accordance with the School's Attendance Policy and Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.

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Appendix 1 Late Letter 1 – concern re late arrival at school

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived late at school. Below for your information is a summary indicating the days «forename» was late:

Late before registration closed: «total_lates_before» half day sessions

Late after registration closed: «total_lates after» half day sessions

Pupils are expected to arrive by «time». All pupils who arrive late must report, with their parent (*if appropriate*), to the school office where the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late in the register.

The register will close at «time». Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2 Late Letter 2 – continued late arrival at school

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

Further to my letter of «date», I am writing to express my concern that «forename» continues to arrive late for school after the register closes. Below, for your information, is a summary indicating the days «forename» was late:

Late before registration closed: «total_lates_before» half day sessions
Late after registration closed: «total_lates after» half day sessions

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child’s learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

If you would like to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns about «forename»’s school attendance, please contact «staff name» using the contact details provided.

I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Continued unauthorised absence may lead to a request for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent** of **each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3

Absence Letter 1 – concern re poor attendance

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away from school, but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «forename»'s attendance. If we can help in any way please do not hesitate to contact us.

If «forename»'s attendance continues to be irregular, then we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 4 Absence Letter 2 - invitation to School Attendance Meeting

Dear «salutation»

Re: «forename» «surname»

I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has not improved. «Forename»'s attendance at school is currently «percentage_attendance»% which means «he/she» has missed «total_authorized_absences» half day sessions for authorised absence and «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This is having an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for «date/time». It is important that you and «forename» (*if appropriate*) attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by a member of the Senior Leadership Team/attendance monitoring team.

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged. If you do not attend this meeting and «forename»'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action such as a penalty notice or possible prosecution.

I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 5 Absence Letter 3A - outcome of SAM – parent(s) attended

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

Thank you for attending the meeting to discuss «forename»'s attendance. Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the notes made in the meeting and agreed actions.

We will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance and I hope that «forename»'s attendance now improves and that action by the Local Authority will not be necessary.

Please note that further unauthorised absences may lead to a request for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 6 Absence Letter 3B - outcome of SAM – parent(s) did not attend

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

You did not attend the meeting on «date» to discuss «forename»’s absence from school.

We will continue to monitor «forename»’s attendance and if there are further unauthorised absences this may lead to a request for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

I must advise you that Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 7

Absence Letter 4A – Penalty Notice requested

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

With reference to our letter of, «date», «forename» has now reached a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result, we will now be requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

I would like to also remind you that further absences from school as a result of illness require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, medical/dental appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, these absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 8 Absence Letter 4B – Statutory Referral to local authority

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

With reference to my letter of, «date», «forename» has now reached a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result, we have made a statutory referral to the Local Authority.

I would like to remind you that further absences from school as a result of illness require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, medical/dental appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, these absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 9

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Absence Letter 1 - concern re poor attendance

Dear «salutation»

«forename» «surname»

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times «forename» has been absent from school. This academic year «forename» has missed «total_authorized_absences» authorised half day sessions and «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «percentage_attendance»%.

Traveller children should achieve 100% attendance which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer if «forename»'s attendance does not improve.

I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless an acceptable reason has been given, there are exceptional circumstances, or if you will be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school in advance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 10 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Absence Letter 2 - absent without return date

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

Thank you for contacting me to say that «forename» will be absent from school from «date» as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise «forename»'s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when «forename» is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 school days to confirm a return date, I will refer «forename» to the local authority as a Child Missing Education.

After 20 days' absence, there may be grounds to remove «forename»'s name from the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely

School Attendance Meeting

Date:

Student Name:		D.O.B:	
NCY:			
Address:			
<i>Parent/Carer details</i>		<i>Parent/Carer Details</i>	
Full Name:		Full Name:	
Address:		Address:	
Tel:		Tel:	
Attended Yes / No		Attended Yes / No	
Other Family/Household Members:			
Attendees:			
Actions to date by school and other agencies:			
Summary of concerns:			
Attendance %			

Additional Information: School Nursing referral required? Yes/ No Early Help involvement appropriate? Yes/ No Parenting Programme requested by parent? Yes/ No
Targets agreed:
Attendance review date:

Failing to reach agreed targets may result in referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer or a request for a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

I/We will do what has been agreed in this meeting. Signed:	
Pupil (if appropriate)	
Parent/carer	
Parent/carer	
School staff	
Agency	

Appendix 12 Attendance Home Visit

Date of Visit:

Childs Name & Class:

Home address visited:

Visited by:

Reason for Visit:	
Outcomes/further action required:	
Signature:	Date: