

Wentworth Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy: July 2024

Date of next review: July 2026

Achieving Happily



Attendance Policy

1. Aims of the policy (including definitions)

Introduction

Wentworth Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open as it is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at Wentworth Primary School.

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:

- Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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:

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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board 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
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Developing a whole school culture of working in partnership with families
- 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The core attendance team in school is comprised of the Headteacher, the attendance officer and Family Liaison Officer. They are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to the core attendance team and the wider school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with school liaison officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Promoting good attendance amongst all pupils
- the recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

In this policy, a parent means;

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person with parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with or looks after the child)

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:30 am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of 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

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Other definitions

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school

Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school

Attendance Processes

For day to day attendance and any queries please contact our Attendance Officer and Senior Attendance Champion Mrs J Phillips via email attendance@wentworthonline.co.uk or via phone on 01322 225694 option 5 for the school office.

Recording attendance

We will keep an 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 whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- All DfE codes appear in appendix 1

We will also record whether any absences are authorised or unauthorised. See below for the definition of authorised/ unauthorised absence.

Children arrive at school between 8:45am and 8:55am. Registers are taken by 9:00am

Unplanned absences

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for absence on the first (and subsequent) day(s) of an unplanned absence by 9.:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. 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 doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other medical 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.

Planned absence

Parents should inform the school in advance in writing or by telephoning the School Office (the appointment must relate to the child, not the parent). 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. 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. For longer periods of planned absence, the pupil's parent/ carer must make a request for leave as far in advance as possible. For more information on requests for leave of absence please see below.

Longer period of absence

If your child is off for more than two days a welfare call or home visit may be made to see how a child is doing and if there is anything that we can do to aid the child's return to school. If a child is not in school and the school is unable to establish a reason for absence, a home visit may be conducted. If your child is off school due to illness for 15 consecutive or cumulative days, the school has a duty to inform the Local Authority to agree any provision needed to ensure the continuity of the pupil's education.

Lateness

Pupils arriving after the school doors have closed (8:55am) must enter the school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and full reason for lateness must be recorded on the Entry Screen. Any arrivals after 8:55am will be marked as late (code 'L').

The register will close at 9.25am and 1.30pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised

absence, unless a reason for authorised absence has been communicated in advance where possible.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

Unexplained absences

If the school has not been informed of an absence, or no valid reason is provided by 9:30am, parents/carers will receive a call from the attendance officer to establish the reason a child is not in school. If there is no response from the call a Dojo message will be sent or a home visit may occur.

Reporting to parents / carers

The school will provide attendance records for parents at open evenings and with end of year reports. Additional contact will occur if there is a cause for concern. At the end of each term all parents/ carers of children with attendance below 90% will receive a copy of their child's attendance record.

Authorising term time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The following are examples of reasons which are **not** defined as 'exceptional circumstances':

- Family Holidays
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Treats
- Parent being ill
- Persistent non-specific illness e.g poorly/unwell

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence using the school's [absence request form](#), accessible via the website or school office. All requests should include supporting evidence to allow the Headteacher to

make a decision on each case. A separate form must be completed for all pupils in the case of siblings.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes
- Prolonged absence due to medical / illness
- Exceptional circumstances- The definition of exceptional is characterised by being ‘rare, significant, unavoidable and short’
- Considerations for travel may be made in any of the above take place abroad.

2. Support first approach

Strategies for promoting good attendance

The school regularly monitors the attendance of all pupils and works with all families to ensure that any potential barriers are removed. Supportive meetings are held to discuss poor attendance and support can be implemented on a case by case basis.

Other strategies include:

- Contact with the school attendance team
- Support from Family Liaison Officer
- Pupil incentives
- Attendance Contracts – a formal written agreement between parent/ school or parent/ local authorities
- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home Visits
- Signposting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Early Help

Strong attendance is celebrated through the school’s Mr Potato Head reward scheme, where each year group receives a reward for achieving above 96% attendance across a set time period. Specific classes are also rewarded for other attendance achievements in order to promote strong attendance and raise the profile of attendance in school.

Please [click here](#) to view the working together to improve school attendance guidance

Analysing attendance

The school holds bi-weekly attendance meetings with the core attendance team. The team will look at historic attendance, emerging patterns and targeted support for individuals. The team also considers whole school issues and develops strategies where necessary.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/ or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Consider referrals to school attendance service
- Look into and challenge any absences that cover a weekend or absences where siblings are off at the same time.

3. Legal sanctions

When the school has exhausted all methods for working with families to improve attendance or when a family has failed to follow the attendance policy closely a notice to improve or a penalty notice may be issued. A notice to improve is the final opportunity for a parent to engage with support before a penalty notice is issued.

Penalty Notices for absence are issued in line with the national framework.

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If a second offence occurs a second penalty notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

If a third offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, it will go to the Local Authority for them to consider the next steps.

The school may also decide that a referral to the local authority for prosecution is necessary if all other forms of support have failed.

After a school has taken the steps set out in Section 3, the relevant case may be referred directly to Kent's Inclusion and Attendance Service to issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or 50 school days – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded U) for 10 or more sessions after the register has been closed
- unauthorised absence for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- unauthorised absence for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice in these circumstances would conflict with other intervention strategies in place, such as Early Help support, or other sanctions already being processed.

4. Other attendance matters

Children Missing Education

No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and Kent County Council's Inclusion and Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority Guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form has been requested by another school

Late Collection from School

Children should be collected on time at the end of the school day at 3.15pm for all pupils. Children not collected at this time will be taken to the school office and registered as being late to be collected. We realise that occasionally children can be collected late for a variety of reasons. Please let us know in advance by telephone if you think you will be late to collect your child or you have made arrangements with an alternative adult to collect your child.

If your child has not been collected by 3.45pm **and we have not heard from you**, we may phone Children's Services to seek advice.

If a pattern of late collection starts to develop you will be given a warning letter. Any further late collections following the issue of a warning letter will result in your child being taken to our after school club, for which you will be required to pay for a full session on collection of your child.

Appendix 1- DFE Attendance Codes

Attendance and Absence Codes from school year 2024-25 (new codes shown in red)				
New Guidance - Chapter 8	Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Pupil Registration Regulations 2024 Reference
Attending the school	/	Present at the school - morning session	Attending	Regulation 10(2) Table 1
	\	Present at the school - afternoon session	Attending	Regulation 10(2) Table 1
	L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Attending	
Attending a place other than the school	K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority Schools must also record the nature of the educational activity	Attending approved education activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(5) and 11(9)(b)
	V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2 and 11(9)(c)
	P	Participating in a sporting activity	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(11) and 11(10)
	W	Attending work experience	Attending approved education activity	Regulation 10(2) Table 2, 10(11) and 11(10)
	B	Attending any other approved educational activity Schools must also record the nature of the educational activity	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(5), 10(11) and 11(10)
	D	Dual registered at another school	Not counted as a possible session	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(9)(a)
Absent – leave of absence	C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(2)
	M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(11)
	J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(4)
	S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(5)
	X	Non-compulsory school age	Not counted as a	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and
Attendance and Absence Codes from school year 2024-25 (new codes shown in red)				

New Guidance - Chapter 8	Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Pupil Registration Regulations 2024 Reference
		pupil not required to attend	possible attendance	11(7) or (8)
	C2	Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(6)
	C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(11)
Absent – other authorised reasons	T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	I	Illness	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Q	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3, 10(12) and (13)
	Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school sit being unexpectedly closed	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(10)
	Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(14)
	Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(6)
Absent – unauthorised absence	G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3, 10(7), (8) and (9)
	O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(9)(b)

	U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(8)(b)
Administrative codes	Z	Pupil's name entered in advance of start date	N/A	N/A
	#	Planned whole school closure – no session to take place	N/A	N/A

Appendix 2 - Attendance actions

Attendance team notice an attendance concern
Awareness letter issued (Blue letter)



No improvement leads to a second letter (Pink letter) requesting a parental meeting - Child's attendance will be below 90%



Another meeting will be requested if after an agreed monitoring period there is no improvement a parental contract will be put in place.



Attendance actions at this point may include: Notice to improve or Penalty notice

Definitions:

Penalty notice: Penalty notices are fines of £80/£160 imposed per parent per child. For example 3 children absent during term time could result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Pathway 5: Pathway 5. Request Attendance Consultation (Individual) This service offer includes supporting the school as it addresses individual pupil attendance concerns prior to an AS1 referral for statutory intervention (pathway 6 below). It may also include contributing to CHiN, CP, Early Help or attendance meetings.

AS1 referral: AS1 referral – for statutory attendance support. Where all resources exhausted, and support not engaged with. Last resort process to try to improve attendance

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

It is necessary for the approval of the School Governors to be obtained for a child's absence from school **before leave of absence commences**.

The parent or guardian is requested to complete this form and forward it, **four weeks** before the proposed period of absence, to the Headteacher.

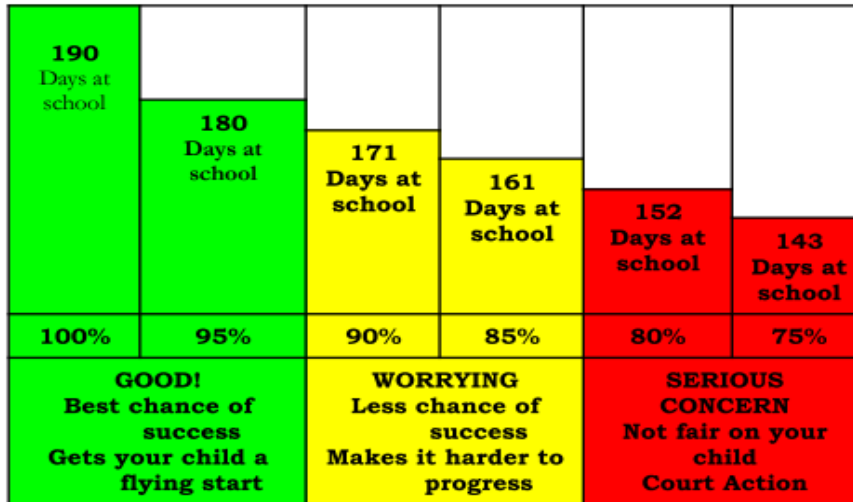
- Each application will be considered individually. The school does not operate a 'blanket approval' policy for requests.
- It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that they have received notification in writing of their request from the office.

Please visit our Policies, Statements and Reports page on the school website: www.wentworthonline.co.uk/policies and click on Leave of Absence Letter or scan on the QR code below to request any leave of absence.



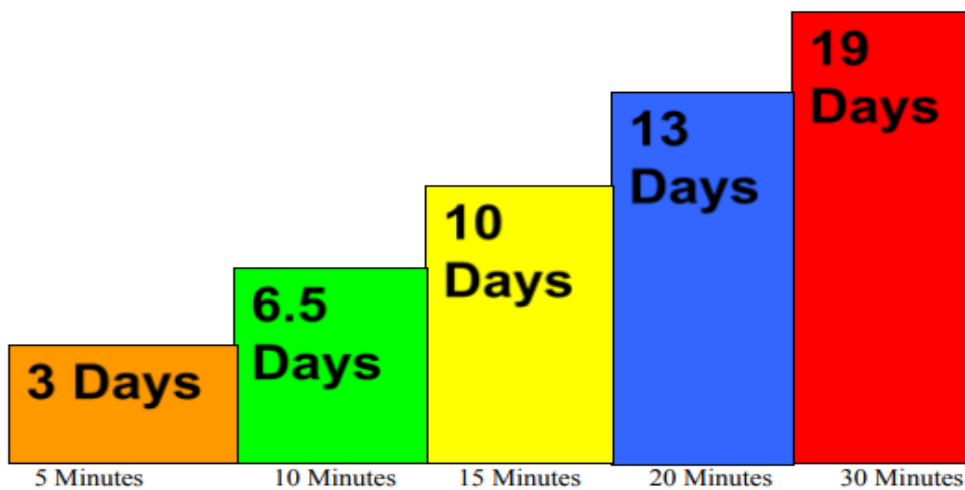
Attendance & Behaviour Service Days off School add up to lost learning

175
NON SCHOOL
DAYS A YEAR
→
175 days to spend on family time, visits,
holidays, shopping, household jobs and
other appointments



Being late adds up to a loss of learning

- If you are 5 minutes late every day that adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- 15 minutes late is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.



Appendix 3: Parent Contract
PARENTING CONTRACT (Initial meeting)

In accordance with the [Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

Date of meeting:	Time of meeting:	Face to face or virtual:	
Pupil name:	Pupil DoB:	Year Group:	School:
Pupil's attendance % (Sep to present):	Authorised absence % (Sep to present):	Unauthorised absence % (Sep to present):	
Parent / carer (1) full name:		Parent / carer (2) full name:	
MEETING PARTICIPANTS			
Full name	Role (School, Parent etc)	Present (Y / N)	



BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE: What are the reasons for the pupil's absences?		
REQUIREMENTS FOR PARENT(S): What do/does parent(s) need to do to help unblock the barriers to the pupil's attendance?		

VOICE OF THE PUPIL: What does the pupil feel they can do to help? *(If the pupil attended the meeting and they are age and ability appropriate to be able to participate).*

SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL

SUPPORT FROM SERVICES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL (i.e., multi-agency teams such as Early Help)



ANY OTHER COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS PRESENT:

Parental consent to information sharing: I/we understand that information about me/us has been and will continue to be collected by schools and local authority services (where relevant) to assess and provide appropriate support. I understand the school and/or local authority may also use this information for monitoring and safeguarding purposes and information could be shared with external agencies and service providers, without parental consent.



A copy of this parenting contract will be circulated to all participants present as well as any relevant professionals unable to attend the meeting. As stated in part (7), section 19 of the [Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#) a parenting contract must be signed by parent(s) and signed on behalf of the governing body, therefore this contract may be viewed by the chair of governors.

Additional information for schools parents and local authorities about parenting contracts can be found in Department for Education guidance, including [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

PARENT DECLARATION	PARENT (1)	PARENT (2)
By signing this contract, I agree to comply with the requirements for parent(s) specified within it for the duration the contract runs.	SIGNATURE:	SIGNATURE:
I am aware that refusal to commit to meeting the expectations set out in this contract may result in its termination and other routes being pursued by the school, including a referral to the local authority which could subsequently lead to prosecution in accordance with the Education Act 1996 444(1), 444(1A); or 444(ZA) in the case of an alternative curriculum provision.	PRINT NAME:	PRINT NAME:
	RELATIONSHIP TO PUPIL:	RELATIONSHIP TO PUPIL:
	DATE:	DATE:

SCHOOL DECLARATION

By signing this contract, I agree to provide support to the parent(s) to help achieve the requirements as outlined above and that a signature by a member of school staff is made on behalf of the governing body as set out in section 19 of the [Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#) part (7).

NAME	JOB TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE

Date of review meeting:

Time of review meeting:

REVIEW MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Full name	Role (School, Parent etc)	Present (Y / N)	Contact number and email address



Pupil's attendance % (Sep to present):	Authorised absence % (Sep to present):	Unauthorised absence % (Sep to present):	
Attendance % change since previous meeting:	Authorised absence % change since previous meeting:	Unauthorised absence % change since previous meeting:	
REVIEW MEETING COMMENTS			
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS:			

DECLARATION

For parents, a signature is acknowledgement that failure to comply with the requirements set out without justifiable reasons may result in the contract being terminated and other routes being pursued, including prosecution by the local authority in accordance with the Education Act 1996 444(1), 444(1A); or 444(ZA) in the case of an alternative curriculum provision.

For schools, a signature by a member of staff is made on behalf of the governing board as detailed in part (7), section 19 of the [Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

FULL NAME	ROLE	SIGNATURE	DATE

