Attendance process

Below is an attendance process that has been created in line with the Working Together to Support School Attendance statutory guidance effective from August 2024. This will support to implement and deliver on the Department for Education's expectations for attendance.

Prior to beginning the process below, schools should follow their usual attendance day to day processes. Where pupils have been identified to have poor attendance, a letter notifying the parent of this and at least one meeting with the attendance lead/champion should have been held inviting the parent(s) to discuss via a letter sent home. Under the old guidance this was previously letter one and two that was sent to the child's parent(s). Below is the name of the letters used in the new process:

1. Attendance contract meeting – initial invite attendance concerns
2. Attendance contract meeting - second invite attempt
3. Attendance contract template with final review
4. Attendance contract outcome letter
5. Failed to attend attendance contract meeting
6. Attendance improved after attendance contract

7a. Attendance contract review meeting invite – parent(s) engaging

7b. Attendance contract review termination warning letter –parent(s) not engaging

8. Notice to Improve (termination of attendance contract)

9. Referral to AST for legal intervention

Attendance process & letters

* Colours reflect steps on "Attendance Roadmap" document

Letter	Description	Review / Monitoring Time Frame
1. Attendance contract meeting – initial invite attendance concerns	This is the first opportunity to invite parents to a formal meeting (Formerly known as an Attendance Panel Meeting). This invite will offer parents the opportunity to request an alternative meeting such as online or telephone to ensure attendance and engagement is maximised.	Give at least one weeks' notice for this meeting. If parent fails to attend, telephone contact should be attempted and recorded.
2. Attendance contract meeting - second invite attempt	If the parent fails to attend the first meeting and does not notify the school that they are unable to attend, a second invite is to be sent noting that the first meeting was missed and again offering an alternative to a face-to-face meeting.	Give at least one weeks' notice for this meeting. If parent fails to attend, telephone contact should be attempted and recorded. Following the failure to attend a re-scheduled second meeting, arrange to hold a separate professionals meeting to discuss support and document **not** using the attendance contract documentation in point 3 below as it cannot be completed in the parent(s) absence.

3. Attendance contract with final review	This is an updated version of the previous Parenting Contract/Attendance Panel Agreement. A more detailed agreement has been created, designed to ensure school are reflecting all supportive interventions implemented or attempted or suggested. The document should be as detailed as possible to ensure that it is in line with Department for Education (DfE) expectations of support provided to pupil. Other relevant professionals should be invited to attend and notified that school have arranged this meeting. **This paperwork is only to be used if parent attends attendance contract meeting. If the parent(s) fail to attend arrange a professionals meeting to discuss/address concerns and document not using the attendance contract documentation.**	If parents attend, monitor attendance over a 5-8 *week review period.* The review period can be anywhere within the 5-8 weeks. This can be decided based on the pupils' attendance at the start of the process. It is recommended that the lower the attendance the shorter the review period. However, if there are 6 sessions of unauthorised absence before the end of the review period, this may trigger an attendance review meeting. (see 7a). When reviewing, assess improvement in proportion to the student's starting attendance at the beginning of the attendance process. For example, if a student had an attendance percentage of 80% at the time of the informal support meeting and at the end of the of the attendance contract review, their attendance increased to 87%, this can be considered as an improvement, even if the threshold of 10 sessions have been met. Each pupil's case is to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, depending on their circumstances. If unsure, seek advice from your allocated Attendance Support Officer (ASO).

4. Attendance contract outcome letter	This letter is attached to the attendance contract. It is to be completed alongside the attendance contract and a copy given to the parent at the end of the meeting. **Only to be used if parent attends Formal Support Meeting to complete the attendnace contract.**	This is a covering letter that accompanies the completed attendance contract.
5. Failed to attend attendance contract meeting	This letter is to be used if parent(s) fails to attend the attendance contract meetings arranged and has failed to reschedule or engage with any attempted contact by the school.	Within one week - if appropriate arrange a Professional meeting to discuss, create, implement and identify interventions of support. If you do not hold a professionals meeting create an internal plan of support that school will provide and Notify parents of either the meeting or plan. Continue efforts to engage with parents and pupil.
6. Attendance improved after attendance contract meeting	This letter can be used at various stages of the attendance process if interventions have worked, and attendance has improved.	To be sent after a period of review and improvement in attendance has been made. Case can remain open and continuously monitored if appropriate.

Use one of the following options in the letter depending on the circumstances:		
7a. Attendance contract review meeting invite – parent(s) engaging. Use the original Attendance contract to record decisions made at the review meeting	If improvement is not sufficient invite parents for a further meeting to review effectiveness of contract and amend as necessary. Failure to comply with contract consider terminating the attendance contract and issuing a Notice to Improve in point 8 below.	Each pupil's case is to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis along with timescales, depending on their circumstances. If unsure, seek advice from your allocated ASO.
7b. Attendance contract review termination warning letter – parent(s) not engaging	Where a parent(s) fails to comply with an attendance contract or engage, they should be sent a warning letter to state the contract maybe terminated and other action pursued. Allow a short period of review. If there is no contact/engagement from the parent(s) or no improvement go straight to issuing a Notice to Improve. Where a parent failed to attend both attendance contract meetings offered and a professionals meeting was held instead; if there are still unauthorised absences, the above steps are not necessary and a Notice to Improve can be issued.	Each pupil's case is to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Where non-engagement is present, proceed to issue a Notice to Improve in point 8 below.

8. Notice to Improve (termination of attendance contract)	This notice is advised by the DfE issued and must be sent prior to a referral to the LA for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Some circumstances may negate the need for this notice, please refer to the Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance as to where this applies here. This letter will offer a further period for improvement and will detail all efforts made by the school so far to encourage improved attendance by addressing the barriers to education.	A 3-week review is held following this letter. When reviewing, assess improvement in proportion to the student's starting attendance. Each pupil's case is to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis along with timescales, depending on their circumstances. If unsure, seek advice from your allocated ASO. Where a child is under 50% and all attempts at support have failed consider a Social Care referral to intensify support as outlined in the Working Together to Improve School Attendance where there are safeguarding concerns (section 19 DfE bullet point 3)
9. Referral to AST for legal intervention	This letter is to notify parents that all attempts at support have failed, and that parent engagement has not been sufficient to secure an improvement in their child's attendance and that school is therefore referring the matter to LBH for legal intervention.	Once a discussion has been held with the school's allocated ASO, complete a referral to the Attendance Support Team for legal intervention via the Education Establishment Portal

All templates available here: Attendance – LEAP. Letters can be slightly amended if required to accommodate different circumstances and to highlight any additional efforts made by the school.

Please note that outside of the above process, schools should continue to provide ongoing support, monitoring, and consistent attempts at engagement. All contact or attempted contact must be recorded. Other meetings may also be required outside of this process and communication with other professionals to provide multi-disciplinary support for families. If a child has a Social Worker, they must be notified of every unauthorised absence