



Attendance Policy

LEIGHTON PRIMARY & PRESCHOOL

ADOPTED BY GOVERNORS	March 2024
REVIEW TIMETABLE	Annually
RENEWAL DATE	Summer term 2025

DATES	NOTES	INITIALS
16/10/20	UPDATED FOR APPROVAL - reverted to the model policy updated p3 with Isle of Wight Council v Platt	FG
Nov 2020	Approved by Governors	
6/10/21	Updated and reviewed	FG/ EW
Oct 2021	Approved by Governors	
Dec 2022	Updated awaiting approval	FG
Jan 2023	Approved by Governors	
Feb 2024	Updated awaiting approval	FG
March 24	Approved by Governors	

Introduction

Leighton Primary & Preschool is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. We promote the importance of regular attendance and strive to support children to attend school 'Every single day'. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils/students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. We are committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies to achieve best outcomes for children via the early help pathways available.

Leighton is a successful, welcoming school which you and your child/ren plays their part in making it so. We strive to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open (Isle of Wight V Platt) unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school play a key role in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. We work to provide an environment in which all of our pupils/students:

- are eager to learn;
- feel valued members of the school community;
- look forward to coming to school every day.

Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Regular attendance is so important as it gives your child the best opportunity to learn. Any absences will affect the pattern of your child's schooling and consistent absences may seriously affect learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines, not only for your child but for others in the same class.

The school liaises closely with our Local Authority and other agencies using an Early Help pathway (Early Help Referral) which assists in the assessment of need in order for appropriate support to be given. This initial pathway enables further referrals to

external agencies to be made and further support acquired to support families to remove any barriers that are preventing regular attendance.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Definition of a parent/carer in Education Law

It is important that schools and local authorities are aware that parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

For the purposes of education law, the department considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not.
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative.
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

The Law relating to attendance and the right to a full-time education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

It is the legal responsibility of **every** parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an **additional legal duty** to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case (2017) considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are determined by the school and are the days and hours that they are open for pupils to attend. Under this judgment all children registered at a school should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

The Law relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is **everyone's responsibility** and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: -

Attendance	Anti-Bullying
Behaviour Management	Access to the Curriculum
Health and Safety	Wellbeing

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Creating and maintaining a pattern of punctual and regular attendance is **everybody's** responsibility – parents/carers, pupils, school staff and external agencies.

Reception Intake Induction period

Peterborough City Council in line with the Admissions Code, offers all children in the September following their fourth birthday a full-time place at school if requested by their parents/carers.

Occasionally school staff may feel the need, under Exceptional Circumstances and in full agreement with parents/carers to use a short induction period where Reception aged children are introduced to their formal education by the use of a reduced timetable to assist in their transition to full-time education. This can be discussed within the first few weeks or in advance of your child starting School.

Expectations and Daily routines

Punctuality

Our school opens at 8.45 am and we expect all children to be in class by this time. Class registers are taken at 8.50am and close at 9.05am.

If your child arrives in class after the registers have started to be taken, but before they close, they will be classed as late and marked as L (authorised late), unless there is an exceptional circumstance that has caused the late arrival.

Your child will receive an unauthorised late mark if they arrive after the register is closed. Your child will be given a 'U' code (unauthorised late) in line with regulations, and this may mean that you face legal action if they persist.

When your child is late, they miss the start of the day, they can miss work, and this will impact on their learning. Late arrivals also disrupt lessons for other pupils in the class, which is not fair on them or your child.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Late marks will have a negative impact on any possible attendance awards.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is going to be absent from school, you must

- contact the school on the first day and subsequent days of absence and inform the school the reason for the absence (unless it is a diagnosed medical condition and evidence is on file).

You can do this several ways:

- telephone 01733 232949 (option 1) before 9.30am on the first day of absence.
- email the School - officeadmin@leightonprimary.net before 9.30am on the first day of absence.
- Visit the school and report your child's absence to reception, who may arrange for the Attendance officer to speak with you.
- Provide medical evidence if requested by the school/Home School agreement in place

If your child is absent we will under safeguarding policies:

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day and every following day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Contact emergency numbers (provided by yourself) held on our database if we cannot contact you.
- Undertake a home visit if no contact is received from you, or we have any safeguarding concerns.
- Call 101 (Police) and request a safe and well check if all other attempts to contact you fail to get a response.
- Invite you to discuss the situation with us.
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of penalty notices issued to each parent/carer for each child or legal action through the courts.

Who to contact if you have questions or concerns about attendance?

- Day-to-day – visit/email/telephone the school office on 01733 232949 or officeadmin@leightonprimary.net
- For more detailed support – speak to the School Attendance Officer Mrs Green on the above number on option 1 or email the school office for Mrs Green's attention.

Data and Monitoring

How we monitor attendance/absence

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

Leighton has a dedicated attendance officer who has the delegated responsibility to oversee, advise the Headteacher and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The attendance officer works closely with senior leaders and the Local Authority Link Attendance officer.

They ensure up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared regularly. Governors receive a termly attendance report. The Attendance Officer ensures attendance and punctuality issues are identified at an early stage. They work with school staff and parents to put in place support that will help improve attendance and punctuality of pupils.

The School Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer will follow Local Authority Guidelines, using an initial letter system (appendix 1,2 and if agreed by the Local Authority Link Attendance Officer No 3) if referred by the School Attendance Officer to the Local Authority Link Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council they will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if all ways of trying to improve the child's attendance by both our school and the Local Authority have failed and unauthorised absences persist, then the Local Authority may use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

We keep track of all our children's attendance and absences thoroughly through regular reports from our Management Information System - Arbor.

We look at the reports on a regular basis to track any concerns that may arise due to unauthorised absences and to ensure that any interventions are timely and appropriate.

We routinely monitor attendance and absences daily, weekly, half termly, termly and annually to assist the school in providing support and/or changes to our process where necessary to provide the correct support to families.

We analyse all patterns of absence, both authorised and unauthorised* and try to ensure that parents/carers are informed of any child's attendance that fails below the National Average to prevent your child becoming a persistent absentee (PA) which means that they have an attendance below 90%. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parent/carer support and co-operation to tackle this.

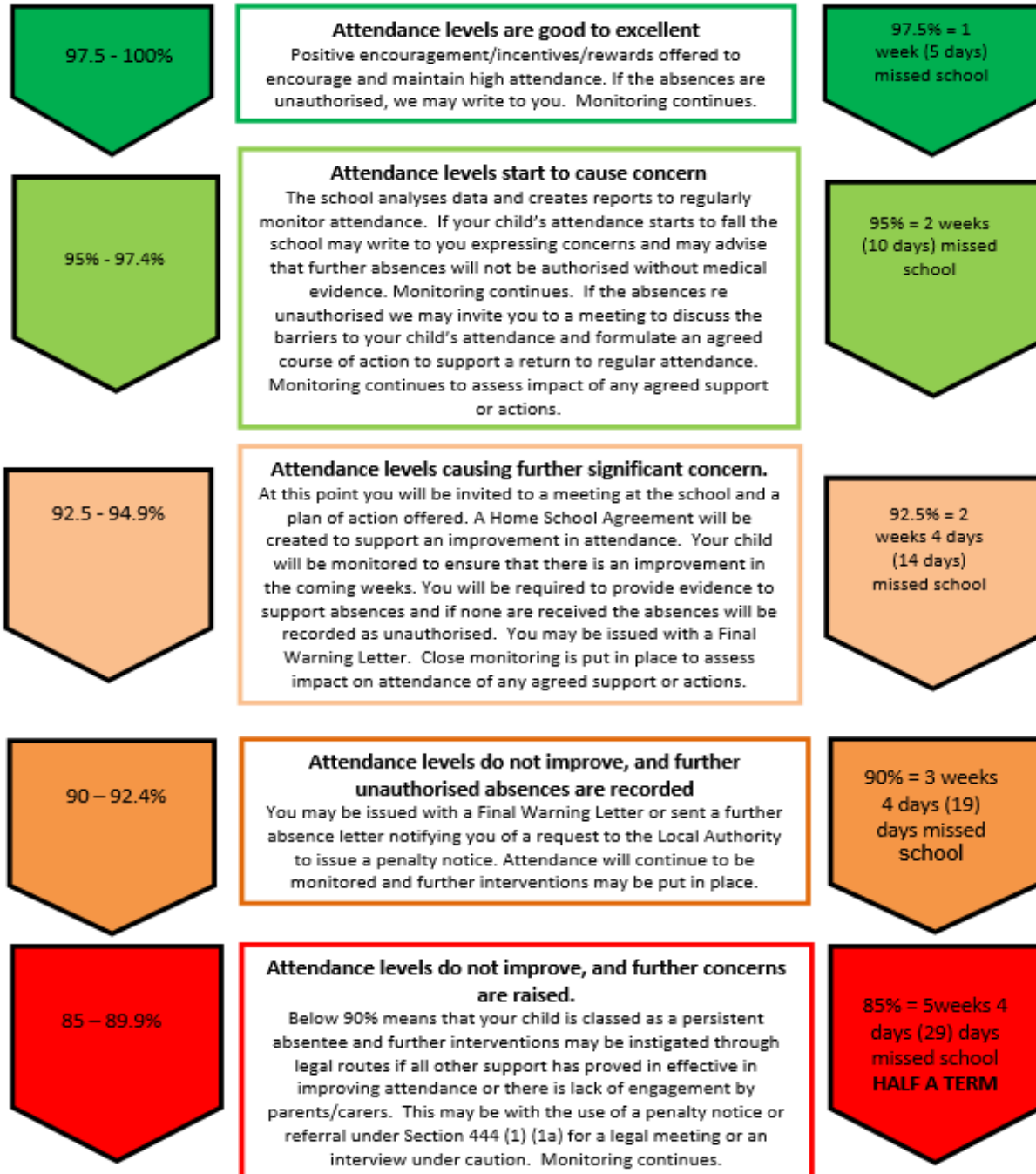
Our interventions at this stage may include, but is not limited to:

- writing to parents/carers if attendance drops below the school's current threshold of 95%.
- requesting that they provide evidence to support absences
- calling a School Attendance Meeting
- making an Early Help Referral
- referring to the Local Authority for support

PA pupils are also tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Our monitoring/intervention strategy

Below is the basis of our intervention pathway. We treat each child individually and therefore each case may take a different route depending on the barriers, needs of the family and any other circumstances which may be impacting on regular attendance. We try to take a holistic approach to dealing with and resolving barriers to non-school attendance and use legal interventions as a last resort.



***Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is essential, preferably in writing so that it can be recorded correctly.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an exceptional circumstance such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time (expectation is that pupils will be in school prior to the appointment for registration and return to school after), emergencies, or other exceptional cause authorised by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. These include, but are not limited to:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children, acting as interpreters or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance.
- a child's attendance is considered to be a concern and/or no acceptable medical evidence has been provided.
- where a parent/carer has not notified the school and we have to chase for a reason;
- medical treatment overseas (unless part of emergency treatment whilst abroad on an authorised absence).

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Team using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is **never** an option to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Impact Analysis

As part of our data analysis and monitoring process we will regularly assess the outcomes of our support/interventions to measure the impact that they are having on the improvement of children's attendance and attainment.

We will continue to meet with and engage with families to find out and help resolve any barriers to regular attendance, including signposting or referring to other agencies.

We will regularly review cases to ensure that the school is providing the appropriate support. Referrals as legal action, for our school is a last resort, but sometimes cannot be avoided.

Legal Interventions

Fixed penalty notices

When we may request a fixed penalty notice to be issued by the Local Authority in line with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for unauthorised leave of absence or where all support interventions do not secure an improvement in attendance.

Leave of absence/single absence event

As a school we ask parents/carers **not** to take children out of school without the permission of the headteacher as per the Law and Legislation. Please remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Headteacher's must comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off during the school term to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance. Parents must complete a leave of absence form (available on our Website or from the school office) and **must** provide supporting evidence. In deciding about whether to authorise the leave the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually taking into account the evidence submitted. If the request is refused the Headteacher will inform all parties of their decision. If the Headteacher grants the request it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

It is important that you understand that we will only authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances supported by evidence.**

Exceptional meaning - Rare, unavoidable and short.

Please be aware that cheap holidays/flights, relatives coming to stay or visiting family are **NOT** usually considered exceptional.

Any period of leave taken without prior notice resulting in agreement from the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

Absence due to Non School Attendance (Irregular/Persistent Absenteeism)

Where the school has implemented attendance interventions and parent/carers have failed to support the school, the school may request a penalty notice under the Peterborough City Council, Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

A penalty notice can be issued if **one** of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices for ongoing attendance concerns may be issued in any academic year)
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions)
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contributes to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website

Escalation of Procedures

When we escalate cases to higher level legal interventions

The school will make every effort to support families/children whose attendance is causing concern. However, there are some circumstances where despite the school's, the Local Authority's and extended work through multiple agencies fails to improve the attendance of children and at this point the school may instigate, or request that the Local Authority instigates a more formal legal intervention.

If this occurs a case may be prepared and presented to the Magistrates Court for prosecution under Section 444 (1) or 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996.

The outcome of these cases will be determined by the courts, of which can be:

- where convicted under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- where convicted under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.
- Impose a Parenting Order

Incentives and Rewards

How our school is **promoting** and incentivising good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Have a whole school approach to attendance
- Provide details on attendance in our regular newsletters and on our website
- Report to you regularly on how your child/children are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress
- Update you at parent/carer evenings'
- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through, half term and term events. Through assemblies and displays throughout the school.

Expectations of academy trust boards and/or governing bodies

Our academy trust board and/or governing body will have high expectations for attendance at our school.

It is their role to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure that our school leaders fulfill their expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge and help to focus our improvement efforts where needed most
- Ensure all our school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

References

The Education Act 1996, 2002 & 2011

Working together to improve school attendance (Guidance) May 2022

Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018,

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, 2012 & 2013

Children Act 1989 & 2004

People with overall attendance responsibility in our school

Designated Senior Leader: Headteacher

Attendance Officer: Mrs Faye Green

Declaration of acceptance by parents/carers

I/We have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Leighton Primary School.

Full Name of parent/carer (PRINT)_____

Signed Parent/carer 1: _____ Date: _____

Full Name of parent/carer (PRINT)_____

Signed parent/carer 2: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name:	Class:
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Parent/Carer name and Address

Dear Parent's name

Date

Re: Full name of pupil and DOB

We are writing to advise you that **Pupil's First Name's** school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to%. A copy of the attendance record is attached.

Regular attendance is a requirement and essential if pupils are to make the best use of their time at school. It enables them to keep up with the work and also maintain regular contact with their friends. Poor attendance creates the problem that having missed lessons they find it harder to understand subsequent work.

Pupil's First Name's attendance will continue to be monitored and you will be contacted again if it does not improve.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of, please contact **School Contact Name** and **Details** as soon as possible.

We would remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly on time and every day.

If the reasons given for your child(ren)'s absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

Yours sincerely

School Signatory

Copy to: Attendance Officer

Parent/Carer Name and Address

Dear Parent's Name

Date

Re: **Full Name of Pupil and DoB**

We write to advise you that **(Name of School)** continues to be / is concerned about **(Pupil First Name's)** school attendance. A copy of the attendance record is attached.

We would now like us to meet to discuss this matter on:

Place:

Date:

Time:

Please contact us on the above number if this meeting is not convenient so an alternative appointment can be made.

May we remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of your child at this School.

If the reasons given for your child(ren)'s absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.
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- Prosecution under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

Yours sincerely

Name

Position

Copy to: Attendance Officer

Invitation to School Attendance Meeting supported by Local Authority Attendance Officer

Appendix3

Parent/Carer Name and Address

Dear Parent/Carer Name(s)

Date

Re: **Full Name of Pupil and DoB:**

Further to our previous letters of (date) and (date)* we are writing to advise you that **Pupil First Name's** school attendance has not improved significantly. A copy of the attendance certificate is attached.

We are now inviting you to a **School Attendance Meeting**

On.....at.....am/pm

To be held at

Please be advised that your child's attendance has now been referred to the Local Authority Attendance Service.

It is important that you and **Pupil First Name** attend this meeting when we will discuss any issues which are impacting on **Pupil First Name's** attendance and agree an action plan to improve the situation.

A Local Authority Attendance Officer will be present at this meeting.

May we remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of your child at this school. If the reasons given for your child(ren)'s absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

Yours sincerely

School Signatory

Copy to: Attendance Officer