



Attendance Policy

Policy updated: November 2025

Policy to be reviewed: November 2026

1. Aims

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

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

Compass School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Family Engagement Workers are Lisa Lewry and Gemma Allan, and can be contacted via email lisa.lewry@compass-school.net or gemma.allan@compass-school.net. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the Family Engagement Workers for queries or concerns about attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (Department of Education (DfE)'s) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)
- It also refers to:
 - [School census guidance](#)
 - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
 - [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the Department of Education (DfE) and Local Authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Management Committee
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising another member of the Extended leadership team to be able to do so in her absence
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the Local Authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the Local Authority, including:
 - Notifying the Local Authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the Local Authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the Local Authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior attendance champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The senior attendance champion is Sally Howells and can be contacted via 023 8021 5320 or via email sally.howells@compass-school.net

3.4 The Family Engagement Workers

The school Family Engagement Workers are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the extended leadership team
- Working with Southampton School Attendance Service officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher and Designated senior attendance champion responsible for attendance (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The school's Family Engagement Workers are Lisa Lewry and Gemma Allan, and can be contacted via email lisa.lewry@compass-school.net or gemma.allan@compass-school.net Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the Family Engagement Workers for queries or concerns about attendance.

3.5 Parents

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

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

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends their timetabled provision
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on each 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
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school's Family Engagement Workers Lisa Lewry and Gemma Allan, they can be contacted via email lisa.lewry@compass-school.net or gemma.allan@compass-school.net Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the Family Engagement Workers for queries or concerns about attendance.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

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

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - The original entry
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - The date on which the amendment was made
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the Department of Education (DfE) attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

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

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend every timetabled lesson.

The school day will start at 8.45am for Secondary pupils and 9.05am for Primary school pupils.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **10.00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **10.30am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1.00pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school on 02380 215320 **option 1**; emailing attendance@compass-school.net or texting 07756 292553/07562 690226

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents 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 must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and 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

4.5 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 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
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving a Southampton School Attendance Service officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's/families' allocated workers from a wide range of agencies
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or make a referral for other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below for more information)

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- An individual timetable

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
 - Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
 - Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
 - Attending provision arranged by the Local Authority
 - Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Responding to attendance concerns

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

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), Local Authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the Local Authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

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

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days. A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National FramSASSrk, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the Local Authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Compass School encourages and rewards punctuality and attendance, working with families and agencies to support our pupils.

Primary

- The Family Engagement Workers will send a celebratory ParentMail message to parents/carers for individual pupils who have made significant improvement in their attendance and/or punctuality, on a weekly basis.
- Celebration postcards sent home
- Raffles will be held termly with rewards for overall best attendance and most improved attendance.

Secondary

- The Family Engagement Workers will send a celebratory ParentMail message to parents/carers for individual pupils who have made significant improvement in their attendance and/or punctuality, on a weekly basis
- Celebration postcards sent home.
- Raffles will be held every half-term with rewards for overall best attendance, most improved attendance and most improved punctuality.

Procedures for following up pupil absence

Compass School has a commitment in line with our safeguarding and child protection policies to ensure that we are safeguarding the needs of all pupils through collaboration work with agencies, parents/carers and the school to improve attendance.

In the event that a child does not arrive in school however, if a reason for absence has been provided, we will update our systems and share the information with relevant staff. In some circumstances, we may complete a home visit to see the child and offer the family any additional support. The Family Engagement Workers will continue to receive daily updates from parents/carers and will liaise with the Inclusion team during the daily meeting regarding any additional actions as well as ensuring the information provided by parents is shared with agencies where applicable by the Inclusion Team.

In the event that a child does not arrive at school and we have not received a reason for absence, we will complete the following:

- Phone parents/carers by 9.45am to establish the reason for their child's absence
- Send a ParentMail and email notification to parent/carers
- Make additional calls to emergency contact numbers
- Discuss with the Inclusion Team regarding any welfare/safeguarding concerns

If by 11am, if we have not received an explanation for a child's absence, we will complete the following;

- Conduct a home visit
- Where applicable, liaise with agencies working with the child and/or family.

In the event where all of the above actions have been completed and we have still been unable to ascertain a reason for absence, speak to parents/carers or see the child, we will make contact with the police to report the child missing from school on the same day.

Attendance support

Compass School is responsible for supporting the attendance of pupils and for dealing with problems that may lead to absence. For pupils of compulsory school age, Compass School will differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

Compass School has a range of strategies to identify pupils who may be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee:

- Regularly audit attendance of all its pupils;
- Work actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils, vulnerable groups and the school as a whole. This will include the effective analysis of attendance data;
- Support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance;
- Be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and pupils this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed;
- Offer additional support and scrutiny for children from vulnerable groups such as Children Looked After, Travellers and children with Special Educational Needs who are at a higher risk of poor attendance;

- Produce school attendance policies, which are agreed and regularly reviewed by the Management Committee and are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents, pupils and staff;
- Be compliant with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments, regarding the marking of registers and the removal of pupils of compulsory school age from the school roll.

The Compass School attendance support systems procedures are in place to;

- Identify absence concerns early
- Understand the causes of absence
- Offer appropriate support to both pupils and parents to avoid unnecessary prosecution

The 6 stages of Compass Attendance Support system provide a framework for pupils, parents and the school to collaborate in promoting excellent attendance for all our pupils.

Systematic staged approach Responding to persistent and severe absence including poor punctuality		
Stage	Approach	Actions from Compass School
Stage 0	Implementation of the attendance policy with pupils, parents/carers and range of stakeholders	Ongoing celebration, encouragement and rewarding of good, improved attendance and punctuality. Attendance will be monitored by the Family Engagement Workers and Safeguarding, Attendance and Guidance Coordinator at internal weekly audit meetings.
Stage 1	Expect: Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents/carers and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school	Punctuality letter Medical evidence letter Telephone calls Home visits
Stage 2	Monitoring: attendance patterns closely monitored and taking action to celebrate or support.	Meeting with Family Engagement Workers (online, telephone or in person) Stage 2 letter
Stage 3	Listen and understand: When a pattern is spotted, discuss it with pupils and parents to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them	Meeting with Family Engagement Workers and Class tutor (in person) Stage 3 letter Action plan
Stage 4	Facilitate support: Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school.	Action plan Notice to improve warning letter FIXED PENALTY NOTICE
Stage 5	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.	Stage 5 letter Southampton school attendance referral Other agency referrals
Stage 6	Enforce: Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education	Southampton school attendance enforcement Fixed penalty notice

The Local Authority

The Southampton School Attendance Service fulfils the statutory duty of the Local Authority in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

Compass School has a link Southampton School Attendance Service Officer (SASS) who will work in close partnership with the school. The SASS will regularly audit the attendance of your child and work in partnership with you and Compass School to improve it.

This work includes:

- Individual casework with pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties, including reviews and information updates on actions taken;
- Development of individual action plans between the school and the Southampton School Attendance Service, to address attendance issues;
- Identification of areas of concern and of good practice in relation to attendance matters;
- Interventions to address systemic attendance issues and help to develop a whole school approach.

Once a referral has been agreed this will form part of the statutory role, and the SASS will undertake casework with pupils and their parents to support a return to full time education, or, will follow through with enforcement if deemed appropriate.

Some key elements of individual case work include:

- Conducting home visits to assess the situation and determine what action needs to be taken;
- Arranging meetings between the school, parents and pupils, agencies and the Home School.
- Enabling pupils and parents to access appropriate support from other services and agencies through the use of a Targeted Assessment.

The Southampton School Attendance Service has the delegated power, in consultation with SCC Legal Services, to take the legal proceedings against families who fail in their duty to ensure regular school attendance where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the child and the Local Authority.

Educational Neglect

The Local Authority recognises that educational neglect exists and can be a factor within physical, emotional, sexual or criminal harm. It is a likely outcome of a range of contributing factors that could be attributable to parent(s)/carer(s), professionals or organisations. It could also be the continued persistent failure of a parent or young person, deemed old enough to determine their own actions, to manage their own travel to and from school and to attend school regularly.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the Department of Education (DfE) on request.

The school has granted the Department of Education (DfE) access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely

Data will be collected each term and published at national and Local Authority level through the Department of Education (DfE)'s school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the Management Committee

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

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

Appendix 1- Attendance Codes

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

I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the Local Authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g., due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2

Individual timetables

At Compass School, individualised pupil timetables are designed to meet the unique needs of each pupil. In line with statutory requirements, pupils must be supported with tailored educational plans that maximise their potential while ensuring compliance with relevant laws and guidelines.

Key Principles for Supporting Pupils

Compass School, in line with Local Authority guidance (SCC), has a duty to provide full-time education for pupil. Any decision to implement a personalised timetable must involve consultation and agreement with parents/carers. The decision must demonstrate a clear benefit to the child and include a planned transition towards a full-time timetable. Schools must ensure adherence to the **SEND Code of Practice 2015** and **Equality Act 2010**, safeguarding the rights of pupils with SEND and ensuring equitable access to education.

Individual timetables

Compass School will create Individual timetable arrangements that cater to each pupil's educational needs, particularly for those requiring a more specialised approach. These pathways allow for flexibility and the use of community-based resources to meet the child's needs.

For Pupils with SEND on Individual timetables, Compass schools must ensure:

- **Safeguarding Compliance**
In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018*, schools must obtain written confirmation from alternative education providers that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out.
- **Risk Assessments**
A risk assessment must be completed to ensure the safety and suitability of the pathway for each pupil.
- **Focused Educational Outcomes**
Every element of the individual pathway must have a clear educational focus and be aligned with the pupil's specific goals and needs.
- **Attendance Monitoring**
Attendance at all components of the individual pathway must be monitored and accurately recorded in the school's attendance register.
- **Appropriate Venues**
Schools must ensure that all venues involved in the pupil's pathway are suitable for their age, level of understanding, and specific needs.
- **Ongoing Contact**
Daily contact with the pupil must be maintained to monitor their progress and ensure their well-being.
- **Pathway Oversight**
Compass School will oversee the implementation and ensure that each pathway reflects the maximum number of educational hours possible, while considering the individual needs and capacities of the pupil.
- **Reporting to Local Authority**
Pupils with SEND must still be reported to the Local Authority as part of the termly census. However, provided all the above criteria are met, the LA model risk assessment and proforma do not need to be completed.

Compass School's individualised timetable arrangements ensures that the education provided is flexible, tailored to individual needs, and fully compliant with statutory regulations. The focus remains on fostering the best possible outcomes for pupils, ensuring their educational, social, and emotional needs are met while maintaining clear communication with parents, the Local Authority, and safeguarding bodies.

Appendix 3 - Application for exceptional leave of absence from school

Good attendance is linked to higher achievement. Poor attendance can be a cause of underachievement. As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school.

Please fill in this form if you are requesting leave of absence for exceptional circumstances only. You are strongly advised to request leave of absence before you confirm any arrangements. Under no circumstances will absences in term time be authorised after the event. The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully, and if deemed to be 'exceptional circumstances' your absence may be authorised.

Name of child:		Class:	
I am applying for leave of absence for my child from: _____ to: _____			
for the purposes of:			
Number of school days missed:			
This leave cannot be taken during the school holidays because:			
Has your child had leave of absence in the last 12 months?		YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details:			
Siblings also needing leave of absence: Schools they attend:			
Signed:		Date:	Contact Number:
(Parent/Carer)			
Child's attendance level over the last 12 months:			
Our overall school target for attendance this year is			XX.X %
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:			
Approved		The absence will be recorded as authorised.	
Not approved		The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.	
Explanatory notes:			
The school reserves the right to request proof of travel including return date at any time.			
Signed:		(Headteacher)	Date:

Good attendance is linked to higher achievement.

Poor attendance can be a cause of underachievement. If your child has five days of authorised absence during the year for a family holiday and takes no other time off for illness or other reasons, their attendance over the school year will be 97.4%.

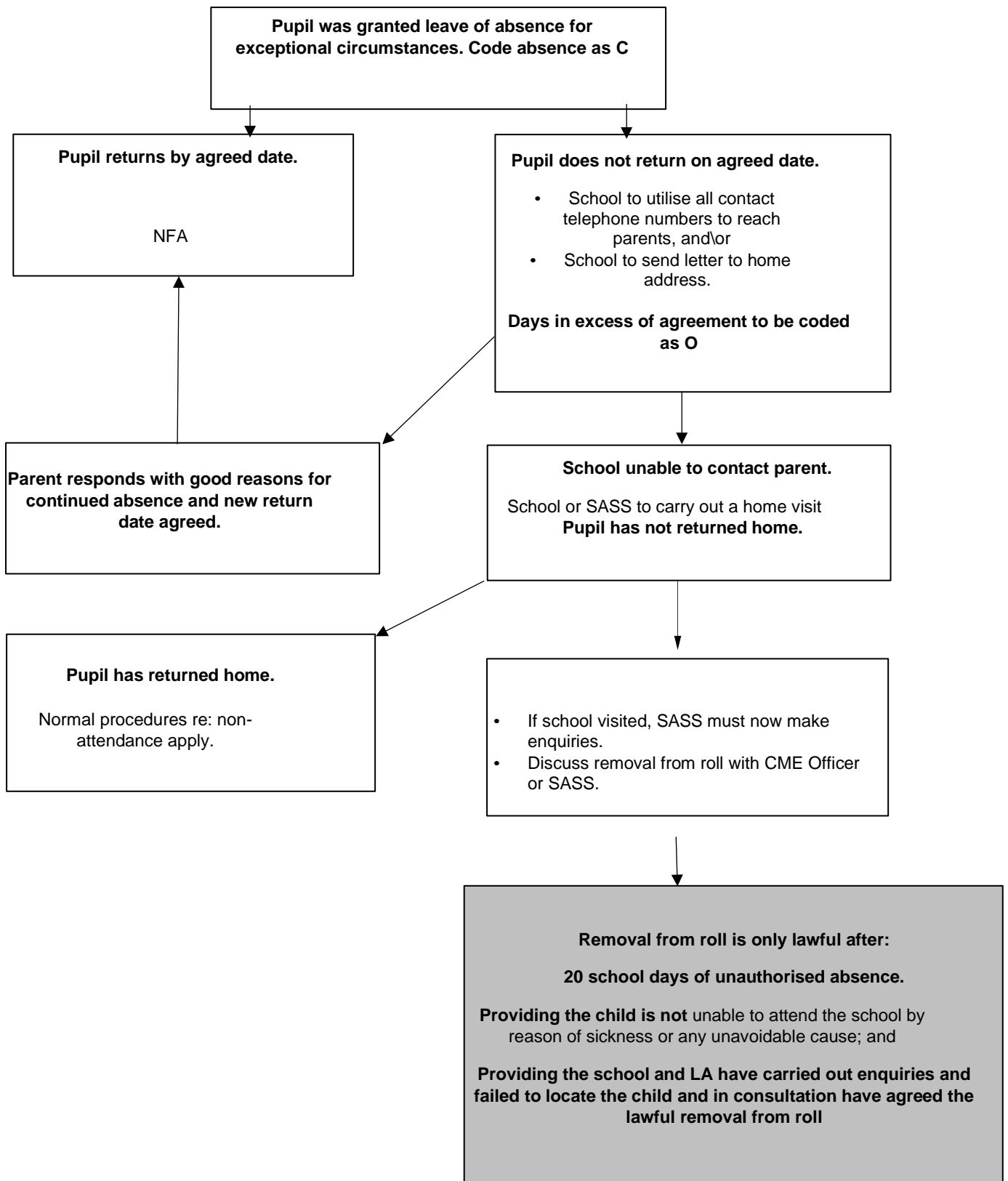
The first few weeks of the school year are very important for learning routines, establishing relationships and expectations and building friendships.

Penalty Notices

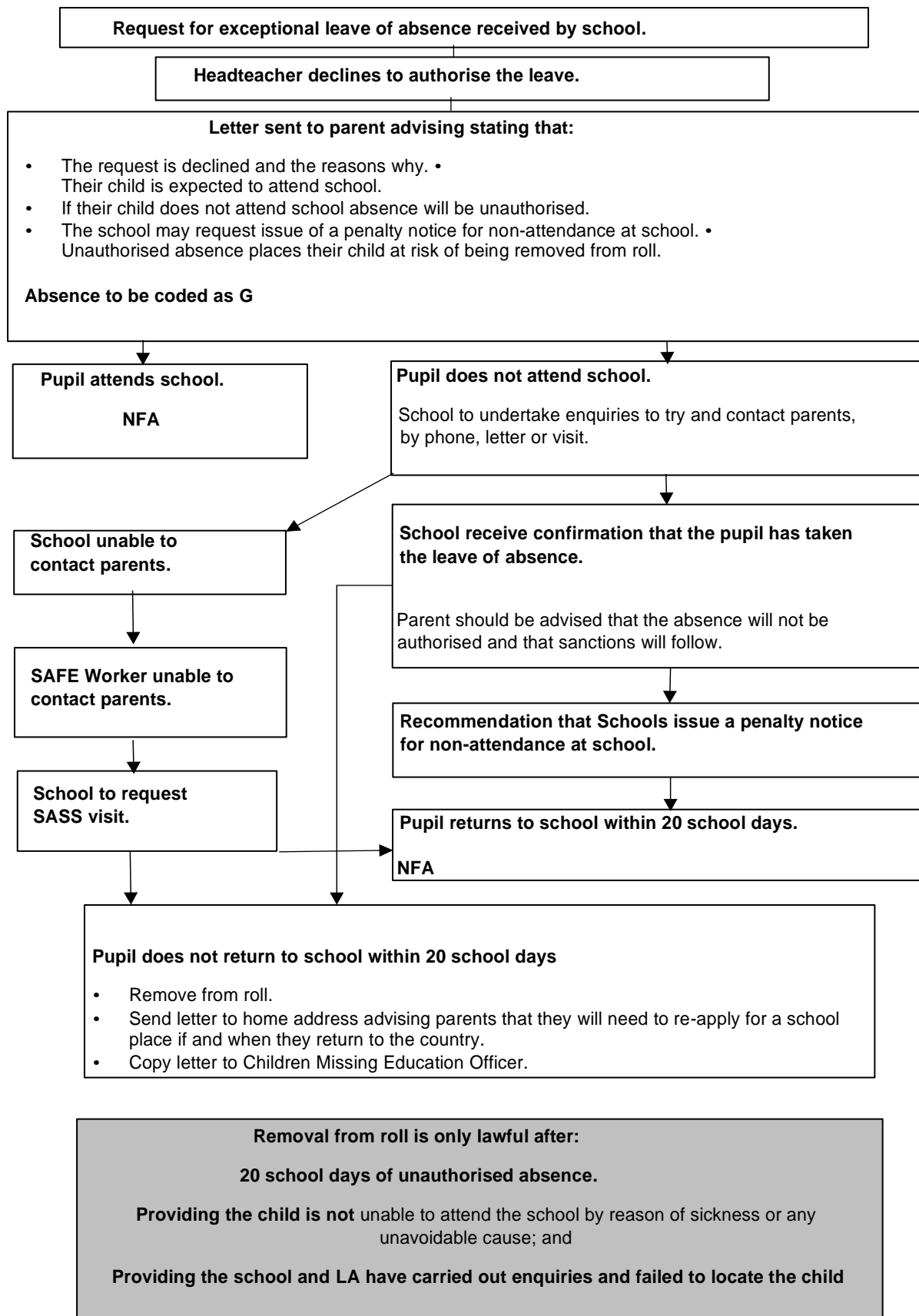
Unauthorised absence and persistent lateness may result in the issue of a **Penalty Notice** to each parent, for each child.

Please ask in school if you are unsure about any particular dates and remember to apply for leave of absence before you make a holiday booking.

Appendix 4 - TERM-TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE GRANTED BY HEADTEACHER



Appendix 5 - TERM-TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE DECLINED BY HEADTEACHER



Green Lane
Southampton
SO16 9FQ

Headteacher: Debbie McKenzie
Telephone: 02380 215320
Email: info@compass-school.net



XXXX 2024

Address
XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Stage 1 - Absences from school

We've noticed that [pupil name] has missed a lot of school recently. We're concerned that they are missing out on key experiences because of this, and that they risk falling behind.

[Name] has missed [insert number of days missed and over what time period].

We know that every family's circumstances are different, and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child. Please let us know if there's anything else going on at home or at school which might be making it difficult for [name] to attend regularly.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss any reasons for these absences, and how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Yours sincerely

Family Engagement Worker
Mobile: 07756 292 553
E-mail: attendance@compass-school.net



Green Lane
Southampton
SO16 9FQ

Headteacher: Debbie McKenzie
Telephone: 02380 215320
Email: info@compass-school.net



XXXX 2024

Address
XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Stage 2 - Invitation for a meeting to discuss attendance online

We would like to invite you an online meeting to have a chat about [name]'s attendance at school. We would like to find out whether there is anything we can do to support your child's attendance and if there are any barriers that is causing them not to attend regularly.

Please contact me on 07756 292553 or 023 80215 320 as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss the above, and how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed school work.

Yours sincerely

Family Engagement Worker
E-mail: attendance@compass-school.net



XXXX 2024

Address
XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Stage 3 - Unauthorised absence from school

We've noticed that [name] has recently taken an unauthorised [absence/absences] from school.

[Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] days on the following dates:

- > [date]
- > [date]
- > [date]

It's important that [name] attends regularly, so that they can get the best out of their education.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact me on 07756 292 553 or 023 8021 5320 as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss any reasons for these absences, and how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days).

You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

Yours sincerely

Family Engagement Worker
E-mail: attendance@compass-school.net



XXXX 2024

Address

XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Stage 4 - Unauthorised absence

We got in touch with you on [date] to discuss [name] taking unauthorised absence. Since then, we haven't seen much improvement in [name]'s rate of attendance. They missed the following days of school:

- > [date]
- > [date]
- > [date]

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days).

In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will be issued with a penalty notice.

When you receive the notice, you must pay:

- > £80, if it's paid within 21 days
- > £160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

We would like to invite you to come for a discussion about [name]'s attendance at school. We would like to find out whether there is anything:

- > Happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to attend
- > Happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of
- > We can do to make it easier for [name] to attend school regularly

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss any reasons for these absences, and how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Yours sincerely

Debbie McKenzie
Headteacher



Green Lane
Southampton
SO16 9FQ

Headteacher: Debbie McKenzie
Telephone: 02380 215320
Email: info@compass-school.net



XXXX 2024

Address

XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Stage Five

I regret to advise you that as your child XXXX is still refusing to attend Compass School on a regular basis, we have had no option but to refer this matter to our Educational Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

Your child's attendance currently stands at XXXX which is significantly lower than the required national average.

As you are aware attendance at school is a legal requirement under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Education Welfare work alongside schools to monitor all student's attendance, and we hope that we will see an improvement in your child's attendance by the next audit.

It is my duty to inform you that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child attends the education establishment provided and that failure to do so can result in prosecution, or a penalty notice may be issued which has a fine attached to it.

If you would like to discuss this further or feel that we can support you to improve your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Debbie McKenzie
Headteacher



Green Lane
Southampton
SO16 9FQ

Headteacher: Debbie McKenzie
Telephone: 02380 215320
Email: info@compass-school.net



XXXX 2024

Address
XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Invitation for a meeting to discuss attendance

We would like to invite you to come in to have a chat about [name]'s attendance at school. We would like to find out whether there is anything:

- Happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to attend
- Happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of
- We can do to make it easier for [name] to attend school regularly

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss the above, and how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed school work.

Yours sincerely

Family Engagement Worker
E-mail: attendance@compass-school.net



XXXX 2024

Address
XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Poor punctuality

I'm writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

They arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

- > [date]
- > [date]

They also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

- > [date]
- > [date]

The school day begins promptly at [time] and registration closes at [time]. Afternoon registration takes place between [time slot].

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child doesn't miss schoolwork, and prevents disruption to the teacher and other pupils. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

Persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice, if your child arrives late after the register closes in 10 sessions in a rolling period of 10 weeks.

We would like to invite you to come in for a chat about [name]'s punctuality. We would like to find out whether there is anything:

- > Happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to get to school on time
- > Happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of
- > We can do to make it easier for [name] to be on time for school

Please contact the school office on [number] to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

Debbie McKenzie
Headteacher



Green Lane
Southampton
SO16 9FQ

Headteacher: Debbie McKenzie
Telephone: 02380 215320
Email: info@compass-school.net



XXXX 2024

Address
XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion].

In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request and it will be considered an authorised absence.

Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity.

However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not necessarily mean I'll agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely

Debbie McKenzie
Headteacher



XXXX 2024

Address
XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Request for leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application, I'm able to agree to your request.

I haven't come to this decision lightly. At Compass School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We consider each request for a leave of absence on its merits and the family's specific circumstances.

Please be aware that that fact that I've agreed to this request doesn't mean I'll necessarily be able to agree to any similar request from you, or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely

Debbie McKenzie
Headteacher





XXXX 2024

Address
XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Your request for leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].

In this case I'm afraid I cannot consent to your request.

At Compass School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its specific circumstances, and I have taken many variables into consideration.

Because each request is different, this decision can't be compared with decisions made by the school in the past, and it won't affect future decisions.

I'm sorry to have to disappoint you on this occasion.

Yours sincerely

Debbie McKenzie
Headteacher



XXXX 2024

Address
XXX
XXX
XXX

Dear

Re: Holiday absence

I'm writing about your action in taking [name] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].

We're treating this as an unauthorised absence because [explain the evidence you have].

At Compass School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We have the power to grant leaves of absence under exceptional circumstances, and a holiday is not generally considered to come under those circumstances. We expect you to consult the school before making any plans that will involve your child's absence from lessons or other commitments. Absences like these could have a detrimental effect on their education.

Insert the following if the child's absence has reached the threshold for a penalty notice and you have decided it's appropriate to issue one (see paragraph 181 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) for questions to consider when making this decision):

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days).

In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will be issued with a penalty notice.

When you receive the notice, you must pay:

- £80, if it's paid within 21 days
- £160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

Insert the following if the threshold for a penalty notice has not been reached:

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

Continue with:

We would like to arrange a meeting so that we can discuss this absence further. Please contact the school office as soon as possible on [phone number].

Yours sincerely

Debbie McKenzie
Headteacher



Green Lane
Southampton
SO16 9FQ

Headteacher: Debbie McKenzie
Telephone: 02380 215320
Email: info@compass-school.net



Education Support Team

Children and Learning
Lower Ground Floor, North Block
First Floor, North Block
Civic Centre
Southampton
SO14 7LY



ADDRESSEE ONLY
PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Direct Dial: 023 8083 3462
Email: non-attendance.penalty.notice@southampton.gov.uk
Our reference: Warning Unauthorised Absence

Date:

Dear

WARNING OF POSSIBLE ISSUE OF A PENALTY NOTICE OR CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS FOR YOUR CHILD'S REGULAR NON-ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

Following a request from _____, I am writing to you regarding your child _____ born on _____.

As the parent/carer of _____ who is a registered pupil at _____, I must inform you that your child has been absent and/or late from school on the following occasions and the absences remain unauthorised by the school:

Southampton City Council and _____ are committed to improving school attendance. This is critical to ensure improved education attainment and a child's future life opportunities. If a child fails to attend school regularly, the parent is guilty of a criminal offence. The Council will look at each family's circumstances individually and in some cases, it will be appropriate for the Council to consider taking criminal proceedings relating to a child's non-attendance.

As an alternative to prosecution, the Council can issue a Penalty Notice, in compliance with the Council's Code of Conduct, which requires the parent to pay a penalty within a time limit, which will discharge the parent's liability for the offence. If the Penalty is not paid in full within the time period, the Council can commence criminal proceedings for the child's failure to attend school regularly.

Your child's attendance will now be closely monitored by the school and should there be any further unauthorised absences or unauthorised lateness, the school will/can request a Penalty Notice to be issued to you or criminal proceedings instigated against you.



Green Lane
Southampton
SO16 9FQ

Headteacher: Debbie McKenzie
Telephone: 02380 215320
Email: info@compass-school.net



In accordance with the Attendance Policy of your child's school, it may also become necessary for further action to be taken in respect of any future absences. In relation to medical absences this could mean that:

- Any future absences will need to be covered by a Medical Certificate, or,
- A consultation with a School Nurse will be necessary, or,
- An approach will be made to the family GP to gain specialist medical advice

You are advised to contact your child's school to discuss with them what future action may be required. I would also urge you to contact your child's school if you are experiencing difficulties and to gain support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Sarah Boyd-Wallis".

Ms Sarah Boyd-Wallis
Legal Co-Ordinator
Education Welfare Service

