

## Attendance Policy



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| <b>Approved by:</b> | Board of Directors | Sept 2021 |
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| <b>Signed by:</b> | Chair of Directors | Sept 2021 |
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| <b>Written by:</b> | Pippa Hart and Dan Kelly,<br>Senior Learning Manager and<br>Deputy Head Teacher | <b>Sept 2021</b> |
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Drafted:

Date approved by Board of Directors:

Review date:

## AIM

Fairfield High School expect students to have a minimum of 95% attendance to ensure students physical, emotional and social wellbeing, allowing them to achieve as high as possible, make a positive contribution and accomplish economic well-being.

## OBJECTIVES

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents of attendance and punctuality issues.
- To identify causes of non-attendance and consequently take action.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the school.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents, carers and students.
- To work with other agencies.
- To recognise the diverse needs of our individual students, particularly when planning re-integration.

## THE LAW

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). Any absence should be considered unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. Unauthorised absence at any level is considered unacceptable by both the school and local authority.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed head teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Head teachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

## PROCEDURES

Attendance is checked on a daily basis though the school office and students individual attendance is monitored by the Attendance Office, Senior Learning Manager and Deputy Head Teacher as part of their weekly meetings to review attendance. As well as absence over consecutive days and persistent absence, SLT and Learning managers also look at 10+ absent sessions in any 26-week period of time including isolated days and unauthorised absence.

Attendance information is stored on SIMs. All absence notes received are kept securely in students personal files. Please refer to the Privacy Policy for data storage information.

Students' current attendance, compared to the national average, is on all reports that are sent home.

### Senior Leadership Team:

- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies, school events and in the school newsletter.
- Support learning Managers and staff on issues of non-attendance and internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions.
- Report on attendance to School Directors.
- Implement system of rewards and sanctions.
- Support with referrals to the Local Authority via Attendance Officer.
- Streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures.

### Form Tutors:

- Be a good role-model for students by actively promoting the school's attendance ethos both via discussion and practically.
- Give attendance a high profile.
- Praise students for arriving on time.
- Take prompt action where students are late or absent without explanation.
- Keep an accurate register. Students signing in after 9.00am should do so at the office.
- Send a paper register to the Office if SIMs does not work.
- Discuss absence with student and parent/carers
- Inform Learning Managers when absence is causing concern.

### Attendance Officer:

- Liaise with form tutors if concerns arise about a student's absence
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified.
- Ensure work is provided for excluded students and where appropriate.
- Look for patterns of absences and consider impact of curriculum upon attendance alongside other possible causes.
- Work with appropriate staff to create individual packages and re-integration plans.
- Support the work of SLT and Form Tutors by:-
  1. Providing regular attendance information via bi-weekly monitoring spreadsheet.
  2. Liaising with parents/carers and monitoring attendance and punctuality
  3. Issuing attendance letters and organising Attendance Support Plans– see Appendix 3.
  4. Working with colleagues and other agencies to identify causes of non-attendance.
  5. Meeting with SLT regularly to make and monitor interventions and referrals.
  6. Conducting home visits where appropriate
  7. Work with students individually/in groups to encourage good attendance

## School Office

- Oversee administration of the SIMS Register system. Record absences and keep up to date, accurate files of student absence.
- Communicate with parents/carers when a student is absent- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> day calling.
- Keep parents informed of any unexplained absences e.g. if students are off site
- Support the work of SLT, Learning Managers and Form Tutors by:
  1. Providing regular attendance information via bi-weekly monitoring spreadsheet.
  2. Liaising with parents/carers and monitoring attendance and punctuality
  3. Issuing attendance letters and organising Attendance Support Plans– see Appendix
  4. Working with colleagues and other agencies to identify causes of non-attendance.
  5. Meeting with SLT and Learning Managers regularly to monitor absence, interventions and referrals.
  6. Conducting home visits where appropriate

## Parents:

- Ensure that children leave for school on time every day.
- Provide the school with a clear explanation for student's absences from school in writing, email, parent app or on the phone to the school office.
- Provide medical evidence e.g. doctor's note if requested for either frequent or extended periods of absence (see Appendix 2).
- Should not to take students out of school in term time.
- Where it is not avoidable to take children out of school during term time, a leave request form must be completed and permission granted by the head teacher.
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with student's attendance.
- If no letter has been sent in advance, telephone the school on the first morning a student is absent and regularly keep the school informed by telephone, email or parent app if the absence exceeds three days.
- Support the school in its ethos relating to the direct link between attendance and achievement.

## Students:

- Arrive at 8.45am for registration every morning and 1.35pm for registration every afternoon.
- Students arriving after 8.55am should sign in at the school office.
- Be on time for lessons.
- If late sign in at the Office.
- If they need to leave early, ensure the adult collecting them signs out at the Office.
- Tell Form Tutor or Learning Managers if having any problems attending school.
- Engage in support and interventions to encourage their attendance

## Support Available:

- Attendance Reports.
- Attendance Support plans, attendance panels and regular reviews.
- Attendance Panel Meetings with SLT, Learning Managers, and other agencies to provide support for students and their parents/carers.
- Re-integration through Learning Managers for casual admissions and on return from long-term absence.
- Re-integration timetables where appropriate.
- Individualised curriculum where appropriate.
- Individualised support package for students as appropriate.

## Rewards

- Commendations.
- Half-termly, termly and annual certificates and letters home for individuals and prizes for good/excellent attendance.
- Half-termly letters sent home acknowledging outstanding and improved attendance.
- Rewarding outstanding and improved attendance with Half-termly non-uniform days.
- Good attendance references to potential employers/colleges.
- Improved academic attainment
- Attendance initiatives

## Sanctions

The school reserves the right to use any of the following sanctions to fulfil its obligations with respect to school attendance:

- Detentions for lateness or truancy from lessons; or isolation in some instances.
- Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered student fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school offering the parent the opportunity to enter into a parenting contract following a student's truancy under section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (with The Governing Body).
- Penalty Notices issued by the school.
  - Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered student fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the Local Authority issuing a penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (by Head teachers and Deputy and Assistant Heads authorised by them).

We will always consider every case on an individual basis, but the following also apply:

### **Accepted medical evidence for absences of one day or less:**

(School Office can photocopy the evidence)

- Medical appointment card or letter showing appointment date and student's name.
- Copy of prescription showing date of issue and child's name.
- Copy of medication box/pack showing date of issue and child's name.

### **For longer periods of absence, we will take into account:**

- Letter from recognised health professional (including mental health) advising of need for absence, hospitalisation or long-term treatment.
- We may also request permission to contact the child's GP or other health professional to confirm the causes of absence.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Table of timescales and actions

**Appendix 2:** Flowchart of timescales and actions

**Appendix 3:** Letters to be sent off in the following order, after bi-weekly monitoring by SLT and Attendance Officer

Letter 1 – Under 95% attendance recorded in weekly monitoring meeting.

Letter 2– No improvement since Letter 1/ Medical evidence following bi-weekly monitoring.

Letter 3– Invitation to Attendance Panel due to lack of improvement in attendance since Letter 2.

Letter 4 - Parent's application form for planned absence from school (holiday/sporting activity).

Letter 5 –Planned absence – positive response from school.

Letter 6 –Planned absence – negative response from school.

Letter 7 – Absence for holiday taken without consent.

Letter 8 – Letter of congratulations for improved attendance following weekly monitoring.

**Appendix 4:** Attendance Support Plan (meeting notes)

**Appendix 5:** Attendance panel Meeting

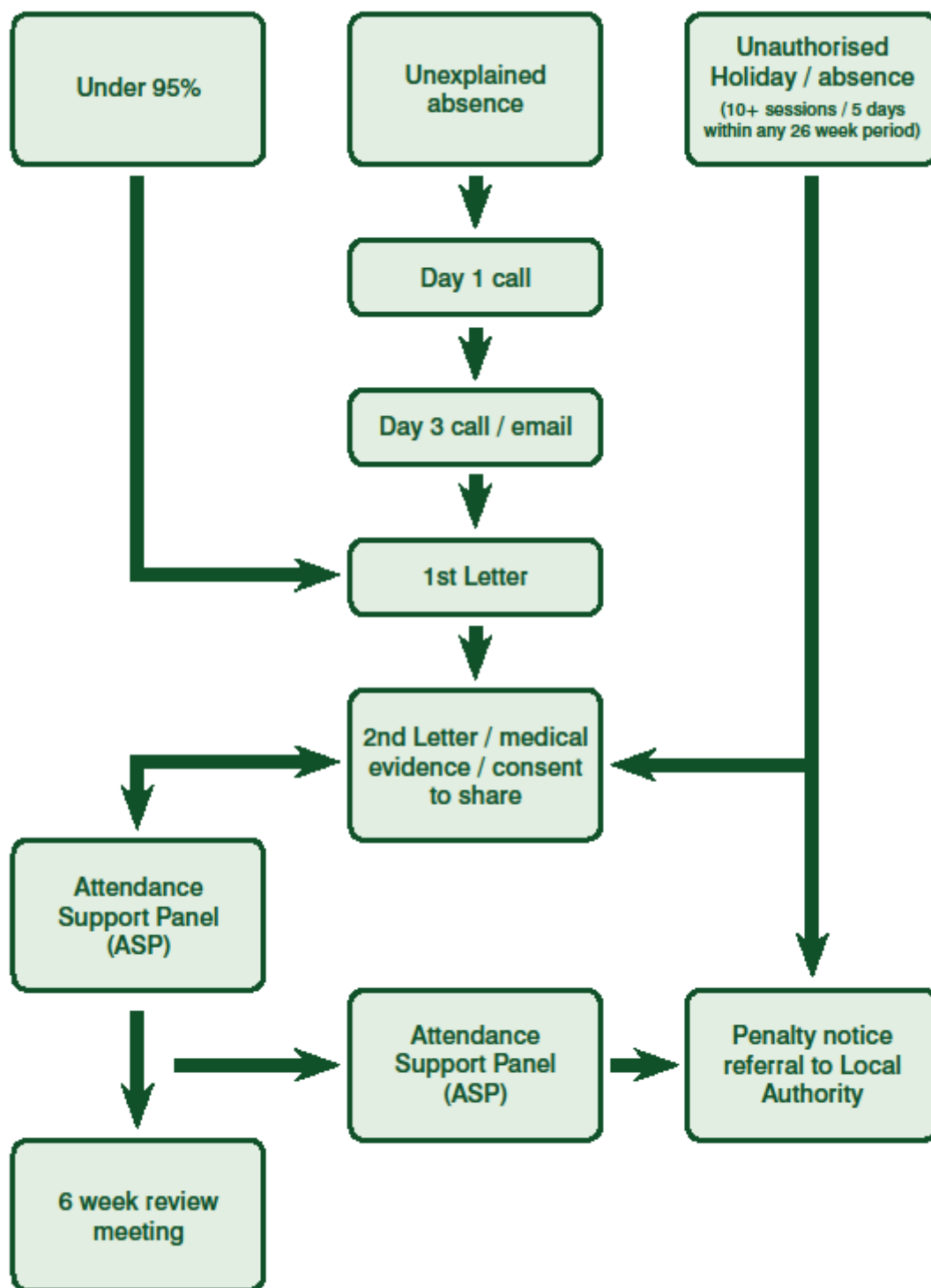
**Appendix 1: Timescale and actions**

| <b>Suggested time scale</b>                                    | <b>Attendance profile</b>  | <b>What needs to be done</b>   | <b>By who/ who with</b>        |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Day 1  | Unexplained absence - Any absence without reason                 | First-day-of-absence contact   | School Office                  |
| Day 2  | Follow up call on first day of absence or absence without reason | Follow up call/email to establish a reason for student not being in school   | School Office                  |
| Day 3  | No response or concern about explanations                        | Third-day-of-absence call and/or email to parents/carers.  | School Office                  |
| Day 6 of absence or 10+ sessions absence in any 26 week period | No response or concern about explanations                        | Call to Parents/Carers.<br>Letter raising concerns   | Learning Manager               |
| In addition, as required                                       | Attendance under 95%   | Letter to Parents/Carers. Request for medical evidence may be required.<br>Absence monitored by SLT and Learning Managers as part of attendance strategy meetings. | School Office/Learning Manager |
| Further absence days or persistent                             | Further unauthorised absence/continual absence                   | Parents/carers to be invited to school meeting. Request for  | Senior Learning Manager        |

| <b>Suggested time scale</b>          | <b>Attendance profile</b>   | <b>What needs to be done</b>  | <b>By who/ who with</b>  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| absence<br>(whichever is greater)    |   | <p>medical evidence may be required.</p> <p>Formal action plan to support attendance to be agreed, individual attendance targets to be included. Date set for further meeting to review plan.</p> <p>Consideration for EHA/external agency support.</p> | SLT  |
| Approx 6 weeks after initial meeting | Further unauthorised absence  | <p>Meeting to review plan and agree a request for support or referral to the LA Attendance Officer</p> <p>Consideration for EHA/external agency support</p>   | <p>Senior Learning Manager</p> <p>SLT</p> <p>Attendance governor</p> |
| Legal Action                         | Unauthorised absence for holiday totalling 10 or more sessions; or further unauthorised absence | School staff to refer to the LA Attendance Officer for school-initiated prosecution   | Learning Managers  |



**Appendix 2: Flowchart of timescales and actions**



**LETTER 1– UNDER 95% ATTENDANCE**

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

DEAR.....

**Under 95% Attendance**

I am writing to you to express concern regarding the number of absences .....has had from school.

Their current level of attendance stands at .....% which is lower than the school expects it to be. This means that they have missed .....number of sessions. It is a fact that if a student improves their overall attendance, they will improve their overall attainment.

At Fairfield High School we encourage all students to attain an attendance level of 97% or above, in order that they can gain the most benefit from their education. As a minimum, students should achieve 95% attendance. As a guideline – an attendance level of 80% means that, on average, the student is missing one day of school each week. Over a school year, this means eight weeks of absence. If this level of absence was maintained across years 9, 10 and 11 by one student, this would mean that they had missed half a school year out of a possible three years.

There are a variety of reasons why any student might be absent from school, either for authorised or unauthorised reasons, but it is the responsibility of the parent in all cases to ensure that their son/daughter attends school on a regular basis. If there are reasons for poor attendance, it is important that these be addressed as quickly as possible to ensure students are not missing out on their education.

If you do have any concerns about your child’s absences, then please do not hesitate to contact the school. Please note any College references always request details about a student’s punctuality and level of attendance.

We will continue to monitor .....’s attendance, and will be back in touch if it does not improve.

Yours sincerely

**LETTER 2a –NO IMPROVEMENT SINCE LETTER 1.**

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear .....

**Under 95% Attendance – no improvement/more than 10 sessions absent**

Since last writing to you regarding .....’s attendance we have not yet seen a suitable improvement.

Consequently.....’s attendance must improve. If this does not happen we will ask you to attend a meeting and we may refer this to the Local Authority who may take further action. If you have any reasons why you think this will not be possible to achieve, please contact the school office immediately. It is your responsibility that you inform the school of any absence during this period.

We hope that this will not be necessary and that instead we will see a significant improvement in .....’s school attendance.

Yours sincerely

**LETTER 2b– GP CONSENT and PERMISSION TO CONSULT MEDICAL PRACTITIONER**

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear

**Re: GP Consent**

We are concerned that..... attendance has fallen below the National Guideline of 95%. Currently their attendance is .....%. Poor attendance will only have a negative influence on your child's education and could result in an intervention, leading to penalty notices or fines.

The government's guideline for attendance is 95%. Since the beginning of the academic year ..... has missed .....registration sessions/ been marked as late for..... registration sessions. We understand that there may be medical reasons as to why they have not been able to be in school.

If for any reason you are unable to provide evidence of a medical appointment/or illness which has necessitated absence, then I have enclosed a medical consent form for you to complete and return to the school office. This will be sent to your GP and will allow the school to speak to the GP regarding .....ability to attend school. This consent does not authorise school to gain specific information regarding your child's health nor their medical records. It will only give school the GP's opinion, as to whether .....was unfit to attend school on medical grounds. If the doctor is unable to confirm any absence on medical grounds, then the absences will be unauthorised.

Failure to return this form or provide appropriate evidence for absences will result in the absences being unauthorised and this may be referred to the Local Authority who may take further action.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely

**PERMISSION TO CONSULT MEDICAL PRACTITIONER**

RE:

DOB

I .....the parent/carer of the above named child hereby give permission for Fairfield High School to consult the Medical Practitioner named below (or other Medical Professional at the same Practice) about the state of health of the above named student as it relates to their ability to attend school on a regular basis.

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| <b>MEDICAL PRACTITIONER INFORMATION</b> |       |
| DOCTORS NAME.....                       |       |
| POSITION                                | ..... |
| ADDRESS *                               | ..... |
|   | ..... |
|   | ..... |

**LETTER 3– INVITATION TO ATTENDANCE PANEL**

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear .....

**Attendance Panel**

Following our letter to you earlier this term regarding your child’s level of attendance, we regret to inform you that .....’s attendance has not improved to the required 95% and is currently at.....% and has .....sessions marked absent.

Therefore you are required to attend a meeting at the school on ..... at .....

Please complete the attached reply slip to confirm your attendance at the meeting.

Our Governor in charge of Attendance will be present at this meeting to discuss the issues affecting your child’s attendance and discuss support to resolve these issues to avoid any further action from the Local Authority.

Yours sincerely,

.....

**Invitation to an Attendance Panel**

Student’s name ..... Date.....

Attendance Panel on ..... At .....

I/we have received a letter regarding the invitation to the Attendance Panel and confirm that I/we are able/are not able to attend. (Please delete as appropriate).

Signed ..... Date .....

If you are not able to attend, please can you give an indication of when you are available below:-

Date ..... Time .....

Date ..... Time .....

**LETTER 4– LEAVE REQUEST FORM**

**ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL REQUEST FORM  
ACCOMPANYING NOTES**

Fairfield has a statutory obligation to monitor attendance and report on it to the Department for Education. The *minimum* attendance level expected is 95%; the expectation for Outstanding schools is 98%+. Absence from school can seriously disrupt your child’s learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away but they also have to simultaneously catch up and keep up on their return. This leads to a risk of underachievement which together we should be trying to avoid.

**10 sessions (1 week) from school means 30 missed lessons and an otherwise 100% attendance record will drop to 94.7% over an academic year.**

Therefore, and in accordance with the local authority's policy on attendance, we will not ordinarily authorise an absence for any holiday taken during term time.

We may consider authorising an absence for holiday during term time if there are **very exceptional circumstances**. Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- time taken after a traumatic event e.g. a family bereavement
- Where a parent's/carer's employer dictates the dates when holidays can be taken
- Specific personal or family circumstances which make absence unavoidable.

**We will not normally authorise holidays that are taken because of cost and we will not normally authorise absence for students in years 10 or 11.**

The continued high expectations on students to achieve national standards at the end of Year 11 mean that absence is inappropriate unless it is completely unavoidable.

**Any intended absence should be discussed with the Head Teacher and requested in writing using the form overleaf, detailing the reasons for the request.**

**REQUEST TO TAKE A CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

*Please complete this form, giving brief but specific details of the requested absence.*

I would like to take my child..... (name)

Tutor group: .....

out of school from .....

to ..... Number of days: .....

I am requesting this absence during term time because:

.....

.....



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

(Please give as much detail as possible, including copies of official work schedules etc.)

Signed ..... (parent/carer)

Date:.....

Name of parent/carer .....

**This form must be completed and returned to Fairfield High School Attendance Officer no less than two weeks before the planned absence.**

**LETTER 5– PLANNED ABSENCE– POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM SCHOOL**

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear parent/carer

Re: Tutor Group

Current attendance %

Further to your recent request for leave of absence:

**Leave of absence is authorised for the following date(s):**

Please ensure that your child returns to school promptly following the absence.

Signed: (Head Teacher) Date:

.....

**LETTER 6– PLANNED ABSENCE – NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM SCHOOL**

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear parent/carer

Re: Tutor Group

Current attendance %

Further to your recent request for leave of absence, I regret to inform you that the leave of absence is unauthorised due to .....

I am sorry to disappoint you on this occasion, but I am sure that you will support the school in insisting of high levels of attendance for all students.

Signed: (Head Teacher) Date:

**LETTER 7–HOLIDAY TAKEN WITHOUT SCHOOL CONSENT**

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear .....

**Re:** .....

Information has been received at the school strongly suggesting that you have taken your children on holiday during term time ..... This would constitute an unauthorised holiday and if the absence amounts to 10 sessions (5 days) or more a referral would then be made to Herefordshire Council. Their policy is to issue each person with parental responsibility a Penalty Notice for £60.00 for each child absent from schooling.

If this information is not correct it is requested that you provide the school with evidence to confirm that we have been misinformed. Medical evidence from the GP would be appropriate.

If for any reason you are unable to provide evidence of a medical appointment, then I have enclosed a medical consent form for you to complete and return to the school. This will be sent to your GP and will allow me to speak to him/her regarding .....’s ability to attend school. This consent does not authorise school to gain specific information regarding your child’s health nor their medical records. It will only give the GP’s opinion, as to whether .....was unfit to attend school on medical grounds. If the doctor is unable to confirm any absence on medical grounds, then the absences will be unauthorised.

Failure to return this form or provide doctor’s notes for absences will result in the absences being unauthorised which may lead to legal action being taken against you for unauthorised holiday.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely

**LETTER 8 —LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS FOLLOWING IMPROVED ATTENDANCE**

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear

**Improvement in school attendance**

Since last writing to you regarding .....’s attendance, we have seen a suitable/significant improvement over the last few weeks. His/her attendance is now at .....%.

Consequently, we would like to congratulate .....on reaching this level of attendance. It is important to note that there is a strong link between academic success and attendance and therefore this should have a positive impact of .....’s achievements in school.

If we can support you and ..... further in maintaining a good level of attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

**Appendix 3 – Attendance Support Plan (Meeting notes)**

|   |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
| <b>Fairfield High School Attendance Support Plan</b>                                    |                | <p>(please tick)</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> meeting</p> <p>Review meeting</p> <p>Meeting date:</p> |
| <b>Student's Name:</b>  |                |   |
| <b>Year:</b>  |                |   |
| <b>Present:</b>   |                |   |
| <b>Summary of attendance concerns: Current attendance ___% Expected Attendance ___%</b> |                |   |
| <b>Summary of parental/carers concerns:</b>   |                |   |
| <b>SMART Targets to improve his/her attendance:</b>                                     |                |   |
| <b>Target</b>   | <b>By whom</b> | <b>Date to be completed</b>   |
|   |                |   |

**School support/action agreed:**



**Parental support/action agreed:**

**Review meeting date:**

**ASP lead:**

**Parent/Carer:**

**Other:**

**Appendix 4 – Attendance Panel Meeting**

|  |                |                             |  |
|--|----------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Fairfield High School Attendance Panel Meeting</b>  |                | <b>Meeting date:</b>        |  |
| <b>Pupil's Name:</b>   |                |                             |  |
| <b>Year:</b>   |                |                             |  |
| <b>Present:</b>  |                |                             |  |
| <b>Summary of attendance concerns: Current attendance ___%      Expected Attendance ___%</b> |                |                             |  |
| <b>Summary of parental/carers concerns:</b>  |                |                             |  |
| <b>SMART Targets to improve his/her attendance:</b>  |                |                             |  |
| <b>Target</b>  | <b>By Whom</b> | <b>Date to be completed</b> |  |
|  |                |                             |  |
| <b>Support agreed:</b>   |                |                             |  |
| <b>Staff mentor</b>  |                | <b>EHA</b>                  |  |



|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>School Counselling</b>                |  | <b>SENDco</b>                            |  |  |
| <b>External Counselling</b>              |  | <b>Health/Medical</b>                    |  |  |
| <b>Change of class/form</b>              |  | <b>LA penalty referral</b>               |  |  |
| <b>CAMHS</b>                             |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Parental support/action agreed:</b>   |  |  |  |  |
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Review meeting date:</b>              |  |  |  |  |
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> |  |  |  |  |
| <b>ASP lead:</b>                         | <b>Parent/Carer:</b>                     | <b>Other:</b>                            |  |  |
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> | <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> | <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> |  |  |