

THE PAINSLEY CATHOLIC ACADEMY



The Painsley Catholic Academy Better Together

Painsley Catholic College

ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2023

Approved by:	Local Governing Body	Date: September 2023
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Last reviewed on:	September 2023
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Next review due by:	September 2024
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1. Aims

As a Catholic school, we are committed to Catholic Social Teaching (CST). CST is 'an aspect of the life and the thinking of the Catholic Church.' It concerns what the Church has to say about social issues and the way in which Catholic faith should be lived out within society. These teachings are rooted in Scripture and especially in the teachings of Jesus found in the Gospels. For this policy, we focus on the CST of 'Rights and Responsibilities'. It is the right of every child to receive an education. To do this, school must work with families to ensure that everybody understands their role and responsibilities in ensuring a child's good attendance.

We believe that **exceptional communication** enhances the spiritual development, life chances and opportunities of all in the community. It is essential that, through exceptional communication, we enjoy excellent relationships with parents and pupils so that attendance can be maximised as set out in the communication charters.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. 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](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

› [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The local governing board (LGB)

The LGB 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
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the Principal/headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- › The LGB member for attendance is Mr R McCusker

The Directors monitor attendance through termly reports from the CEO.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors and the Executive Leadership team who will, in turn, report it to the Board of Directors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr A Growcott and can be contacted via alg@painsley.staffs.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7). Secondary: This includes checking for missing marks and absent pupils by checking class registers on an hourly basis.
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Assistant Principal responsible for attendance (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The Attendance Officer is Mrs M Barlow and can be contacted via mb@painsley.staffs.sch.uk

3.5 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office using the SIMS lesson monitoring software.

3.6 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They also may transfer calls from parents [and pupils] to the Pastoral Lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. Pupils must be on the school site by 8:35am and in Emmaus by 8:40am.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:55am 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

3.8 Pupils

Secondary pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time

Sixth form pupils are expected to:

- Call the school to report their absence before 8:55am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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. We will also take a SIMs register every lesson. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am and will be kept open until 9:10am (half an hour after the start of Emmaus) The register for the second session will be taken at 1:20pm and will be kept open until 1:50pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:10am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school reception (see also section 7).

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 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.

4.3 Planned absence

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. Parents can telephone the school reception or email their child's pastoral lead.

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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed at 9:10am will be marked as late, using the appropriate Code (Code L). Parents will receive a same day text message.
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (Code U). Parents will receive a same day text message.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call and send a text message to the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may send the Education Welfare Officer to conduct a home visit, notify the local authority or contact the police in the event of a safeguarding concern.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer. Staff, pupils and families must understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk.

4.6 Reporting to parents

In line with DfE expectations, the school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half termly reports. Parents also have access to their child's attendance via the SatchelOne parent app.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Any requests for a leave of absence must be made in person at a meeting with the Leadership Pastoral Lead in school as well as in writing. We will not consider authorising any leave of absence unless we have met a parent in person. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Examples of exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time include:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence - up to a maximum of 3 days
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if Principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement
- Time-off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs". This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions

- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays. However, we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave will only be authorised for this purpose when we are satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitment.

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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school reception. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

If we suspect a family is on holiday, even if we are told otherwise, we will investigate and request for a penalty notice to be issued by the Local Authority if our findings are that the family is indeed on holiday (see section 5.3). A return to school meeting must be arranged by the Leadership Group Pastoral Lead with both the parent and child.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include but are not limited to:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

We will work proactively with parents and pupils to improve their attendance. A first letter will be issued when absence dips or, if at the start of a term, patterns emerge regarding persistent absence. Discretion will be used with this – obviously if someone has been genuinely ill, we will not be issuing this letter.

A second letter is issued at 95% or if worrying patterns continue. A notification letter is issued at 92% when a pupil is at risk of becoming a persistent absentee. The third letter is a statutory letter, and this is where we refer back to the Local Authority.

In addition to the letters, parents will be invited into school to discuss with the Education Welfare Officer, Pastoral Lead and Leadership Pastoral Lead and remove potential barriers to school attendance. A parenting contract will be drawn up where there is little evidence of improvement and attendance is persistently below 90%. See the template letters.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The 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 £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the 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
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Promoting attendance is a whole school responsibility

- Achievement points will be awarded to pupils for 100% weekly attendance by the Emmaus tutor
- Achievement points will be awarded each term for pupils between 97%-99% attendance and 100%
- Achievement points will be awarded each half term for pupils who improve their attendance following the previous term
- Inter Emmaus attendance competitions
- End of term reward assemblies
- All pupils are encouraged to download the SatchelOne app on their smart phone to view their year to date attendance and punctuality
- Bespoke attendance tracking and analysis

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

We will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data on a weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly basis across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

We share daily attendance with the DfE, which allows for the MAC to monitor attendance and provide challenge and support as necessary. In addition, we use Fischer Family Trust reports to monitor our attendance patterns relative to other similar schools.

7.2 Analysing attendance

We will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Report to the Executive Leadership team and Directors regarding attendance patterns and the analysis of Fischer Family Trust/Power Bi data

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

We will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Emmaus Tutors, Pastoral Leads, Heads of Department, SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead and other school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

We will:

- Reach out to parents to establish exceptional communication channels and therefore develop excellent relationships and understand and overcome barriers to attendance
- Send letters to parents once thresholds have been met (see section 5.2).
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular 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

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning by 8:55am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.1).

If the school has not received a call, we will phone the parent to ascertain the reason for the child's absence (see section 4.2 and 4.5).

If a pupil's absence in any single period is over 10 days, a home visit or, if circumstances require, a virtual visit will be held to ensure the child is safe.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the education welfare officer.

The Local Authority requires the school to update the online portal for any pupils who are on part-time timetables or off sick for 15 consecutive days and to ensure the information shared is kept up-to-date at all times. The portal link is:

7.5 Children with a social worker

We will engage with Virtual Schools to:

- Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker.
- Set aspirational targets for attendance of pupils with a social worker.
- Provide training for the designated teacher about their role in promoting the attendance of children who have ever needed a social worker.
- Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent
- Work with all social workers to ensure they recognise the importance of good school attendance, and that attendance is built into every child in need or child protection plan where attendance is a concern.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the CEO (at MAC level) and Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board (at school level) and full Board of Directors (at MAC level).

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Values and Expectations policy
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Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
I	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective

		employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the

		reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Template letters

Dear Parent/Carer

School Attendance - 97% and above

I am writing to inform you that XX's current attendance is xx. This is excellent! We know that good attendance is linked to wellbeing, positive mental health and great educational outcomes.

Regular school attendance also prevents XX having gaps in their learning, which helps HIM/HER engage in lessons. We thank you in helping XX attend school so regularly. Please pass on our praise to XX and support HIM/HER in continuing to keep HIS/HER attendance at this level.

The table below shows the impact absences can have on a student's learning:

Attendance during school year	Equals to number of days absent	Equals weeks of learning missed	Equals lessons missed
100%	0	0	0
97%	5 days	1 week	25 lessons
95%	10 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	20 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks (half a term)	150 lessons

Yours sincerely

Principal

97% and above	Regular school attendance
94% - 96%	Cause for concern - Monitor
90% - 93%	Unacceptable level – interventions
Below 90%	Statutory Action - Education Welfare Officer

Dear Parent/Carer

School Attendance – 94-96%

I am writing to inform you that XX's current attendance is XX%. This means that XX has missed more school than HIS/HER classmates. Students fall behind when they miss school – whether they are absent for excused or unexcused reasons. You can have a big effect on XX's absences this term – and we really appreciate your help.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with you to provide the best education for XX. We also know that good attendance is directly linked to a child's wellbeing.

The table below shows the impact absences can have on a student's learning:

Attendance during school year	Equals to number of days absent	Equals weeks of learning missed	Equals lessons missed
100%	0	0	0
97%	5 days	1 week	25 lessons
95%	10 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks (half a term)	150 lessons

Yours sincerely

Principal

97% and above	Regular school attendance
94% - 96%	Cause for concern - Monitor
90% - 93%	Unacceptable level – interventions
Below 90%	Statutory Action - Education Welfare Officer

Dear Parent/Carer

School Attendance: 90% - 93%

I am writing to inform you that XX's current attendance is XX%. We expect children's attendance to remain at or above 97% as attendance below this figure can have a dramatic impact on a child's learning. We know that good attendance is linked to wellbeing, positive mental health and great educational outcomes.

XX's current attendance is a cause for concern and we are sure you feel the same too.

Therefore, we will be inviting you into school to meet with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss XX's attendance. Additionally, XX will have regular attendance discussions with HIS/HER Pastoral Lead.

A copy of our Attendance Policy can be found on our website or from the school office.

The table below shows the impact absences can have on a student's learning:

Attendance during school year	Equals to number of days absent	Equals weeks of learning missed	Equals lessons missed
100%	0	0	0
97%	5 days	1 week	25 lessons
95%	10 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks (half a term)	150 lessons

We look forward to working with you and doing all we can to support XX's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Principal

97% and above	Regular school attendance
94% - 96%	Cause for concern - Monitor
90% - 93%	Unacceptable level – interventions
Below 90%	Statutory Action - Education Welfare Officer

Dear Parent/Carer

School Attendance – Below 90%

I am writing to inform you that XX's current attendance is XX%. We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with you to provide the best education for every child. Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us. We know that good attendance is linked to wellbeing, positive mental health and great educational outcomes.

XX's attendance concerns have been raised with you via letters, phone calls, emails and meetings. XX now has the following unauthorised absences:

LIST

In order to prevent **Statutory Action** from being taken, we will be contacting you to arrange an urgent meeting to discuss XX's attendance.

The table below shows the impact absences can have on a student's learning

Attendance during school year	Equals to number of days absent	Equals weeks of learning missed	Equals lessons missed
100%	0	0	0
97%	5 days	1 week	25 lessons
95%	10 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons

85%	29 days	6 weeks (half a term)	150 lessons
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Yours sincerely

Principal

At or above 97%	Regular school attendance
94% - 96%	Cause for concern - Monitor
90% - 93%	Unacceptable level – interventions
Below 90%	Statutory Action - Education Welfare Officer

Attendance Contract Template

Date/time of meeting:	
Venue:	

Pupil name:	
Date of birth:	
Address:	
School:	

Present at meeting:	
Areas of concern:	
Education Welfare Officer contacts	
Any possible barriers or problems at school, home or in the community/friendships which may be contributing to poor school attendance?	
Does the family require any support to help improve attendance?	

Action agreed
<p>EXAMPLES OF ACTION AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil will arrive at school by 8.30 a.m. every day. • Parent will inform the school on the first day of a sickness absence and provide a note upon pupil's return. • Parent will provide medical evidence for every sickness absence pupil may incur. • Are any issues preventing pupil from attending regularly, school staff will be informed?

Attendance target:	100%
Timescale for improvement:	

Date for review meeting:	
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I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present.

Signed:

..... Parent/carer

..... Pupil

..... School Representative

..... Other Agency