



Skelton
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Hope Learning
Trust York

Implemented: October 2020
Review: November 2023

Attendance Policy

CONTENTS:

1. Rationale

2. Aims

3. Definitions

Authorised, Unauthorised, Persistent Absence (PA)

4. Registration

4.1. Attendance Codes

4.2. Registers & Punctuality

4.3. Medical Appointments

5. Requests for Leave of Absence

6. Religious Observance

7. Role & Responsibilities

7.1. Role of the Pupils

7.2. Role of Parents

7.3. Role of Class Teacher & Teaching Assistant

7.4. Role of the School

8. What we expect from parents/carers

9. The role of the Home-School Support Worker

10. Role of the Governing Body

11. Role of the Local Authority

12. Intervening with Attendance Concerns

13. Children Missing in Education & Relevant Legislation

Important Equality Act 2010

In operating this Policy/Procedure it is very important to ensure compliance with discrimination law which is now consolidated within the Equality Act 2010.

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil by treating them unfavourably because of their disability.

The school is expected to make reasonable adjustments. The 'test of reasonableness' should be applied in each situation where a reasonable adjustment may need to be made.

In some instances, it may be justified not to make a proposed reasonable adjustment to resolve a situation where the young person, parent/carer, staff of school, governors and/or disabled members of the public who use school premises/facilities outside of core school hours could be seen as being at a "substantial disadvantage" as compared to their non-disabled peers. This doesn't mean that where this reasonable adjustment is considered and felt to be appropriate, that no action should be taken to resolve the situation.

If you have any questions/concerns concerning the application of the Act in relation to this policy/procedure you must always refer the matter to the Principal.

For Reference:

'Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils' guidance to school issued by Equalities and Human Rights Commission dated September 2012. www.equalityhumanrights.com

'Advice for School Leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities' issued by the Department for Education 23rd October 2012. www.education.gov.uk

1. Rationale

‘Good Relationships – The Heart of all Learning’.

Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community. Every member of the community has rights and responsibilities which enable us to work and learn in a school environment in which they feel safe and supported.

This policy outlines the underlying philosophy and management of attendance at Skelton Primary School. It is a working document designed to promote positive attendance and reduce absence from school.

The policy reflects current practice within the school. Its fair and consistent implementation is the responsibility of all staff. Our school takes an active approach to promoting good attendance. With the support of parents, the wider community, the local authority and the pupils themselves, we take a positive approach to safeguard the well-being of all pupils and staff.

2. Aims

At Skelton Primary School children should be in school on time every day unless they are unwell and unable to attend. The better a child’s attendance the higher they achieve and research shows that attendance levels at primary school have an impact on GCSE results at the end of secondary school. Start times are as follows:

Nursery (Ducklings):

The doors will be open from 8.45am until 9am so that children can be dropped off at a time that best suits the parent.

Reception (Robins):

Doors open at 8.45am until 9am so that children can be dropped off at a time that best suits the parent.

Year 1 to 6 (Woodpeckers, Owls and Kingfishers):

Doors to all classrooms will be open from 8.45am until 9am. Teachers will be available on classroom doors for the 15 minutes so that important messages can be passed on. For safeguarding reasons, parents should not enter the classrooms at this time.

We expect children to aim for 100% attendance at school. However, we also understand that there are times when a child will be ill and may be absent or that there may be legitimate reasons for absence. The national average for attendance is 96%, the equivalent of missing around 8 days over a year, and all children should aim to have this as a minimum for attendance.

Any child whose absence falls below 90% or around 19 days off over the year is classified by the Government as a Persistent Absentee. If your child’s attendance approaches or falls below this figure you may be invited into school for a meeting.

In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils in school we aim to:

1. Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents/carers, teachers and governors.
2. Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
3. Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.

4. Implement a system of rewards and sanctions.

Skelton Primary School uses Integris, O Track and CPOMS which are online systems that enables staff to track attendance, achievement and behaviour throughout the school day. Current practise involves teachers awarding bronze, silver or gold for positive behaviours for learning and when necessary yellow, orange and red (see behaviour policy) for those who do not follow the school rules.

Our online systems are an integral part of our reward system which is set up to provide praise for positive behaviour and attendance. At Skelton Primary School we believe in working closely with parents and recognise the importance of collaboration.

5. Provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and pupils.
6. Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. Develop effective partnerships with supporting services and agencies through the Local Authority, The Children's Front Door Team (childrensfrontdoor@york.gov.uk) and the Local Area Teams (LAT).
8. Recognise and address the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence.

The Government expects Parents and pupils to:

- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.
- This advice summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1) (3) (4) & (6) and 458(4) & (5).
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.
- School Attendance, guidance for schools DfE, 2016.

3. Definitions

It is the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether a child's absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised (DfE, Guide to Absence Statistics, March 2018).

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered as justification for the absence (DfE, School Attendance Guidance for Schools, September 2018).

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason has been given (DfE, School Attendance Guidance for Schools 2018).

Persistent Absence (PA)

- The Department for Education (DfE) define a 'persistent absentee' as a pupil who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at **10%** or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised. The PA status may change as the terms progress but these pupils are at particular risk of achieving poor outcomes at school and beyond.

4. Registration**4.1. Codes**

There are a series of codes which are used to denote authorised and authorised absence (DfE, School Attendance Guidance for Schools, 2018).

It is the school's responsibility to ensure the correct codes are recorded and that patterns and trends in children's absence are analysed. The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations.

They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence.

4.2. Registers & Punctuality

We need children to arrive at school punctually so that they can access all learning opportunities.

If a child misses the start of the day they will miss time spent with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for the children which may encourage further absence. We actively encourage all children to arrive at school on time.

Gates open at 8.45am. **All children are to be in their classroom by 9am.**

Children arriving before 9.30am should be recorded as Late (using the code 'L'); this will be an attendance.

Children arriving after 9.30am should be recorded as Late after registers close (using the code 'U'); this will be an unauthorised absence.

It is a legal requirement that school registers must be completed at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions and the same time scales apply.

4.3. Medical Appointments

We encourage families to book medical appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, the following codes are used:

If a child arrives back in school before the official close of the register at 9.30am, this will be recorded as 'L' and therefore the child is marked as attending school. If a child arrives back after the official close of the register, the child will be marked as 'M' for a medical appointment.

Parents are asked to bring in a medical appointment card for all appointments to authorise absence.

5. Requests for Leave of Absence

We believe that all children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. For this reason, we do not authorise leave of absence (including holidays) in term time unless for exceptional reasons.

Please note: a child who has two weeks of absence for a holiday (or any other reason) means they will have a lower than average attendance for the year.

We follow the guidance written by the City of York Council (Guidance relating To Pupil Leave of Absence from School for Family Holidays).

The Head teacher has the discretion to make exceptions to this rule and can authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, when the leave of absence is for no more than 10 days

(Using Code H: Family Holiday Agreed).

Special circumstances may include:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

The national guidance suggests that requests for the following reasons should not be authorised:

- Availability of cheap holidays.
- Availability of desired accommodation.
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.

If we know that the pupil has siblings in other schools, it is strongly advised that we make contact with the other school to come to an agreement when coding the leave of absence (i.e. whether the leave of absence is authorised or unauthorised).

Parents/Carers whose children are absent for leave of absence, such as a family holiday, can be issued with a penalty notice fine which means that they may be liable to pay a fine up to £120 per parent per child.

Penalty notice fines for leave of absence in term time without authorisation can be issued without prior notice.

6. Religious Observance

The DfE recommends the use of Code 'R' when children are absent from school to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.

This is interpreted to mean that if the parent's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival then the school must authorise the absence. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

If the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave absence. Additional holidays and days off linked to the religious festival but not "exclusively set aside for religious observance" by the religious body are not marked using Code 'R' and may be marked as an unauthorised absence.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the school community have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

7.1. Role of the Pupils

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the education opportunities available.

All pupils **where appropriate** will:

- Ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Be aware of their current attendance record and targets.
- Be aware of the consequences of poor attendance or truancy.
- Arrive to lessons punctually.
- Not leave school without permission.

- Follow correct procedures for known absences.
- Respect themselves and others.
- Encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- Be happy and encourage others to feel happy
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied or feel unhappy in school.

7.2. Role of Parents

Parents have an essential role in ensuring their child's good attendance.

We ask parents to:

- Establish good attendance habits by acting as a role model and showing their children that good attendance and punctuality is important.
- Praise and reward good attendance, even small successes, e.g. getting ready quickly, even if resisting going to school.
- Talk regularly with their child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to. If the child is reluctant to come to school, you can talk to us about this.
- Contact the school by phone, text, email or letter as soon as possible to say why their child is absent, and when they are expected to return.
- Only grant days at home for genuine illness.
- If appropriate, arrange for a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick.
- Avoid taking holidays in school time.
- Ensure that wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. ensuring children have their P.E. kits on the right days.
- Establish a good bedtime routine, so that their child can sleep well, get enough sleep and make mornings less of a struggle.

7.3. Role of the Class Teacher & Teaching Assistant

We ask all staff to:

- Encourage good attendance.
- Ensure that registers are correctly and promptly marked.
- Set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Provide a safe and secure environment in which to learn.
- Provide engaging and worthwhile learning experiences that encourage students to regularly attend lessons.
- Ensure that children are informed of their current attendance record half termly.
- Listen to and value children's views.
- Make initial contact with parents when concerns arise and mention children's attendance as a matter of course at parents evening, meetings, etc.
- Be aware of who is at risk of becoming a Persistent Absentee through their own monitoring, and should then notify the Home-School Support Worker once they have taken steps to encourage attendance, but no impact has been made.

7.4. Role of the School

As a school we:

- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- Develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- Meet the legal requirements set out by Government and consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of The Education Act, 1996 & 2005.
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- Develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees.
- Develop procedures leading to the formal referral to the Advice, Assessment and Early Intervention Service (The Children's Front Door & Local Area Team).
- Adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of the resources available, and ensure that appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

8. What we expect from parents/carers

First day contact:

On the first day of absence, if the school has not received a reason for a child being away from school, The Attendance Lead will make contact with the parents. This is done either by phone call or a text messaging service by 9.30am, all contacts will be contacted to establish the child's whereabouts.

Where no contact can be made, the Attendance Lead and a Designated Safeguarding Lead will carry out a home visit by 10am. If there is no response and no sign of habitation, contact numbers will be tried again, a text is sent to the parent's phone, and a check made to Front Door.

If a child is absent from school for two days and that child is highlighted within school as potentially being 'at risk', the school will notify The Children's Front Door (551900 or childrensfrontdoor@york.gov.uk).

9. The role of The Attendance Lead

- Monitor attendance across all year groups, using schools online systems.
- Analyse attendance data alongside academic data.
- Work with Teachers who have identified students at risk of becoming persistent absentees, set appropriate targets and implement intervention strategies to meet targets.
- Work and communicate effectively with external agencies.
- Ensure that parents are aware of their legal responsibility and ensure that information is communicated through a variety of means.

10. Role of Governing Body

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2016, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day.

This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

The governing body monitors the rate of attendance and ensures the policy is adhered to fairly and consistently, by annual attendance reports.

11. Role of the Local Authority

The Local Area Teams are available to offer information regarding a child and advice on other services available and are based in each cluster.

The Local Authority employs a School Attendance Adviser who is able to support the school with attendance panel meetings and provides guidance on National Legislation and Local Initiatives.

12. Intervening with Attendance Concerns

Skelton Primary School would like your support to improve levels of attendance and punctuality, therefore a 'Fast Track Initiative' is run in school in order to address attendance concerns quickly and effectively (Termly Fast Track Cycle, Appendix 1).

The Attendance Lead will identify pupils using the fast track process in conjunction with the City of York Council.

- A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems, informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending.
- Where patterns are identified and following initial contact concerns continue a letter will be sent inviting parents/carers into school to attend a School Attendance Panel meeting (SAP) between the parents, Senior Leader, Attendance Lead and possibly the School Attendance Adviser. A SAP meeting will be held whether the parent attends or not.
- Parents/Carer's of the pupil are likely to be sent a penalty fine notice warning (PNFW) letter following a SAP.
- The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored for an agreed period of time generally four or five weeks and if there appears to be no improvement, it is likely the parent/carers of the pupil will be fined with a fixed penalty notice warning (FPNW) by the Local Authority.

A penalty fine notice would mean the parents/carer's have to make a payment of either £60.00 or £120.00 per parent, per child depending on when they pay the penalty notice.

Generally, in such situations parents will be issued with a fixed penalty notice fine through the Local Authority which does have the power to prosecute parents rather than issue a fine.

Penalty Notice:

If parents do not pay penalty notice fines it is likely they will be prosecuted by the Local Authority as parents have a duty to ensure their child receives an appropriate full time education. If they fail in this duty they may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 and liable to prosecution. If convicted parents can be fined up to a maximum of £2500 per parent and/or receive a custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

13. Children Missing in Education

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the local authority must include: (a) the full name of the pupil, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the pupil's future address and destination school (e) the pupils start date of expected start date (DfE Children Missing Education, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, September 2016). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

When pupils leave and parents have not provided the school with the above information, and the school cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'.

This means that the school and Local Authority have a legal duty to carry out investigations, which may include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

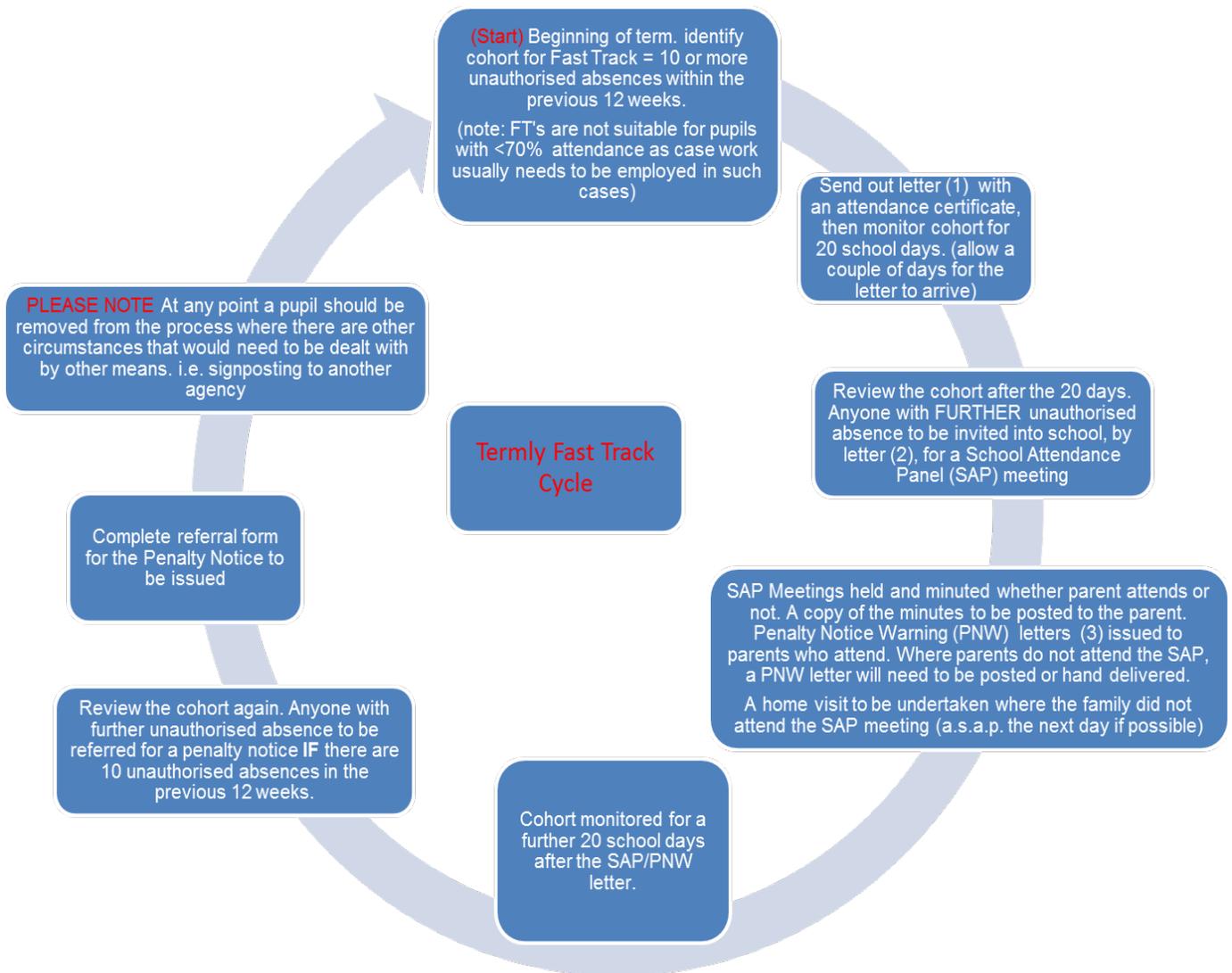
By providing us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided. We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards at Skelton Primary School.

Relevant Legislation:

- The Children Act 1989 (section 36);
- The Education Act 1996 (sections 7, 19, 436A, 437-39, 443-447);
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (section 8 -10);
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (ASB Act) (sections 19-24);
- The Education Act 2005 (section 115);
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 97-111) ;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008 (section 2 and 155);
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 and amendments.

Appendix 1

Termly Fast Track Cycle



Dear Parent/Carer

Re: _____

DOB: _____

As the Attendance Lead at Skelton Primary School, my role is to improve attendance and punctuality. I monitor pupil's attendance regularly and follow up on any frequent or unreasonable absences.

Skelton Primary School would like your support to improve levels of attendance and punctuality, therefore a 'Fast Track Initiative' is currently being run in school in order to address attendance concerns quickly and effectively.

Having recently completed a register check, I am concerned to note _____ poor level of attendance and I enclose a copy of their registration certificate for your information. The attached copy has the sessions they were absent for highlighted.

As a result of these concerns, your child's attendance will be monitored for the next 20 school days, during which time school will only authorise absences if medical verification is provided. If their attendance shows little or no improvement after the monitored period, you will be formally invited to a School Attendance Panel in school order to discuss and address the situation.

I am obliged to inform you that under the provision of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time. Failure to do so could result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings being taken by the Local Authority.

If you require advice and support with regard to your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Hannah Smithson
Head of School

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: _____

DOB: _____

As the Attendance Lead at Skelton Primary School, my role is to improve attendance and punctuality. I monitor pupil's attendance regularly and follow up on any frequent or unreasonable absences.

Skelton Primary School would like your support to improve levels of attendance and punctuality, therefore a 'Fast Track Initiative' is currently being run in school in order to address attendance concerns quickly and effectively.

Having recently completed a register check, I am concerned to note the number of late codes on _____ Attendance Summary, I enclose a copy for your information. The attached copy has the sessions they were absent or late for highlighted.

As a result of these concerns, your child's attendance and punctuality will be monitored for the next 20 school days.

If their punctuality shows little or no improvement after the monitored period, you will be invited to attend a School Attendance Panel in school order to discuss and address the situation.

I am obliged to inform you that under the provision of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time. Failure to do so could result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings being taken by the Local Authority.

If you require advice and support with regard to your child's attendance and punctuality, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Hannah Smithson
Head of School

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: _____ **DOB:** _____

Further to my previous letter advising you that Skelton Primary School is currently involved in a Fast Track Initiative, having recently completed a register check I am concerned to note that _____ has failed to achieve the attendance target set. I enclose a copy of their Attendance Summary for your information. The attached copy has the sessions they were absent for highlighted.

As a result of these concerns and in order to discuss and address the situation, I would like to invite you to a Fast Track School Attendance Panel to be held in school on **«appointment time and date»**. Failure to provide an acceptable explanation for the absences may result in a Penalty Notice Warning letter being issued immediately following the meeting.

If the above appointment is not convenient, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number to make an alternative arrangement, as the meeting will go ahead in your absence if you do not attend.

I am obliged to inform you that under the provision of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time. Failure to do so could result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings being taken by the Local Authority.

I look forward to meeting with you on the due date.

Yours Sincerely

Hannah Smithson
Head of School