



ACET ATTENDANCE POLICY – GUIDANCE

Swinton Academy

PHASE	ACET RMBC Junior & Senior Academies
POLICY LEAD	LINDSEY BURGIN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
DATE OF APPROVAL BY TRUSTEES	7TH JUNE 2021
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Aims and principles of excellent attendance

- The academy is committed to maximising the achievement of all students/pupils.
- There is a clear link between excellent attendance and educational achievement.
- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if students/pupils are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities which are offered to them within the academy.
- Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the academy and encouraging students/pupils to reach excellent attendance levels.
- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at the academy.
- The academy will take appropriate action to promote and encourage excellent attendance.

What our academy expects of our students/pupils:

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day.
- To report to the attendance office and sign in should they arrive after the start of the school day and if they are more than 10 minutes late.
- To inform their year teams of any reason that will prevent them from attending the academy.

What our academy expects of parents/carers:

- To fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend the academy regularly and on time.
- To ensure that they contact the academy every day that their child is unable to attend (before 8 30am).
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well-prepared for the school day [list of items that students/pupils should bring to the academy].
- To contact the academy whenever any problem arises that may lead to their child's absence/keep their child away from the academy.
- To inform the academy and seek authorisation for any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, arrange appointments outside of academy/school day.
- To ensure the continuity of their children's education by taking holidays during the academy/school holiday period.

What students/pupils and parents/carers can expect of our academy

- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at the academy.
- The encouragement and promotion of excellent attendance.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Contact with parents/carers on a daily basis when a student does not attend.
- *Prompt action taken if any problems are identified that prevent a child attending the academy/*Prompt action taken linked to any problems brought to a member of staff's attention.
- Close liaison with the Early Help Team to assist and support parents/carers, students and their families where needed.
- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through regular reports, and letters home.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1)
- When a student is absent and contact cannot be made by telephone, a standard letter will be sent and a home visit will/may take place.
- The law requires the register to be taken twice a day. Electronic registration takes place at the start of the morning session (8.55am) and once in the afternoon session (1pm) using SIMS. (Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in 'School Attendance' published November 2018 by the DfE).
- Registers close at 10 40am and 1 30pm, after which students/pupils will be marked with the unauthorised absence (U code).

- **Where the academy's procedures and contact with home have failed to bring about improvement and poor attendance persists, the academy will request that parent/carers attend meetings within the academy with the EWO and the year team. Where a student's/pupil's attendance does not improve when placed on an 'Attendance Plan' (AP) a meeting will take place with the Academy's Attendance Panel and the relevant communication and referrals will be made to Andy Doyle who will liaise with academy staff to provide further attendance support.**
- **The academy and year group attendance data will be collected, analysed and monitored. The academy will respond to any areas of concern identified.**
- **Through partnership working with Early Help, further action may be taken in the form of a penalty notice should concerns regarding a child's attendance persist despite the academy's procedures being followed (see Appendix 2).**

Attendance Awards

- We promote excellent attendance as a high priority and seek to celebrate outstanding/improving attendance.
- Attendance figures are shared in assemblies.
- Certificates are awarded for 100% attendance, termly attendance and improved attendance, individually, by tutor group and by year
- Excellent attendance is celebrated at the annual Oscars and ACET Awards events.
- Recognition is made of improving attendance for individuals/groups of students/pupils.
- Excellent/improving attendance is shared with parents/carers through social media and letters home.
- Attendance figures are recorded on the monitoring reports sent to parents/carers and excellence / improvement is praised by group tutors.

Attendance Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership Team

Senior Leaders have responsibility for attendance. They will:

- Develop, monitor and regularly review the Attendance Policy.
- Produce and distribute attendance information for parents/carers.
- Set and monitor targets for improving attendance within the academy.
- Support all staff in their work related to attendance.
- Meet with year teams to regularly discuss attendance patterns and students/pupils causing concern (Intervention strategies will be planned, implemented and reviewed).
- Collate attendance data for the DfE, Local Authority and the Local Governing Body and in liaison with colleagues.
- Report students missing in education (CME) following academy and local authority procedures.
- Report to the local authority any students where written notification of Home Education has been requested.
- Liaise with the Early Help Team regarding attendance targets and the Academy Strategy.

Year Teams are responsible for:

- Identifying individual students with known punctuality/attendance concerns and ensuring these students are monitored closely using attendance information and attendance trackers.
- Supporting the role/s of the group tutors.
- Identify those students/pupils whose attendance is falling below average and work with parents/carers towards improvement.
- Liaising with the parents/carers regarding students whose attendance is giving significant cause for concern.
- Liaising with other partner agencies and services towards improving and developing strategies to raise levels of attendance where relevant.
- Rewarding outstanding / improving attendance.
- Liaising with relevant colleagues regarding Attendance Support Plans (ASPs) and their implementation for students with specific medical needs.

Group Tutors

- Complete registers promptly and accurately at the start of registration – electronically. Within the first 10 minutes of the lesson.
- Have regular discussions with students about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality – daily Tutor Time.
- Liaise with year teams regarding any queries surrounding absence.

Class Teachers - Primary

- Complete electronic registers accurately.
- Have regular discussions with pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Liaise with the Attendance Lead regarding any queries surrounding absence

Subject Teachers - Secondary

- Subject teachers must register students every period and follow up unauthorised absence from that period as truancy.
- Staff should mark registers every lesson on the electronic system within the first ten minutes of the lesson so that post-registration truancy can be checked. If this is not possible a paper copy of the register must be taken and sent to the

Attendance Office.

- Students arriving after the register has been taken should have their absence mark amended. A late mark should be recorded, where appropriate.

Attendance Support Team

- Academy staff notify parents/carers of their child's absence via the a telephone call where no message or call has been received by period 2. Where this generates no response, contact will be made with the EWO to initiate a visit.
- Information received regarding attendance is entered onto the SIMS system.
- Notify year teams of absences in line with attendance procedures.
- Administrative support is provided in logging, tracking and communicating individual and collective attendance levels and patterns.

The Local Governing Body

- Receives information from the Principal on attendance.
- Will be involved in setting academy targets on attendance.
- Will contribute to plans in response to where attendance is a cause for concern.
- Will support the academy in its efforts to raise attendance.
- Will contribute to the academy's strategies to improve attendance, e.g. "Academy Attendance Panel".

Education Welfare Officer

- Monitors/improves attendance of target groups.
- Home visits/letters/casework/liases with other agencies linked to students/pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Attends Case Conferences, TAF meetings and or other directed professionals' meetings on behalf of academy/LA.
- Weekly attendance/liasion meetings with senior leaders / year teams.
- Liases with the Local Authority EWO regarding case-loads and prepares any relevant documentation.
- Produces statistics/information for specified meetings.
- Assists parents with academy transfers and may give advice regarding parent/carers requests for support to multi-agencies/welfare and benefits procedures.
- Works closely with senior leaders to review attendance systems and procedures.
- Maintains a high profile for attendance.
- Supports with gate duty to promote the importance of punctuality.

Promoting attendance

Responsibility for promoting academy attendance is shared by everyone in the academy

The Electronic Attendance Registration System provides us with accurate up- to-date information which allows us to monitor attendance patterns and set targets.

If irregular attendance is not challenged early, it quickly becomes a habit that is hard to break. The importance of regular and punctual attendance should be emphasised to both parents/carers and students/pupils and consciously reinforced at regular intervals. It is important to stress that whatever problems a student/pupil and their families are experiencing, regular attendance is compulsory. The academy will provide support if required but will not authorise absence on these grounds.

Punctuality

- Staff should actively encourage punctuality and discourage late arrival at the academy / lessons. Students/Pupils arriving late disrupt the continuity of learning for others as well as themselves.
- A firm line is taken on late arrival. When students/pupils arrive late without adequate explanation a record of the time of arrival should be kept.
- Persistent lateness may provide grounds for prosecution and parents/carers will be informed of this.

Improving Attendance

Responsibility for promoting academy attendance is shared by everyone in the academy. All members of staff, therefore, are expected to give positive messages to students about the value of good attendance.

Parents/carers are kept informed of student/pupil attendance and letters are sent if students/pupils fail to maintain good levels of attendance. Where there is little or no improvement parents/carers will be invited to meetings in the academy. A sequential system of intervention takes place culminating with the Academy Attendance Panel where individual cases can then be passed onto appropriate multi-agencies including Early Help.

Holidays in Term Time / Leave of Absence

As of 1st September 2013, the Principal will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are *exceptional circumstances*. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Principal prior to the leave of absence period in question. Parents/carers are requested to complete the Leave of Absence request form and including any additional information regarding the circumstances leading to the request.

Exceptional Circumstances include:

- funerals or weddings of immediate family members
- to visit a terminally ill relative
- forces staff returning from abroad
- parents returning from having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period
- compassionate leave
- performance at representative level (County/National) with accompanying letter from the relevant body

The Principal will determine the number of academy days a child can be away from academy if the leave is granted. (For example a maximum of two days or equivalent in each academic year will be awarded for students taking part in pursuits not linked directly to the academy).

Parents/carers who remove their children from the academy without authorisation or do not return their child to the academy on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning (FPN) which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Appendix 3).

Absence from the Academy Premises

Students/Pupils leaving the premises during the morning or afternoon session may only do so legitimately if they have parental permission expressed as a request to the academy *or* a member of staff has made arrangements with a parent/carer. They should be issued with a Leave of Absence slip/note in their planner and should sign out at Reception. If the reason for leaving is to attend an appointment, it is important that they bring the actual appointment card especially if the student is an irregular attender. For health and safety reasons parents/carers are required to collect students/pupils from Reception. Students/Pupils should sign out and sign back in if they return on the same day.

Involvement of Parents/Carers

It is vitally important that parents/carers are actively engaged in promoting good attendance. The academy will keep parents/carers informed on issues surrounding attendance and punctuality through the academy prospectus, website details, newsletters, electronic, written and verbal communication and monitoring reports. The academy will react as swiftly and effectively as possible to any parent/carer concerns. Parents/carers will be encouraged to make contact with the academy to discuss any issues impacting on their children's attendance. A child of compulsory academy age who is registered at an academy must attend regularly. In law parents/carers have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

List of abbreviations

AP	Attendance Plan
ASP	Attendance Support Plan - medical
CME	Children Missing Education
DFE	Department for Education
EWS	Education Welfare Service
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
FCAF	Family Common Assessment Framework
FPN	Fixed Penalty Notice
LA	Local Authority
LPM	Learning Progress Manager
MARF	Multi-Agency Referral Form
SIMS	School Information Management System
TAF	Team Around the Family

Leave of Absence Request

(Including holidays in term time)

Academy
Logo

A child can now only be granted leave of absence during term time for exceptional reasons.

The Principal does not have to give permission if you request a holiday. If the holiday is not approved, your child's absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

Exceptional Circumstances include:

- funerals or weddings of immediate family members
- to visit a terminally ill relative
- forces staff returning from abroad
- parents returning from having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period
- compassionate leave
- performance at representative level (County/National) with accompanying letter from the relevant body

How do I make a request for Leave of Absence?

- Complete the leave of absence request form on the next page.
- Detach the form and hand it in to the school reception (at least 14 days before the first day of your requested absence)
- If you consider the circumstances to be **exceptional** attach a letter addressed to the Principal explaining the circumstances of the request.
- You will be notified in writing informing you of the decision.
- Please note that unless circumstances are judged to be exceptional, the leave of absence will be declined.

“Taking your child out of school during term time will result in missed learning opportunities. National studies have shown that there is a strong link between school attendance and attainment.”

Should I still fill in a form if I know the request will be unauthorised?

YES

We contact parents/ carers on a daily basis if we do not know the reason for absence of a student. It is very important you let us know why your child is absent even if the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

In deciding if the absence is **EXCEPTIONAL**, the Principal will consider the following:

- ◇ Is the absence within the control of the parent/ carer?

(A letter, on headed paper, from an employer is required if the absence is due to the availability of leave)

- ◇ Does the student have a good attendance record?
- ◇ Will the absence have a negative impact on the attainment of the student?
- ◇ Is the activity a worthwhile experience which will enrich the student’s broader education?
(our guidance is for two days maximum (or equivalent) in each academic year for such activities)

**APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL
DURING TERM TIME**

If you consider you have to take your child out of school in term time, please complete this form and return to the school at least 14 days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.
Please read the reverse of this form carefully prior to its completion.

Student Name Tutor Group.....

Home Address

First day of absenceDate of return to the academy

Total number of days missed

Reasons for absence (please attach a letter if you require additional space)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the Education Welfare Officer will be notified.

I understand that a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued. From September 2013 these are £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. This rises to £120.00 after 21 days.

Name of Parent/Carer making application

Signed Date

(Please ensure you are giving at least 14 days' notice of the proposed absence)

**Please return to the academy reception. Remember to include
any supporting information**

For official use only

.. AUTHORISED: For the following dates:

___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___

.. UNAUTHORISED: Reason:

Decision taken by _____

Leave of absence in term time – Local Authority guidance for the consideration of parents/carers

- 1 The decision to grant the request is for the school, not the Local Authority or the parent/carer. Only schools can authorise absences.
- 2 There is no requirement to authorise because a request has been made.
- 3 The Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) gives the Local Authority the power to issue fixed penalty notices for unauthorised leave of absence during term time.
- 4 No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right.
- 5 Any request for leave must be made in advance.
- 6 Holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.
- 7 If the application for leave of absence in term time is made because of the parents'/carers' workplace holiday arrangements, then a letter from the employer/s explaining why the leave of absence must be taken in term time SHOULD be attached to this form on letter-headed paper.
- 8 If important work has been missed by the student due to parents/carers making a request for leave of absence for a holiday, parents/carers should not expect special arrangements to be made by the school for that student to catch up work.
- 9 The circumstances of each individual request will be taken into account. The following factors may be relevant but this should not be regarded as a comprehensive list:
 - Parent's workplace holiday arrangements if supported by a letter from employer.
 - The overall attendance of the child for the previous academic year or 3 terms.
 - If taking leave of absence in the first half of the first term would have a negative impact on student progress.
 - If a previous holiday has been taken in the same academic year.
 - Timing of internal and/or external examinations/assessments.
 - The reason given by a parent for requesting leave of absence in term time.

If you have any questions regarding how Leave of Absence decisions are made, please don't hesitate to contact us in school. Your first line of contact should be your child's Learning Progress Manager.

Below is an extract from the 'Frequently Asked Questions' section of the Department for Education publication: School attendance, published in 2018

Can a parent take their child on holiday during term time?

Headteachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher 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.

'School attendance parental responsibility measures', DfE update 2017.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Updated DfE guidance – July 2019

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSE
/	Present (AM)	Present	
\	Present (PM)	Present	
B	Off-site educational activity	Approved educational activity	Counted as physically present
C	Leave of absence authorised by the academy	Authorised absence	
D	Dual registered – at another educational establishment	Not counted in possible attendance	
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence	
G	Family holiday (NOT authorised by the academy or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	
H	Family holiday authorised by the academy	Authorised absence under exceptional circumstances	
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments)	Authorised absence	
J	Interview	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	
M	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised appointments	
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	
P	Approved supervised sporting activity	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence	
U	Late arrival (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
W	Work experience	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
X	Either: Not attending in circumstances relating	Not counted as an absence in the school census	

	<p>to coronavirus (Covid-19)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Non-compulsory school age absence</p>	Not counted in possible attendances	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (enforced closure)	Not counted in possible attendances	
Z	Pupil not yet on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendances	

Appendix 2: Early Help Referral Procedures

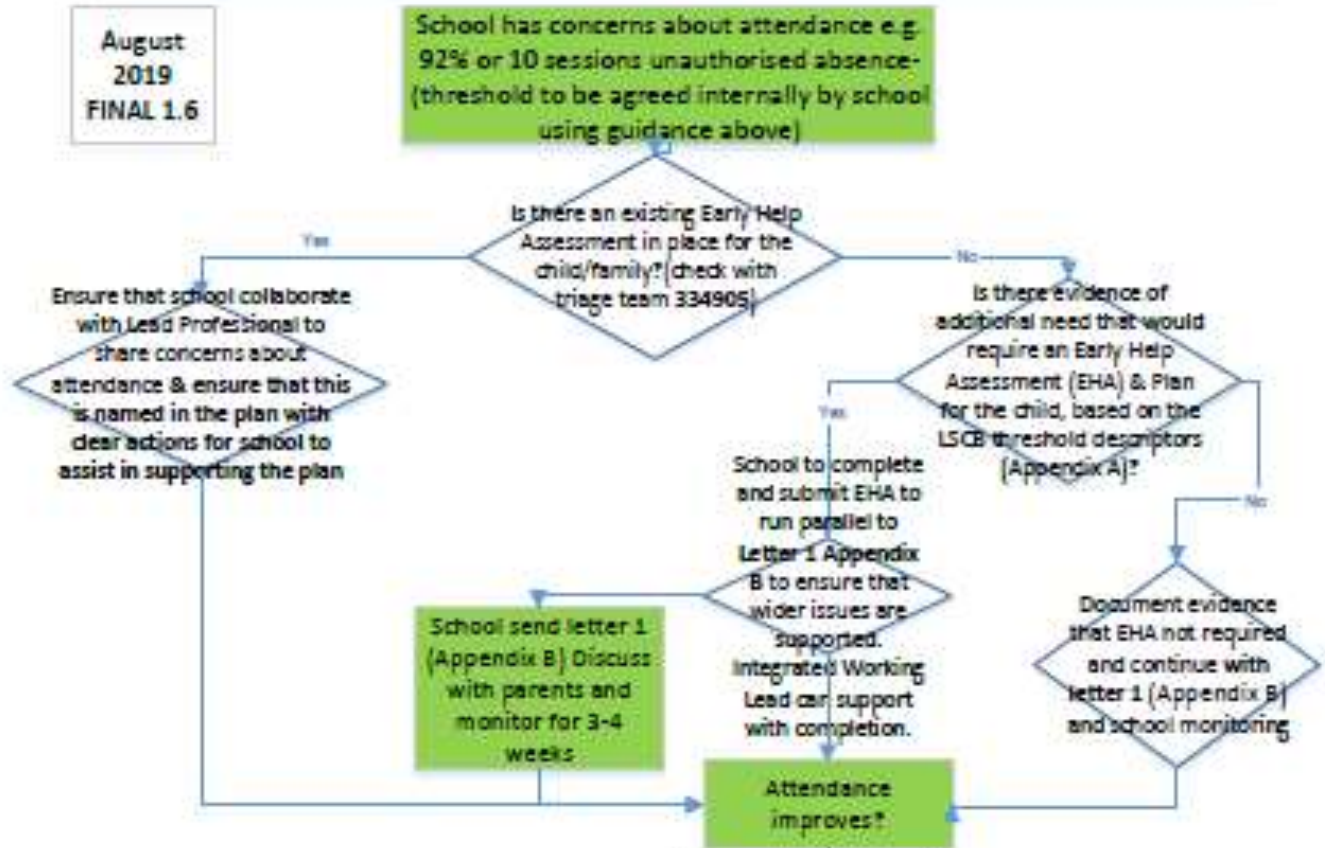
Updated September 2019

The monitoring of attendance is very specific in differing junior and senior academies, but the following general principles apply. Please note that these can be modified linked to individual school and community circumstances. Please contact the ACET Attendance Lead for further guidance if needed.

1. Monitor the attendance of all students daily – please ensure that the correct register codes as shown in Appendix 1 are applied.
2. Please ensure that registers close at an appropriate time for your school – this will depend on your individual circumstances.
3. Visits to vulnerable students are quickly identified and are promptly communicated to the EWO.
4. Daily attendance levels are checked for key target cohorts – SEND, Disadvantaged etc.
5. Weekly attendance is checked – Academy and key target cohorts
6. Keep an ongoing record of Leave Of Absence Requests
7. Where attendance is historically a cause for concern and absence is unauthorised please use the LA guidance ‘Attendance Matters’ pathway to check whether or not an **Early Help Referral** is in place for the family. Where it is, please liaise with the **Early Help** worker and send out unauthorised absence letters as per the flow chart guidance. Where it isn’t, please follow the **Early Help** flow chart and issue unauthorised absence letters (authority worded letters that need personalising for each school). Please check the evidence that can be used to authorise absence.
8. Further attendance checks should take place at key points when letters have been issued for individual students. Records should be kept regarding when letters have been issued. Some students may need to be placed on Attendance Support Plans.

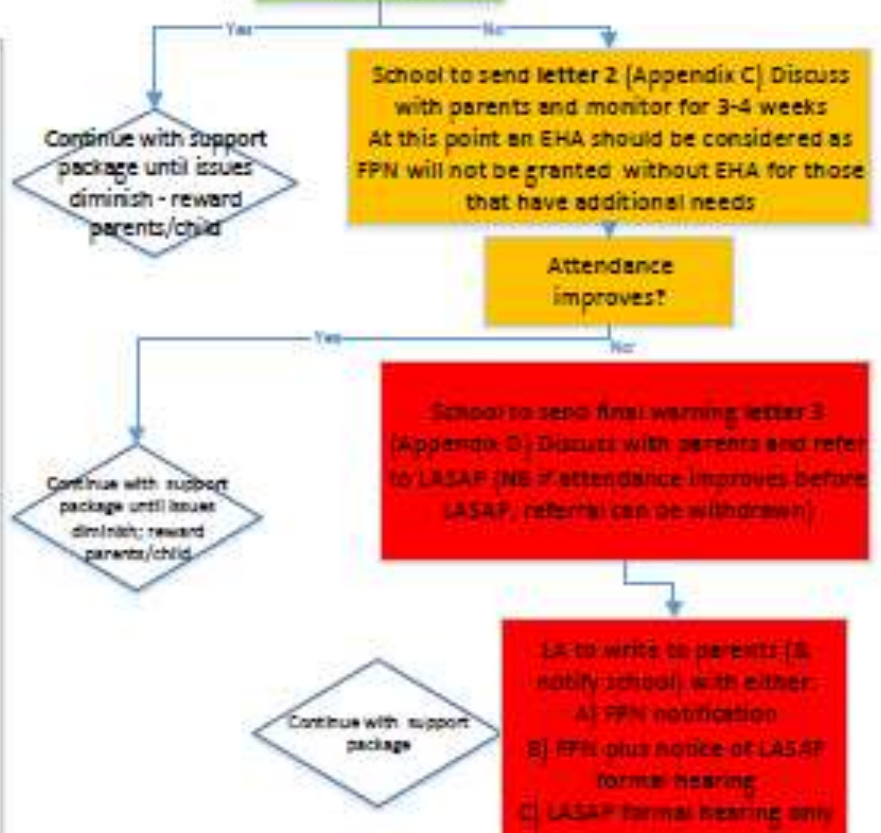
Rotherham Early Help 'Attendance Matters' Local Authority Pathway for Schools Part 1 of 2

August
2019
FINAL 1.6



IMPORTANT

NB for children and families with additional need, the Early Help Assessment must be the underpinning tool used throughout this process to ensure that adequate support and challenge is in place to enhance outcomes and support attendance. Some schools have replaced their pupil support plans with the EHA to ease this process. Integrated Working Leads are available to support the EHA process. The EHA is a shared responsibility across the wider children's workforce to ensure that issues are addressed early in the development of a problem. The definition of additional need can be seen in the threshold descriptor 'Levels of Need' document in Appendix A. Children known to have additional need, that don't have an EHA in place will not progress to FPN.



Appendix 3: Unauthorised Leave of Absence - Holidays in Term Time (FPN procedures)

1. The criteria for issuing a FPN for a holiday in term time is that the leave must be unauthorised (Code: G), the absence must be 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) or more in length and the student's/pupil's attendance for the previous 12 months including the holiday absence period must be under 95.2% (which is the combined National Average %).
2. To make a referral, colleagues should use the new LA referral form alongside the LA guidance booklet.
3. The referral must be sent along with any other correspondence; the request for leave form, the school's response to parents/carers and the child's registration certificate of attendance for the current and previous academic year, to FPN@rotherham.gov.uk.
4. FPNs can be issued where parents/carers do not complete a leave request form, provided that there is certainty the pupil/student was on holiday. For these cases, parents/carers are written to indicating that a referral has been made. Parents/carers have the right to appeal and still have the opportunity to provide proof of illness/other reasons for absence, where applicable.

Any queries regarding the issuing of FPNs should be directed to the ACET Attendance Lead.