



St John's C of E Academy Attendance Policy

Policy lead:	Vice Principal
Date written:	March 2024
Review date:	March 2026
Governors' Approval	18/3/24

Attendance Policy

BELONG We each belong to a family, class, school, community, a country and the world.	BELIEVE We believe in our ability to become the best we can be and we believe in a God who can help us to achieve anything.	ACHIEVE We are unique and special individuals who have different talents, skills and abilities which we can share and celebrate together.
---	---	---

1 RESPECT-KINDNESS-GENEROSITY-TRUST-PATIENCE-PEACE-TRUTH-UNDERSTANDING-LOVE-JOY

Aims and expectations

1.1

St John's C of E Academy is a Christian community that places emphasis on creating a culture of respect, trust and support. We care about and invest in our communities and each other. The academy believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the Academy will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

1.2 It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupils should be deprived of his/her opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

1.3 Pupil Expectations

- That they attend school regularly, at least **97%** of the time.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

1.4 Parental Expectations

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To make all none emergency medical appointments outside of school hours.
- To provide medical evidence of appointments given by medical agencies, for example, hospital/orthodontic appointments, so that we can authorise the absence.
- To ensure that they contact the academy promptly for each day of absence unless discussed with the appropriate member of staff for extended periods of absence. This can be done via letter, phone call, text message or email.
- Provide accurate and up to date contact details to the school.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the academy in confidence whenever any problem occurs that affects the pupils' performance in school.

- To provide medical evidence if requested or if an illness exceeds 3 consecutive days.

1.5 What can parents and pupils expect from school?

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance with appropriate coding.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the pupil or their parent, unless there are concerns for the child in terms of their safety).
- We will reward good attendance but not discriminate against children with significant medical needs (where medical evidence has been provided).
- A high quality education.
- Systems and support to address attendance concerns.
- Staff are appropriately trained in using our recording systems for attendance.

2 Encouraging Attendance

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the session.
- A high quality and engaging curriculum.
- Recording of good attendance on individual pupil reports.
- Weekly individual, class and house award and recognition *
- Termly class and house attendance award and recognition*
- A certificate for 100% attendance for any one term, two terms and whole year; prizes for all those with 100% attendance.*
- Establishing a mechanism for supporting those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- The efficient use of computerised registration systems can provide valuable, year group, form and pupil level attendance data which can assist speedy analysis and timely responses by the academy.
- A relentless attitude to raising expectations from pupils and parents where attendance and achievement are concerned.

*Any attendance rewards will take into consideration pupils with significant medical needs that impacts attendance to avoid discrimination

3 Absence Procedures

3.1 When a pupil does not attend, the academy will respond in a number of ways depending on the individual circumstances.

- 1) Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on a day of absence via text, email or phone call to notify them of their child's absence.
- 2) A text will be sent to any parents, who have not notified school of their child's absence, to notify them of their child not registering.
- 3) If a satisfactory reason is not provided, this will be followed up with a telephone call.
- 4) This can be followed up with a home visit to check on the welfare and safety of the child if there has been no contact within 2 days.
- 5) If there has been no communication and a home visit is unsuccessful, referrals to other agencies such as social services will be made.

- 3.2** If a child absence exceeds 3 consecutive days, medical evidence will be requested in order to authorise that period of absence and will be situation specific.
- 3.3** The academy has a structured response for dealing with attendance concerns. When attendance falls below the academy's expectation of **97%**, monitoring will be put in place. This will be followed by a letter to parents and medical evidence will be requested in order to authorise absences at the Academy Attendance Officer and Principal's discretion.

4 The Role of the Class Teacher

- 4.1** The class teachers in our school have high expectations of the children's attendance
- 4.2** Take a proactive role in pupil attendance and absence.
- 4.3** Discuss the important of good attendance with their class and take an active interest in attendance competitions and rewards.
- 4.4** Discuss with pupils in cases of poor attendance, truancy or patterns that cause concern and to communicate this with the Principal, Vice Principal and Attendance Officer as appropriate.
- 4.5** Keep class attendance monitoring accurate through the use of electronic registers, enquiring in cases of absence.
- 4.6** Develop positive relations with parents and make contact with home for both praise and concern.

5 The Role of the Principal / Vice Principal

- 5.1** The Principal / Vice Principal supports the staff in the implementation of the policy.
- 5.2** To oversee the reporting of progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- 5.3** To liaise with all stakeholders in the monitoring and tracking of attendance.
- 5.4** Ensure positive attendance remains a priority within the school.

6 The Role of the Attendance Officer and School Office

- 6.1** Liaise with staff regarding weekly attendance data and other reports on request.
- 6.2** Liaise with class teachers regarding messages regarding messages received and individual parental contacts.
- 6.3** Monitoring attendance including letters to parents requesting penalty notices from the local authority where required.
- 6.4** Support with attendance panels and initiatives to raise attendance.

7 The Role of Governors

- 7.1** Ensure the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures.

- 7.2 Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 7.3 Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 7.4 Having regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2021) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

8. Lateness

- 8.1 As a school, we actively promote good punctuality. Pupils who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation are challenged. Parents will be contacted in cases of persistent lateness.
- 8.2 Registers remain open 30 minutes from the beginning of registration, for reporting purposes. Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open between 8.35am and 8.45am he/she may be marked present.
- 8.3 Where a pupil arrives between 8.45am and 9.05am, he/she will be marked with the letter L. (Late before registers close)
- 8.4 Where a pupil arrives after register closure at 9.05am without good reason, he/she will be marked with the letter U or M if the late relates to a medical appointment.
- 8.5 In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child is persistently late for 10 separate instances over a six week period and where they are marked as a 'U' in the attendance register.

9 Removal from the school roll

- 9.1 There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in Pupil Registration Regulations 2006. **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**
- Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
 - Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at the school. (Elective Home Education).
 - Where the school has been notified by a Health Care Professional that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.
 - Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Principal of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Service to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
 - Where the Principal has been notified that the student has died.
 - The pupil has had 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student.
 - Where a pupil has failed to return from an extended family holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
 - Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

10 Categorising Absence

10.1 Only the school, in the context of the law can authorise absence, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If there is not an acceptable explanation offered for absence then the matter must be referred to the Principal. The school therefore has the right to not authorise absence if they see fit.

- Reasons for absence will be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.

10.2 Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised** which can lead to fixed penalty notice, see below.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available
- Days of religious observance
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated
- Absence that the Academy deem exceptional circumstance

10.3 Unauthorised Absence

In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child has in excess of 5 days (10 sessions) unauthorised absence over a 10 week period. The national framework for considering penalty notices from August 2024 is: A fine of £80 per parent/carer, per pupil if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days. A national limit of 2 penalty notices within a 3 year rolling period. If a parent/carer receives a second fine for the same pupil within the 3 year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160 per parent. A further penalty notice would be referred to the enforcement team for possible court action.

10.4 Family Holidays

The academy cannot authorise holidays unless under exceptional circumstances due to the adverse effect upon the child's education. Unauthorised absences may be referred to the local authority, which may result in a Fixed Penalty Fine of up to £160 per parent/carer per child being enforced (under section 444(B) of the Education Act 1996), for failing to ensure regular attendance at school.

The amount of a fixed penalty notice is set by the Department for Education National Framework and are therefore subject to change without amendment of the policy.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to notify school of any intended holiday absences and any exceptional circumstances a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the holiday being taken.

Where school suspects a child may be on holiday and parents have not notified school, a home visit may be conducted.

The school will only consider authorising holidays in term time under the following exceptional circumstances:

- √ A parent/carer is a member of the armed forces or a police officer with directed leave
- √ A terminal illness to a close family member
- √ Religions observance (up to 3 days per year at the discretion of the school)
- √ Other circumstances deemed to be totally out of the control of the parents

10.5 Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstances.

- Shopping trips
- Holidays in term time unless under exceptional circumstances
- Minding the house or looking after siblings
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified
- No reason given
- Academy staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid

10.6 Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a pupil being absent from school. It is for the Principal to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

11 Missing Children

11.1 Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

1. The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Principal immediately.
2. The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
3. A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Principal.
4. The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - a. All classrooms and other internal rooms
 - b. All toilets
 - c. The school grounds
5. Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
6. If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then parents of the pupil will be notified.
7. The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
8. If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
9. The missing pupil's teacher will complete a written log, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
10. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
11. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
12. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Principal will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The Principal will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced where necessary, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

12 Monitoring

12.1 The Principal monitors the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis. He also reports to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy and, if necessary, makes recommendations for further improvements.

12.2 It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor attendance, and to ensure that the school policy is administered fairly and consistently.

13 Review

13.1 The governing body reviews this policy every two years. They governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Appendix 1


ATTENDANCE GOOD PRACTICE

At St John's C of E Academy we endeavour to adopt the following elements of good practice as highlighted by research.


1. A member of the SLT being charged with specific responsibility for pupil attendance.
2. The academy devising a sensitive scheme for the immediate follow-up of absentees – eg. either by telephoning home or sending out letters to parents or guardians.
3. Class Teachers ensuring that records of attendance are as accurate as possible and explanations for absence are produced when pupils return to school.
4. Class Teachers monitoring the attendance records of pupils.
5. Rewards introduced for individual pupils or classes with an excellent attendance record in the form of praise or prizes.
6. Penalties being introduced for parents of pupils who are persistently late.
7. Absentees and truants being quietly welcomed back to school upon their return and efforts made to reintegrate them socially and academically.
8. First day of absence contact. Where the academy is able to resource this, a phone call to the homes of all, or a targeted group of absentees on their first day of absence has proved to be effective in addressing casual and opportunistic absence. Even short-term use of the strategy can produce long-term benefits.
9. Working with families to remove barriers to attendance following the Attend Framework.

Appendix 2 – Absence Procedures Flow Chart

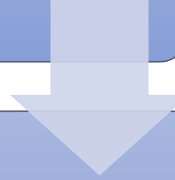
1) Parents should notify the school office of absence via phone, text, email or by calling in person. Office will contact via text any pupils with an unexplained absence by 10:00am.



2) Any parents who do not reply to the text will have a follow up phone call using all available contacts at 11am by Office.

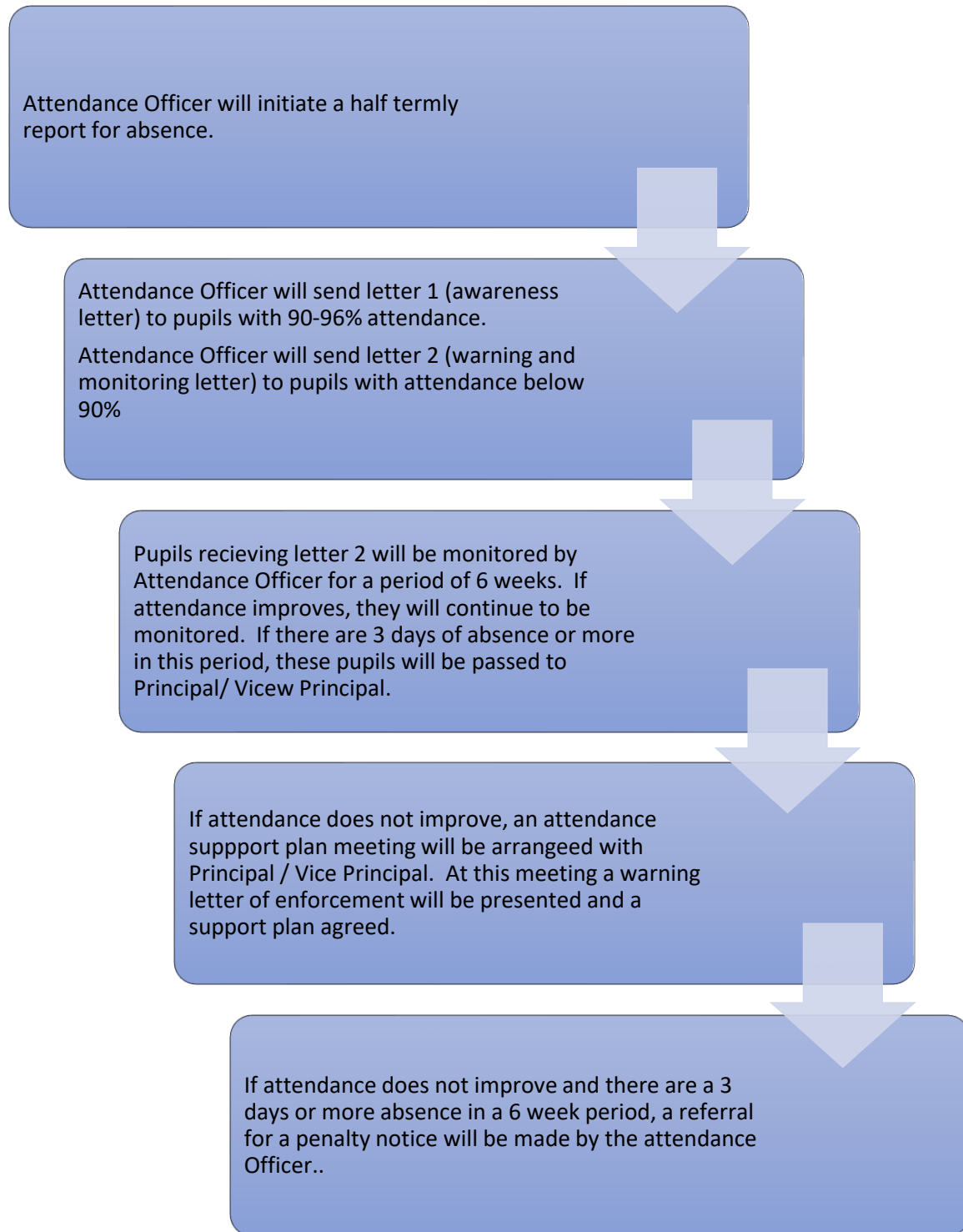


3) If school is unable to contact for a 2 days or there is concern for the welfare of the child, it will be passed to Principal or Vice Principal to arrange a home visit.



4) If no contact is made with a home visit, external agency support will be initiated through social services and the police.


Appendix 3 – Monitoring Absence Flow Chart




* A pupil may skip a stage for attendance monitoring if there is historical poor attendance to allow early intervention*

Appendix 4 – Punctuality Intervention Flow Chart


Class teachers and are to monitor and report any concerns to the Attendance Officer.




Attendance Officer to send a warning letter to parents about punctuality at school and monitoring will take place.



If there are continued punctuality concerns will 3 more occasions of lateness in 6 weeks, Attendance Officer will notify Principal/ Vice Principal and a support meeting arranged.



A support plan will be completed with parents and Principal / Vice Principal and a warning about penalty notices issued.



If there are a further 3 incidents of lateness in a 6 week period, a penalty notice will be issued.

Appendix 5 - ILLNESS EXCLUSION POLICY

Rashes and skin infections	Recommended period to be kept away from school or nursery
Athletes foot	None
Chicken Pox	Until all vesicles have totally crusted over
Cold Sores	None
German Measles	4 days from appearance of rash
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease	None , usually a mild disease
Impetigo & other skin infections	Until lesions are crusted and healed, or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment
Measles	4 days from onset of rash
Ringworm of the body/Scabies	Seldom necessary to exclude provided treatment being given
Scabies	Child can return after first treatment
Scarlet Fever & Streptococcal infection of the throat	Child can return 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment
Slapped Cheek	None
Shingles	Exclude only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered
Warts and viruses	None
Diarrhoea and vomiting illness	
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting	48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting
E-Coli Typhoid Shigella	Should be excluded for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea Further exclusion may be required for some children until they are no longer excreting
Cryptosporidiosis	Exclude for 48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea
Respiratory infections	
Influenza	Until recovered
Tuberculosis	Always consult your GP
Whooping Cough	48 hours from commencing treatment, or 21 days from onset of illness if no treatment
Other infections	
Conjunctivitis	None
Diphtheria	Exclusion is essential. Consult GP.
Glandular Fever	None
Head Lice	None. Repeated treatment recommended.
Hepatitis A	Exclude until 7 days from onset of Jaundice
Hepatitis B & C	None
Meningococcal Infection	Until recovered from illness
Mumps	Exclude child 5 days from onset of illness
Tonsillitis	None
Covid-19 Positive	Isolation for 10 days
Covid 19 Symptoms	Isolate until negative PCR test received

Please note that in all contagious infections the washing of hands and good hygiene procedures will always shorten any chances of infection.

In consultation with the Health Protection Agency the above periods of exclusion have been set. These are to ensure that both staff and children within St John's are not placed at unnecessary risk from infection.

Appendix 6 – Attendance concern letter 1 example

Address

Date

Dear

As a school, we have high expectations of our children and define good attendance to be at least 97% over the course of an entire school year. This equates to being ill for 5 school days (10 morning and afternoon sessions) over the course of a school year. St John's C of E Academy is committed to improving achievement through attendance and monitors the attendance of all of its pupils.

I am aware that absences due to illness rise at different times of the year and this can impact on a child's attendance. I am also mindful of individual circumstances and significant illnesses, where medical evidence has been provided to school, which can result in longer periods of absence. However, I am obliged to make you aware that your child's attendance is currently tracking as potentially below 90% and is therefore identified by the Department for Education as a potential persistent absentee. Up to the age of 16, a yearly 90% attendance would mean a child losing over a year of school education and failing to achieve their full educational potential.

I enclose a copy of your child's school attendance record for your information.

If there is any further support or guidance that school can provide to you or your child to support regular attendance, please do not hesitate to ask your class teacher or arrange a meeting with me.

Yours Faithfully,

Appendix 7 – Attendance concerns letter 2 example

Address

Date

Attendance concerns

Dear

As a school, we have high expectations of our children and define good attendance to be at least 97% over the course of an entire school year. This equates to being ill for 5 school days (10 morning and afternoon sessions) over the course of a school year. St John's C of E Academy is committed to improving achievement through attendance and monitors the attendance of all of its pupils.

I am aware that absences due to illness rise at different times of the year and this can impact on a child's attendance. I am also mindful of individual circumstances and significant illnesses, where medical evidence has been provided to school, which can result in longer periods of absence. However, I am obliged to make you aware that your child's attendance is currently a cause for concern tracking as below 90% and is therefore identified by the Department for Education as a persistent absentee. Up to the age of 16, a yearly 90% attendance would mean a child losing over a year of school education and failing to achieve their full educational potential.

We are now in a position where we are unable to authorise any further illness absences without medical evidence (copy of a prescription or medical appointment card etc.) being provided. I must make you aware that if a child has in excess of 3 days unauthorised absence in a six week period, this may result in an attendance enforcement referral being made.

I enclose a copy of your child's school attendance record for your information.

If there is any further support or guidance that school can provide to you or your child to support regular attendance, please do not hesitate to ask your class teacher or arrange a meeting with me.

Yours Faithfully,

Appendix 8 – Attendance concern letter 3 example

Address

Date

Dear

Education Enforcement Referral:

Following our previous discussions regarding attendance, we are now in a position where we are required to refer XXX attendance to Education Enforcement. XXX attendance at school for this academic year is currently at XXX%.

Should you require any further support in ensuring XXX is attending school on a regular basis, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind Regards