Attendance Policy

Reviewed 01.09.2025

Next Review Sept 2026

Fairfields School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Fairfields School is committed to providing all pupils with an appropriate and effective education in a safe and happy environment. We believe that education is essential for all and to achieve their full potential children need to attend school regularly and punctually. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. Due to the context of our school and the complex needs of our pupils, we provide a relational approach to school attendance. This is line with the approach taken by West Northamptonshire Council.
Benefits of a relational approach:

- Provides an opportunity for connection, collaboration and problem solving
- Personal contact to listen, understand and plan next steps
- Personalised, empathetic and adapted to the family's context
- Explore root causes, identify barriers and tailor interventions
- Increased personal support, pastoral involvement and multi agency work before sanctions
- Makes reasonable adjustments with specialist input while maintain expectations
- Supporting anxiety through gradual reintegration, safe spaces and wellbeing interventions
- Parents are seen as partners; tone focuses on shared gaols for the child
- Outcome focused through long term engagement, improved wellbeing and sustained attendance

Legislation and guidance

All children of compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education.
This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Section 7 of The Education and Inspectors Act (1996) says parents must make sure their child is regularly attending school or 'otherwise' (i.e. another suitable alternative). Section 444(1) of the same Act says parents are guilty of an offence if their child doesn't regularly attend school.
The Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance for schools (page 5) reiterates that responsibility for ensuring attendance lies with parents, including care givers or anyone with 'parental responsibility'.

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence through a relational approach
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents / carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents / carers will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent / carer.

School procedures

The school door opens at 8.45am until 9am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register

Attendance– Registration Period

We keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

- The Register is taken by 9.30am each day and pupil's attendance or absence is indicated in the register with the appropriate code
- Pupils in attendance will be marked Present with / = am or \ = pm accordingly
- The register will remain open until 10.00am.
- Therefore pupils arriving between 9.30am – 10.00am will be marked as late (Code L).
- Any pupil arriving after 10.00am will be marked absent as code U (meaning the pupil is in school but has missed the registration period).
- Any pupil arriving after 10.00am due to school transport will be marked as code L. If they are absent due to school transport it is code Y1
- The register will open at 1pm and close at 1.30pm for the afternoon session.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See Appendix A for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence
The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office team, who can be contacted via 01604714777 or officestaff@fairfields.northants.sch.uk
We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
Medical evidence will only be requested where we have genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. The medical evidence required could be, as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence
Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
Parent can do this by phoning or emailing the school office or by notifying their class teacher.
However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach the parent, they will try all of the pupil's emergency contacts.
- If we receive no correspondence by the morning of day 2 a home visit will be carried out. If unable to make contact we will consider a MASH referral or contacting the police.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, carry out additional home visits and call siblings settings if appropriate, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer and/or social care if they are involved with the family

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals e.g. open an EHA

If a child's unexplained absence cannot be ascertained

If after the checks have been carried out or a child unexplained absence cannot be ascertained within 10 days, the child needs to be reported as missing from education. This is done through the form on the West Northants Council website.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.
The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances**.
We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a pupils non-attendance that is deemed unavoidable and beyond the control of the student and their family. These circumstances are generally considered significant enough to justify the absence despite the usual emphasis on regular school attendance. Common examples of exceptional circumstances include but are not limited to:

1. **Serious Illness or Medical Conditions**: Extended or serious illness that requires hospitalisation or ongoing medical treatment.
2. **Family Emergencies**: Critical family issues such as a death or serious illness of a close family member.
3. **Religious Observances**: Observing a recognised ceremony or pilgrimage.
4. **Mental Health or Emotional Issues**: Situations where the student's mental health necessitates a temporary absence, often supported by a healthcare provider's recommendation.
5. **Special Family Events**: Attending a significant family event, such as a wedding, funeral, or cultural ceremony, which cannot be scheduled during school holidays and is deemed important for the child's emotional and social development.

At Fairfields, these circumstances are considered with added sensitivity due to the unique needs of the pupils. Documentation and verification, such as medical notes or legal documents, are required to support the claim of exceptional circumstances.

From 1st September 2013 there is **NO** entitlement for parents /carers to take their child on holiday during term time. In accordance with the amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances.**
Examples of where a leave of absence maybe authorised due to exceptional circumstances:

1. **Medical or Therapeutic Needs**: If a holiday is recommended as part of a medical treatment plan or therapy regimen, especially if the timing of such treatment is critical to the child's health and well-being.
2. **Family Respite**: When the family is under significant stress due to the intensive care needs of the child, and a holiday is seen as necessary respite. This is particularly relevant if it helps maintain the mental and emotional health of both the child and their caregivers. This may also involve specialist accommodation, or the availability of additional carers to support.
3. **Unique Educational Opportunities**: If the holiday includes a unique educational component that would benefit the child's learning and development, such as visiting a specialist facility, museum, or engaging in an activity that provides educational value aligned with the child's needs.
4. **Critical Family Circumstances**: When a parent or close family member is in the armed forces and home on leave, or when a family member is facing a terminal illness, and the holiday represents a final opportunity for family bonding.
5. **Therapeutic Travel**: When the holiday destination provides a specific therapeutic benefit, such as a climate that alleviates a medical condition, reduced sensory overload due to it being a quieter time of year or access to unique therapeutic services not available locally.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously/terminally ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments

The Headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our website or the school office. (Appendix E) The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
We will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the Chair of Governors prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. Evidence would be required in each case.

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.

Approval for extended holidays abroad, in the family's home country will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. If consent is given it will be for a maximum of 6 weeks with an agreed return date If the pupil fails to attend after this period, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to the education and inclusion Partnership Team at the Local Authority. If deemed necessary, Welfare calls/emails will be carried out during this period of absence.

If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

Parents/carers should contact the school directly if they feel there are exceptional circumstances that warrant taking their child out of school during term time.

If leave from school during term time is granted the Headteacher will determine the number of days that the child can be away from school and the parent will be informed in writing.

If the pupil has attendance of 95% or higher, the absence due to exceptional circumstances will be authorised. If the pupils attendance is below 95% this absence will be classed as unauthorised but a referral for a fixed penalty notice will not be made unless the pupil is classed as persistently absent.

Parents/carers should be aware that if they take their child on holiday in term time without the authorisation of the Headteacher they may be issued with a **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE.**

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Where a child is unable to attend school due to possible emotional behavioural school avoidance (EBSA) or has flexi-schooling arrangements in place with the Local Authority regular welfare checks will be carried out e.g. weekly, either through a teams call or a home visit. The number of visits will be determined by the circumstances.

Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.
They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.
If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.
Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.
If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.
A penalty notice is classed as a minor offence and is not a criminal offence. However if you do not pay the fine, you may be prosecuted.

Considerations for pupils with SEND

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. All pupils have the right to an education so the attendance ambition is the same for all pupils. Due the complex needs of our pupils, we will be mindful of the

attendance challenges they may face and put in additional support where necessary to help them access their full-time education.
Where pupils have a long term illness or health needs, a health care plan will be put in place to additional support can be given so they are able to continue their education.
Once it is clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more because of their health needs, the named officer who is responsible for the education of children with health needs at the Local Authority will be contacted so suitable alternative provision can be arrange. The 15 days may be consecutive or over the course of a school year.
Where a pupil has a significant barrier to their attendance due to their Special Education Need, the EHC Team at the Local Authority will be informed of this.

Pupil returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

As a school we understand that when a pupil has been absent from school for a significant amount of time e.g. a long hospital stay due to illness or medical procedure, they may find this transition difficult. In these circumstances a reduced timetable maybe deemed appropriate. A reduced timetable may also be put in place if a child's behaviour has changed or escalated and they are becoming unsafe in school. This decision would be in line with our behaviour policy. As a maintained school, we follow the Local Authorises approach to reduced timetables. If a reduced timetable is required their West Northants Council paperwork will be completed, signed by the parent and school and submitted to the SASO – Appendix F

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. If the child has good attendance, the parents will be thanked at the end of each half term. The attendance report will be sent home to all parents with the annual report at the end of the academic year. Attendance will also be discussed at Annual Review meetings.

Attendance Monitoring

Fairfields monitors attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, and whole school level. We recognise that data may have 'outliers' which are unusual values due to longer term absence or patterns of absence. These may be caused by EYFS phased entry, pupils on reduced timetables, pupils on long term absence due to hospital admissions or class or school closure. In addition to whole data being analysed, the data will also be analysed with these outliers removed, to give an additional picture of the attendance across school.
It is mandatory that specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE. Fairfields has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.
The school will benchmark its attendance whole school data against national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing body.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teacher to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders
- Share information and work collaboratively with local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see above)

Our procedures are as follows:
As a school we have a responsibility to monitor children's attendance in school and respond when pupils are persistently absent. At Fairfields we want to have a partnership with our parents and do this in a supportive way. Fairfields School takes due regard to absences in respect of medical conditions or reasonable explained absences and in these cases the situation will be monitored.
Long term absentees may find returning to school difficult. For some pupils a personalised reintegration plan may be needed.

If a pupil has had good attendance (95% and above) a message will be sent home to the parents thanking them for ensuring their child comes to school regularly, using the ParentApp. This will be done at the end of each half term.

Pupil attendance will be reviewed fortnightly with any concerns being brought to the Headteacher or to a DSL meeting. Concerns may include:

- *8 or more days authorised absence in a two week period (persistently absence)*
- *3 or more days of unauthorised absence in a two week period*
- *Where there is a regular pattern of absence over a longer period (four weeks/half term)*
- *No improvement has been made after attendance discussions*
- *Concerns around the reasons given for pupil absence*
- *The teacher has recorded pupil attendance as a safeguarding concern*

5 Stage Formal model (either documented on my concern, monitoring spreadsheet or using form on Appendix C) to respond when pupils are persistently absence from school.

Stage 1: Telephone call home (Family Support Worker)
Stage 2: Telephone call home (Family Support Worker/Headteacher)
Stage 3: Parent Meeting where an attendance success plan is set up (Headteacher)
During this meeting it is important to be supportive and unpick the barriers to the child's absence. A plan can then be put in place.

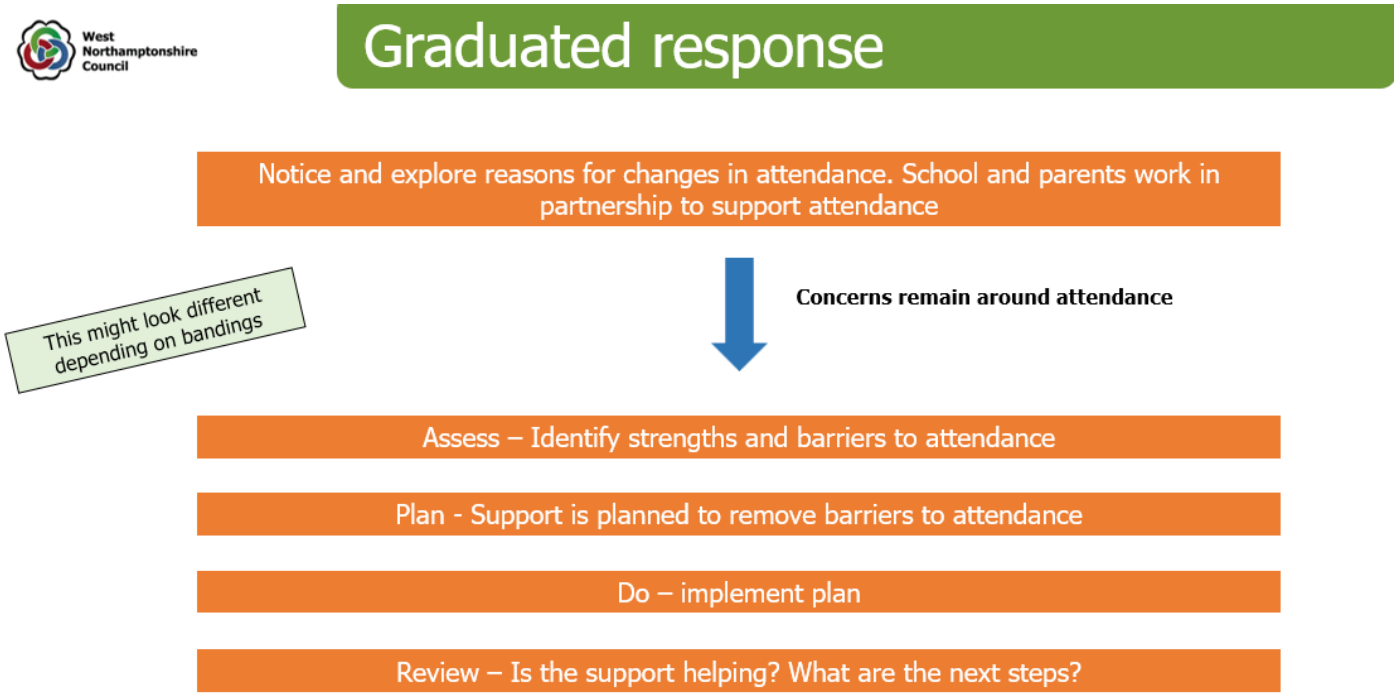
An Early Help Assessment maybe required at this point of the process.

Stage 4: Parent Meeting where the attendance success plan is reviewed and closed or a Notice to improve is issued (Headteacher)

Stage 5: Advise of a discussion with the Local Authority which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued (Headteacher)

Information about the schools expectation for good attendance is shared at the start of the year either through the school newsletter or in a separate information letter.

While as a school we have a formal staged approach to manage attendance this is done in an supportive/relational manner using a graduated approach as recommended by WNC.



Local Authority's School Attendance Support Team

West Northamptonshire Council have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.

There role is to:

- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.
- Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.
- Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.
    - If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.
- Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Responsibilities

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Making sure their child attends every day on time
- Calling the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Providing the school with 3 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Janice Crane – Family Support Worker can be contacted via 01604714777 or cranej@fairfields.northants.sch.uk

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the senior leadership team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals to School Attendance Support Service
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Discussing attendance issues at parent / carer meetings where necessary.

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Ensuring the correct codes are logged on the attendance register for absence
- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late is recorded correctly, using the correct codes, annotating the code where appropriate
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.

Attendance Officer is responsible for:

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/ Senior Attendance Lead (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Janice Crane and can be contacted via 01604714777 or cranej@fairfields.northants.sch.uk

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Also known as the Senior Attendance Lead) is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance

- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Lesley Elder and can be contacted via 01604714777 or head@fairfields.northants-ecl.gov.uk

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising Senior Attendance Lead to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The Governing board is responsible for:

- **Having a clear understanding of the context of school when looking at attendance to ensure that when responsibilities below are carried out they reflect the cohort of pupils and the barriers around attendance.**
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Excellence and Enjoyment Committee have responsibility for monitoring pupil attendance.

Equal Opportunities:

We are firmly committed to the principles of equal opportunities. We believe that all pupils are entitled to learning experiences, which will enable them to achieve their potential and enrich their lives. We place great value on diversity and treat every member of the school as an individual. This means we value equally the unique qualities of each individual.

Monitoring

We need consistent attendance management throughout the school. In addition to the above monitoring tasks school Governors monitor attendance during full Governing Body meetings and Excellence and Enjoyment sub-committee meetings.

Working together to improve attendance
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/657995f0254aaa000d050bff/Arranging_education_for_children_who_cannot_attend_school_because_of_health_needs.pdf

Appendix A

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable

C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention

Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix C: Absence Management Proforma (only use if computer access if unavalible)

Name: **Class:** **Date:**

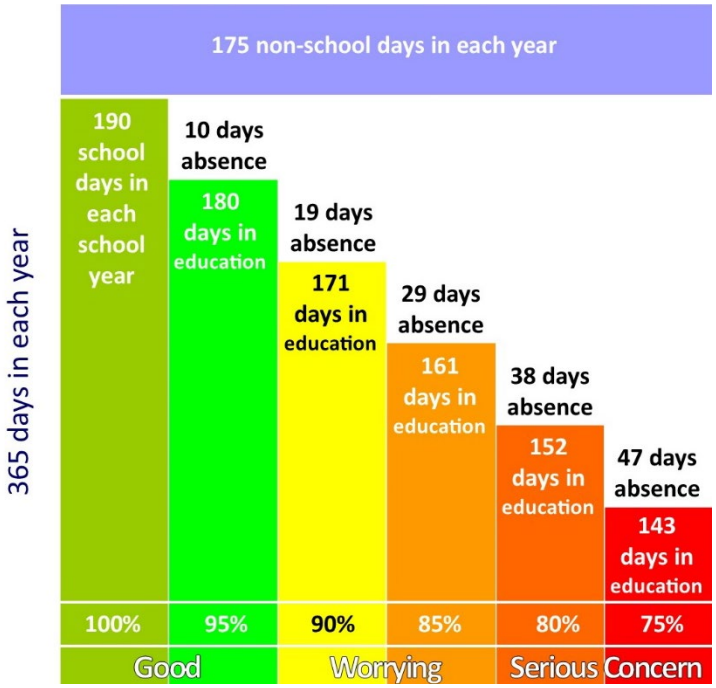
Attendance Concern				
Stage of Process	**Action**	**Who**	**Date**	**Comments**
Stage 1	**Phone call home** Script I have been monitoring * attendance which is currently *This is low. Is there anything we can do to improve * attendance? I will continue to monitor * attendance and hope to see an improvement over the next three weeks. **After 3 weeks if attendance improved – phone call home/email home** We have noticed that * has attended more regularly- thank you for helping make this improvement. We will continue to monitor to ensure this is maintained. Please remember to contact me if you need any help to make sure your child attends regularly.			
Stage 2	**1st Letter**			
Stage 3	**2nd Letter** **Absence Management meeting**			
Stage 4	**Absence Management meeting**			
Stage 5	**No sufficient improvement referral to LA**			

NB: Additional Evidence to support pupil absence e.g. Medical letters to be attached.

Letter 1: Ongoing absence

Dear
I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that ……has been absent from school. I attach for your child's registration certificate indicating the sessions ….was absent.

Parents have a 'legal duty' to ensure their child attends school. Every single day a child is absent from school is a day of lost learning. Sometimes attendance percentages can be misleading. The chart below converts these into number of days missed across the year.



We know that you can have a significant effect on {Pupil Name} absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that {Pupil Name} comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this – please call or come in and meet {Pupil Name}'s class teacher, key stage leader or our family support worker if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

I am sure that you share my concern and would wish to work with us to improve …….'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

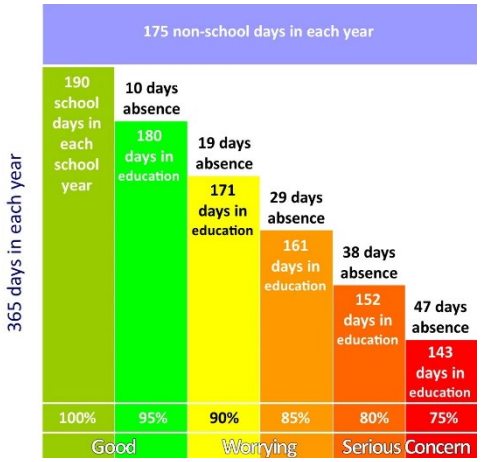
Headteacher

Letter 2: No improvement

Dear
Re: …….

Despite previous attempts to advise you, I note with concern there has been no significant improvement in your child's attendance at school.

……'s attendance is currently …% This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.



Parents have a 'legal duty' to ensure their child attends school. Every single day a child is absent from school is a day of lost learning. We understand that sometimes attendance percentages can be misleading. The chart below converts these into number of days missed across the year.

As there has been no improvement in ……'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences as a result of illness will require medical evidence. If this is not provided, further absences will be unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance meeting. The time and date have been set for ……. at……It is important that you and ……attend this meeting for us to talk about the issues around poor attendance.

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me as soon as possible so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and the absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the School Attendance Support Team, which could lead to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Fairfields School Attendance Success Plan

Date/time of meeting:	
Venue:	

Pupil name:	

Present at meeting:

Challenges/Concerns:

Actions agreed

Attendance target: **(100%)**
Timescale for improvement:

Date for review meeting:	

I confirm that this Attendance Success Plan was agreed by all present.

Signed:

…… Parent/carer …… Headteacher

Appendix D: Attendance Reporting Proforma

Attendance Report Term 1 2020-2021

Period: **03-09-2020 to 28-10-2020** Scope: whole school	Sessions	Days	%
Attendances Authorised absences Unauthorised absences Possible attendance			
Including Approved educational activity Lates before register closes Lates after reg. closed Unexplained absences			

Data with outliers removed.

	Number of days absent in the year	Attendance grade indicator
95% and above	10 days or less	High
94% – 90%	Between 19 – 9 days	Above average
89% - 85%	Between 20 -29 days	Average
Below 85%	More than 30 days	Low

Attendance	% pupils
95% and above	
94% – 90%	
89% - 85%	
Below 85%	

Attendance Comparison Tracker

	Term1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6	overall
2022 - 2023							
2023-2024							
2024-2025							

Analysis

Appendix E

Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are

exceptional. **Please note**: There is **NO** entitlement for parents /carers to take their child on holiday during term time. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we will consider legal action.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A – to the headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's Name		
Class		
Dates of requested absence	**From:**	**To:**
Names of siblings in school also requesting a leave of absence		

Section B

Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional**; and therefore the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements.

Section C

I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides.
The information I have given on this form is correct.

Name:

Signed: Date:

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Inspiring everyone to shine

From 1st September 2013 there is **NO** entitlement for parents /carers to take their child on holiday during term time. In accordance with the amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances.**

Section D – For School Use Only

Child's Name: Current attendance rate:

Tick as appropriate	
	Request approved for number of days From: To: Expected return date to school
	A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact:
	Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress. **PLEASE NOTE:** ***This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parent/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a penalty notice for non attendance being issued.***

Headteacher: Date:

Fairfields School
Inspiring everyone to shine

Traveller Absence Request Form

Child's Full Name:			
Address:			
Reason for the application:	Traveller Absence:		
Declaration:	I understand that this absence can only be authorised when the pupil's parent(s) are travelling for occupational purposes.	Yes ☐	No ☐
	I can confirm that I will be working as part of this absence.	Yes ☐	No ☐
	I understand that a member of staff from school will keep in regular contact as part of their welfare duties.	Yes ☐	No ☐
Dates of absence:		Return date to school:	
Name: Signed: Date:			

……

Attendance Officer Authorisation

Absence Authorised: Yes No

Attendance Code Given:

Signed: _____(Headteacher)

School	

Date					
SASO					
Pupil Name					
UPN					
Date of birth					
Tick if applicable	LAC	CP	CiN	EHCP	SEN Support

Reduced Timetables Parent/school Meeting	
Lead Person In school	
Name of Parent/carer	
Date of meeting agreeing to reduced timetable	
Initial number of hours in education each week	
Expected end date of reduced timetable (no more than 6 weeks)	
Has pupil had a reduced timetable previously?	
Has a referral to SSS been made? Date of this	
Has a referral to SEMH been made?	

Reason for the reduced timetable

West Northamptonshire Council

School Attendance Support Service: Reduced Timetable Consent Form

Official sensitive

Objectives of the reduced timetable/Action Plan

1.

2.

3.

Week 1					
Monday (Times)	Tuesday (Times)	Wednesday (Times)	Thursday (Times)	Friday (Times)	**Total time in education (hrs)**

Week 2					
Monday (Times)	Tuesday (Times)	Wednesday (Times)	Thursday (Times)	Friday (Times)	**Total time in education (hrs)**

Week 3					
Monday (Times)	Tuesday (Times)	Wednesday (Times)	Thursday (Times)	Friday (Times)	**Total time in education (hrs)**

Week 4					
Monday (Times)	Tuesday (Times)	Wednesday (Times)	Thursday (Times)	Friday (Times)	**Total time in education (hrs)**

Week 5					
Monday (Times)	Tuesday (Times)	Wednesday (Times)	Thursday (Times)	Friday (Times)	**Total time in education (hrs)**

Week 6					
Monday (Times)	Tuesday (Times)	Wednesday (Times)	Thursday (Times)	Friday (Times)	**Total time in education (hrs)**

Any additional comments

I understand that my child has been placed on a reduced timetable for a limited period of time. I have discussed the matter fully with the school and agree that for the duration of the reduced timetable I will:

- Take full responsibility for my child during the hours when they are not attending school
- Ensure that there is supervision of school work that has been set
- Ensure that any work is returned to school for marking and feedback/guidance
- Take full responsibility for the health and safety of my child when they are not in school.

Parental comments

Parent/career signature…….

Date……..

For the duration of the reduced timetable the school will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the reduced timetable
- Hold a review on the agreed date
- Provide work for the child to do whilst at home and mark all work completed

School signature……

Date…….

Other signatures if required:

SEN Caseworker……

Social worker……

Virtual school……