PACE Academy Trust

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Chipstead Valley Primary School

CVPS

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School Day Timings

Year Group	Start of School Day	End of School Day
Nursery (mornings)	8:30am	12:30pm
Nursery (afternoons)	1:30pm	3:30pm
Nursery (all day)	8:30am	3:30pm
EYFS/KS1/KS2	8:40am	3:15pm

1. Introduction

PACE Academy Trust recognises that all pupils have the right to access full time education. A good education helps to give children the best possible start in life. Evidence suggests that children out of school are at risk

of becoming victims of crime or abuse and more likely to be drawn into anti-social behaviour. Regular attendance is essential to enable students to take part in all the opportunities available and to develop their full potential. We are committed to working in partnership with our parents/carers who are responsible for ensuring their children access education. Through the implementation of this policy, pupils, staff, parents/carers and governors all have a part to play in securing the following aims:

2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Promoting good attendance
- Promoting and supporting punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- **The Children Act 1989**
- **The Crime and Disorder Act 1998**
- **The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003**
- **The Education and Inspections Act 2006**
- **The Sentencing Act 2020**
- **The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**
- **The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007**
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)
- **The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013**
- **The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933** and 1963
- **The Equality Act 2010**
- **Children not collected from school policy**

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Local Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- 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
- Requesting a penalty notice to be issued by the Education Welfare Service
- Implementing the parenting contract between schools and parents to support with absence
- Working closely with the PACE Attendance and Family Engagement Officer to improve overall attendance and engagement

4.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Ensuring that the learning environment, on offer to pupils, creates the foundations for excellent attendance and punctuality
- Co-ordinating and monitoring the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the school.
- Raising the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality, for example, through the assemblies and the reward systems that are put in place
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Facilitating calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

4.4 Attendance and Family Engagement Officer

The PACE Attendance and Family Engagement Officer is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance and expectation of good attendance with all pupils
- Using the trust's management Information System to monitor attendance
- Working in partnership with Headteachers, SENDCos, DSLs and attendance administrators to improve attendance and family engagement for pupils who are persistently or seriously absent from school
- Working directly with targeted pupils and their families who have attendance below 90%, establishing positive, regular communication and completing home visits where necessary
- Monitoring the attendance of groups of learners across school and trust, identifying patterns and trends and identifying actions to address these
- Establishing a referral process for case work across each school, maintaining high quality records of each case so that there is a clear audit trail of the work completed and of the communication between home and school.
- Providing regular updates to the PACE Behaviour and Attendance Lead
- Referring pupils to the Local Authority where attendance requires a more intensive approach
- Contributing to the overall ethos/workings and aims of the school

4.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the end of registration period in the morning and afternoon sessions

4.6 School Administration Staff

School administration staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Refer parents to the class teacher or dedicated attendance lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Carry out first day calling/text messaging and establish reasons for absence including telephone calls to parents/carers on the first day of absence, send attendance letters
- Ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the school computerised registration systems for attendance and punctuality, for example, processing registers
- Liaise with the PACE Attendance and Family Engagement Officer, where appropriate

4.7 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- To be fully supportive of the school with regard to attendance and punctuality
- Engage with all staff who may be involved in improving their child's attendance, in particular the Family Engagement Officer
- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9 am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return

- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- To support the school and their child (ren) by not requesting authorised absence for holidays, during term time
- To contact the school immediately if they have concerns or if there are issues preventing full-time attendance.

4.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- To ensure they maximise their learning potential by taking responsibility for achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality
- To discuss with their teacher any problems that may prevent full time attendance or punctual arrival at school
- To support their fellow pupils and thereby their class in winning awards that relate to attendance and punctuality.

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am each school day. The children are encouraged to arrive at school when the doors open at 8.40am where they can take part in early morning work and activities.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.15am. If the child arrives after 8.55am but before 9.15am they will be marked in as late. If the child arrives after 9.15am they will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm. If the children are not in attendance by 1.30pm it will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on 01737 553255 option 1. An answer machine facility is available to leave a message. Please ensure that you speak clearly, stating your child's name and class and providing the reason for your child's absence avoiding using words like "sick" or "unwell." Please be specific with the reason for the absence to ensure that we can complete our registers accurately. You can also email the school office on office@chipstead.croydon.sch.uk.

If the school is not notified of a child's unplanned absence parents will receive a text message or a call from the school office to discuss why the child isn't in attendance. Parents should inform the school each day to explain their child's absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

5.3 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.

To request time off for medical appointments parents should liaise with the school office in person, via telephone or email. Parents will need to provide information about the appointment, who the appointment is for, the date, time and the medical evidence for the appointment. This could include an appointment card, letter, or a text message. We require the parents to notify the school as to when the children will be returning to school.

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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- It is exceptionally important that the children arrive at school on time. This ensures they do not miss any valuable learning time and feel fully regulated when they enter the classroom. Children who arrive past 9am will be classified as late as this is when the register closes.
- For those children who are persistently late families will be initially contacted by the child's teacher and/ or the Attendance and Family Engagement Officer to discuss any concerns and how the school can support the family to improve punctuality for the child. If the lateness continues parents will receive a letter from the Head of the school sharing the concerns the school has and offering a meeting for the parents to come in to look at ways the school can support. Following this, if the school continues to have concerns, they will make a referral to the local authority and parents will be contacted by the educational welfare officer. The educational welfare officer will work with families as a supportive measure; however, they do have the authority to refer families to legal proceedings and penalty notices if lateness is persistent once the register has closed.

5.5 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/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit, contact the education welfare officer, children's services, or the police to support with a home visit.
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- If the unexplained absence continues over a period of 20 school days, in conjunction with the local authority the child will be classified missing in education and can potentially be off rolled from the school's register in agreement with the local authority.

5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via:

- School newsletters
- Parents Evening
- School reports
- Whole school attendance letters
- If children's attendance drops below 96%, they will be informed

6. Authorised and unauthorised absences

6.1 Approval for term-time absence – Appendix 2

The Local Governing Board believes that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a student's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2016 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.

2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form. (Available from the school office) Verbal requests will be recorded in writing.

3. This must include the reason you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as a medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to you within 7 days.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £160.

6.2 Legal sanctions/Penalty Notices

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in the issuing of Penalty Notice Fine/prosecution by the London Borough of Merton, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The 1st fine per parent per child will be £160 if paid in 28 days. If paid within 21 days, the fine is reduced to £80. If the fine is not paid the matter will usually proceed to prosecution.

The 2nd fine is £160 with no option to pay a reduced rate. If the fine is not paid the matter will usually proceed to prosecution

After 2 fines are issued to a parent/carer for a specified child in a rolling 3-year period the 3rd action is prosecution. There is no option to issue a third fine in that timescale.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority at the request of the school in line with the Code of Conduct.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

As a school we are committed to working together to promote high levels of attendance, and to act on an early intervention basis where attendance and punctuality become a concern. To promote attendance and punctuality we:

- Employ an Attendance and Family Engagement Officer to work with children and families to help improve attendance and punctuality, and to strengthen the link between home and school.
- Keep parents up to date with attendance via whole school letters, newsletters and regular communication if a child's attendance drops below 96%
- Hold regular celebration assemblies to share and celebrate good attendance
- Reward classes and children with the best attendance
- Present 100% termly and yearly attendance certificates with prizes
- Establish attendance contracts with parents/carers where necessary

Attendance Contracts

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement with the School, Parent(s), Pupil(s) – See Appendix 3.

The aim is to offer support by listening to the reasons for absence and difficulties that prevent regular school attendance during a meeting with the parents, school staff and the child, if age appropriate to do so.

The purpose of the meeting it to set out an action plan to address the poor school attendance of the pupil with realistic achievable targets to be made within a reasonable time scale. A Parenting Contract can cease after 4 weeks if there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality in line with the targets set.

8. Attendance and punctuality monitoring

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96%. Our school has the following attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures, to ensure that children's attendance and punctuality meet the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where children's attendance and/or punctuality falls below the standard:

8.1 Monitoring attendance and punctuality

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Discuss attendance and punctuality with classroom teachers on an ongoing basis. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to a senior leader.
- Monitor punctuality data on a regular basis
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences and/or punctuality may be a cause for concern
- Where there is a cause for concern attendance will be monitored weekly
- A termly attendance data report is written by the designated senior leader and shared with governors and staff

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance and punctuality

The school will:

- Analyse attendance, absence and punctuality data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and/or punctuality, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance, absence and punctuality, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide attendance information to PACE Academy Trust on a termly basis and discuss outcomes with Trust leadership

8.3 Using data to improve attendance and punctuality

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 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.

The school will:

- Closely monitor a child's attendance
- When a child's attendance drops below a certain level parents will receive a letter from the school
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide families with support with internal support mechanisms – ELSA
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Involve the Attendance and Family Engagement Officer as a supportive measure

9. Deletions from the register /removals from the school role/ Changes to school role

Parents must ensure they inform the school of any change of address, contact details or family circumstances. Should a parent advise they are moving and will be removing their child (ren) from the school role, the school must attempt to obtain the parent's new address and if possible, the name of the new school the child will be attending. If this information is not supplied the school will complete a Child Missing from Education form and forward it to the LA.

The school will report a child is Missing from Education to the LA, following 20 school days of absence, when all checks have been exhausted. This will include telephone calls to all known numbers in the school system, including relatives, discussion with class teacher and known friends of pupil, home visit by School. The school will notify the children missing from the education team via USOFX with the relevant information and await confirmation to remove them.

Child Missing in Education

If a pupil moves too far from the school, moves out of the area/abroad, the parents must complete a school leavers form, available from the school office. This will provide the school with the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school's name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

Ten days' unauthorised absence and fifteen days attributed to illness

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The School/Police will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Part Time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

The school attendance officer will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons. Please see Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information.

Suspension from School

With effect from the 1st of September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also the penalty notice section.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Hayley Lewis Head of School. At every review, the policy will be approved by the local governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

Registration Code	Description	Physical meaning
Code / \	Present in attendance	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
Code B	Attending any other approved educational activity	
Code D	Dual Registered	This code will be used if a pupil is registered at two schools.
Code G	Holiday not granted by the school	The school has not granted a leave of absence, and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. ***If the parents did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.***
Code K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	
Code L	Late arrival before the register is closed	
Code N	Reason for absence not yet provided	
Code O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	
Code P	Approved sporting activity	This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, i.e. — training sessions, trials and sporting events.
Code U	Arrived late at school after the register closed. ***(This is 9.15am for Chipstead Valley Primary)***	
Code Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	
Code V	Educational visits and trips	
Code W	Work Experience	
Code Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	
Code Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	
Code Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	
Code Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	
Code Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	
Code Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Code Y7	Unable to attend because of other unavoidable causes	
Code Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	

Code #	Planned whole school closure	
Authorised Absences		
Code C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, i.e. — family funeral. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.
Code C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	
Code C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	
Code E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	
Code I	Illness	Schools can request medical evidence from parents/carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.
Code J1	Interview	This code will be used when it has been agreed that the pupil can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam
Code M	Medical or dental appointments	Parents/Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours, but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.
Code R	Religious Observation	This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only authorise one day's absence for religious events.
Code S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	
Code T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes and the child is a mobile child	
Code X	Not required to be in school (not compulsory school age)	

Appendix 2: Request for leave term time for exceptional circumstances.

CVPS

CHIPSTEAD VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL
LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

Request for Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances during Term Time

It is not advisable to take your child/ren on a leave of absence during term time as this causes disruption to their education. Schools must follow the law in this regard and may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances if certain criteria are fulfilled.

School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024

- Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances is authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. **(This is not an automatic right of parents/guardians.)**
- **You should not normally take your child(ren) on a leave of absence during the school term.**
- Please do not book your leave of absence until authority is given.
- **Each request for leave of absence will be considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request and any supporting evidence provided.**
- **If the absence is approved by the Headteacher you will be advised as to how many days, the Headteacher has approved for your child's absence.**
- **If the school does not agree the absence and you take the leave without permission, or your child is absent for more than the agreed number of days the absence will be unauthorised.**
- **Leave of absence taken without the authorisation of the school may lead to your child(ren) being referred to the Education Welfare Service/ Local Authority and the possibility of statutory action and a fine/prosecution**

In order for your application for absence to be considered, please complete below:

Name(s) of Child(ren):

_____

Form/Year:

_____

Home address:

_____

_____

_____

Dates of absence: From_____ To: _____ Days out: _____

Reason for request (additional evidence may be required)**/Who is travelling?**

_____

_____

_____

Signed: Parent/Guardian: _____

Email address: _____ **Mobile number:** _____

Date form submitted: _____

The above request for leave of absence in term time for _____ has/has not been authorised. If authorised, your child/ren should return to school on: _____

Signed: _____ **Role:** _____

School Data Checklist:

For School Office Use Only:

Pupil's name	
Child's age	
Current Attendance	
Previous leave of absence requested/taken in last 2 years	

Nature of exceptional circumstances and evidence provided	
Number of days granted (if any)	

Appendix 3: Guidance and examples of attendance contracts

Attendance Contract requirements, good practice and template

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement with the School, Parent(s), Pupil(s), and other Lead Professionals.

An attendance contract is not a punitive tool and is designed to provide a support framework.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter into a contract, and they cannot be agreed in the absence of the parent/s

A letter should be sent to the parents/carers to invite them to a meeting to discuss the concerns regarding attendance and/or punctuality with the time and date of the appointment and details of who to contact if this is not convenient.

- The appointment should be arranged in advance.
- The letter(s) should be sent by post to the home addressed to each individual parent.
- Both Parents should be invited to attend unless this would place one or other at risk or be counterproductive.
- The letter should be translated into a language that the parent understands.
- The letter should include that they should bring the child with them if they are not in school that day or if they are in school advise the parents that they will be bought to the meeting if they are able to understand and contribute.
- Offer the parent the opportunity to discuss matters in private that may be sensitive.
- If an interpreter is needed, then this should be booked in advance. Family members should not be used.
- The Representative of the School/Academy must be able to make commitments on behalf of the establishment, at the meeting.

Attendance Contracts should be in place for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months. If no progress is made towards the objectives set the Attendance Contract can cease after 12 months.

The aim is to offer support by listening to the reasons for absence and difficulties that prevent regular school attendance during a meeting with the parents, child, staff. It will usually include other professionals, such as an Educational Welfare or Family Enaggement Officer.

It should set out an action plan to address the poor school attendance of the pupil with realistic achievable targets to be made within a reasonable time.

Be written in clear and accessible language that everyone understands.

Any issues raised by the parent/carer or pupil on the school's side are addressed with specific solutions.

It should avoid general statements of good intentions on either side.

Everyone attending should be asked to score the level of concern as per the scale shown on the Parenting Contract.

A review date should be set at the initial meeting

The Parenting Contract should be printed and signed at the end of the Meeting (time should be allowed for this to happen) Everyone at the meeting should be given a copy of the Parenting Contract and a copy placed on the pupil's file.

Further information and advice are available on Parenting Contracts in Working Together to Improve School Attendance Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) . Please also see Appendix 1

Parenting contracts can be used as an outcome of a TAF meeting https://www.mertonscp.org.uk/working-with-children/effective-support-for-families-in-merton/ including templates for meetings and family plans.

Useful links:

Early Help/Children's Social Care - candfhub@merton.gov.uk

Below are some suggestions of tasks/actions that you may wish to include. You may also wish to include tasks or actions that are specific to the pupil or family.

The Parent/Carer agrees to:

Suggested Action
Make sure pupil attends school every day
Contact the school by phone to check attendance
Look for the pupil and when possible, return them to school should they have chosen to walk out of school
Attend any future meetings that may be called by school staff or Education Welfare Officer/Lead Professional
Notify the school on the day of absence, giving a reason and indicating a return date/time.
Contact the school as soon as you become aware of any concerns, issues, or problems that you or the pupil have.

Contact the Attendance and Family Engagement Officer/Educational Welfare Office if the pupil feels that the school are not dealing with any issue, or if the pupil feels uncomfortable about discussing an issue with the school.
Find out where the pupil goes when he/she is not in school and inform the Attendance and Family Engagement Officer /Educational Welfare Officer so that action can be taken if this arises.
Notify the school of any occasions when you are aware that the pupil will be late into school giving reasons
Keep the school updated with full contact details, including, where possible, a telephone number.
Ensure the pupil is seen by a GP/a GP is consulted when ill and provide medical evidence of any absence due to illness (i.e., appointment cards, prescriptions, letters etc.)
Address the concerns that the child has about leaving home or why they stay at home
Reward child with extra positive activities at home / weekend with improved attendance

The school agrees to:

Suggested Action
Address concerns related to why the child does not want to be in school - this could be extra support with learning/ friendship groups/ bullying
Respond as soon as practicably possible to any issues raised by the Pupil, Parent/carer or Lead Professional. If contacted by the Parent/Carer by phone or e mail response to be within 2 working days.
Meet child every morning in an agreed room to help them start the day well
Arrange to meet with the pupil regularly or when the pupil requires
Allow the child to access after school activity to build confidence or success / build new peer group
Provide support, help or advice to the pupil, parent/carer, or school staff on request.
Meet with the parent/carer, pupil, or school staff in the first instance should there be any further issues or problems identified particularly relating to attendance or punctuality
Refer child to extra support provided by in school services i.e., Mental Health in schools' support
To make referrals to appropriate agencies – state which ones
Work with Social Care or Early Help/appropriate agency as appropriate attending meetings regarding the pupil or family

Review attendance after ……. weeks with Line Manager and agree further action as necessary

The Lead Professional / Education Welfare Officer agrees to:

Suggested Action
Respond as soon as practicably possible to any issues raised by the pupil, parent/career, or school staff.
Provide support, help or advice to the pupil, parent/carer, or school staff on request.
Provide the parent/carer(s) with details of a place on a Parenting Program
Meet with the parent/carer, pupil, or school staff in the first instance should there be any further issues or problems identified particularly relating to attendance or punctuality
Arrange to meet with the pupil regularly or when the pupil requires
Review attendance after ……. weeks with Line Manager and agree further action as necessary
Consider the use of the Common Assessment Framework
Contact other professionals supporting the pupil to clarify roles

The Pupil agrees to:

Suggested Action
Attend school as agreed and on time
Be responsible for obtaining a registration mark even if they are late for school
Attend any future meetings as felt necessary by parent, school staff, lead professional or Education Welfare Officer
Be responsible for getting out of bed each morning to get to school on time and be aware that if he/she is late he/she will have to face the consequences

Make sure they follow the conditions of any attendance report
Tell their parent/carer of any concerns especially if they are likely to affect attendance
Contact the Attendance and Family Engagement Officer/Educational Welfare Officer or the identified teacher and let them know of any problems they have generally or relating to his/her schoolwork

If the Parent/s who sign this Parenting Contract do not follow through with what has been agreed and attendance fails to improve to the agreed level set for the child or an appropriate level (over 90% for more than 6 weeks) consideration will be needed as what further actions will now support an improvement in attendance.

For example: They may issue a Penalty Notice Warning to each parent and/or discuss with the Local Authority whether an Education Supervision Order (ESO) is indicated in this case. The decision to apply for an ESO rests entirely with the Local Authority.

Appendix 3 – Attendance Contracts

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CVPS

Chipstead Valley Primary School
Attendance Contract

Student's Name	DOB / Year group	Student's school
Parent/carer 1 full name	**Parent/Carer 2 full name**	**Address**
Contact number	**Contact number**	
Child's ethnicity	**Any SEND**	**Date**
		Time (start/end)
Attendance during last 12 weeks	**Sessions of unauthorised absence**	**Number of late marks**
What are we worried about?	**What is working well?**	**What needs to happen?** **What will it look like to not be worried anymore?**

0 …… ….10		
On a scale of 1 to 10 , where 10 means (pupils name) is attending school regularly on every day the school is open and only absent in exceptional circumstances and when authorised and 0 means that (pupil's name)'s attendance is not improving, where do we rate the situation?		

Targets for pupil, parent, school and agencies	**Date to be achieved by**	**Review of targets**	**Date to be achieved by**

Date of review:

This is a voluntary agreement where all parties agree to work together to follow the agreed plan to support the pupil to attend school regularly and punctually.

I agree to work together with school and the local authority to follow the agreed plan

Signed: …… Date: …… Student's score …… [child]

Signed: …….. Date: …… Parent's score ……. [parent]

Signed: …….. Date: …… Parent's score ……. [parent]

I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.

Signed: …….. Date: ……. School score ……
Academy/School

I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.

Signed: …….. Date: ……. score ……
Lead professional

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or a whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.