

Attendance Policy



Approved by: Governors

Date: February 2026

Last reviewed on: February 2026

Next review due by: February 2027

Introduction

The governors and leaders of Foxfield School recognise that there is a clear link between attendance and pupil achievement. This policy is to help encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and to support parents/carers in achieving this.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school (Working Together To Improve School Attendance. DfE. 2024). Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason is an offence in law (The Education Act, 1996) and may result in legal action.

Attendance is important as it is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues, by seeing the children on a regular basis and providing an educationally safe and secure environment. We also understand that some of our pupils have medical requirements that mean they may not be well enough to attend school at times.

At Foxfield School, the day starts at 8:45am. All pupils are expected to be in school by 9am. Registers close at 9.30am or when the last LA vehicle has transported pupils. Any child arriving after this time will receive a late mark.

Aims

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Foxfield School by:

- Raising the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community
- Maximising the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality
- Reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent (90-51%) or severely absent (50% or below)
- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance
- Continuing to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, School and Community Health and other partner agencies
- Providing support and advice for parents, pupils and staff in maximising attendance.

Understanding types of absence

Leaders have to report every absence that a pupil takes from school. This is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by calling the school or sending a message via Class Dojo on the first day of absence.

As a school, we define regular attendance as 91%+, persistent absence (PA) as 90% - 49% and severe persistent absence (SPA) as 50% or below.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation as satisfactory justification for the child not attending school on a particular day. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be

authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents, who makes the decision to authorise absences from school.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence, or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, for activities such as shopping and birthdays
- absences which have not been explained
- pupils who arrive after the close of registration.

This type of absence may result in the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September April 2026 Foxfield School will issue warning letters to parents when there are concerns that a child is at risk of PA or if attendance has dropped below 90%.

90% attendance is equivalent to a child missing half a day every week.

Warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) will also be issued to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent to 5 full days) in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 school days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the Headteacher may refer the case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued. <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/education-social-welfare-service/school-attendance-and-absence>

Persistent Absence

Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DfE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence, whether authorised or unauthorised. The DfE expects schools to intervene by this point.

Whilst we will take into consideration that some pupils can be absent from school for medical requirements, we have a duty of care to follow up all needs so the school can provide support to families where needed. Parents/Carers are asked to contact the school office in the first instance, where they will be signposted to a relevant member of staff.

If your child has persistent absence or patterns of absence you may receive a letter from school.

Severe Persistent

Absence Pupils who miss 50% or more of school are classified as being severely absent by the DfE. This cohort of pupils is a priority group for Foxfield School and additional support may be required from the local authority and partner agencies to support your child improving their attendance. It is essential that parents work in partnership with the school and its partners, to ensure their child receives the support they require to overcome any barriers that are preventing them from attending school. Promoting Regular Attendance at Foxfield.

If your child has severe absence or patterns of severe absence you may receive a letter from school and the Local Attendance Officer may be informed.

Promoting regular attendance

We recognise that attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and is therefore seen as everyone's responsibility in school.

To help us all focus on this, leaders will ensure:

- there is a designated leader at Foxfield School who acts as Attendance Lead, with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. The Attendance Leads will be supported in their role by an Attendance Team, including admin staff, class staff, Pathway leads and Family Support Workers
- effective strategies are in place to deter poor punctuality
- an engaging curriculum is in place which will be reviewed regularly
- high quality teaching and learning is delivered throughout the school
- vulnerable groups are provided with effective support at the earliest opportunity and attendance is monitored rigorously
- effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided
- attendance and punctuality are regularly talked about with children where appropriate
- attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

Attendance expectations and Absence procedures

When a child is not attending school it could be considered as a safeguarding matter. It is important for parents to provide school with timely information if their child will be absent from school.

In case of an emergency

In case of an emergency we need to have up-to-date contact numbers at all times. Please ensure you inform us of any changes as soon as possible. We require a minimum of 2 emergency contact names and numbers (1 emergency contact should not live at your home address).

Expectations of Parents Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal obligation (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

- Ensure your child arrives to school for a 8:45/9am start (ready on time to be collected by transport, or dropped off at school by 9am)
- Before 9:30am, telephone school if your child will be late or absent and provide a reason.
- On the first day of sickness absence, please give an indication as to when your child will be able to return to school if you can.
- If the reason for absence requires a more personal conversation, please call school and ask to speak to a member of the class team or management.

Foxfield School will provide support to any parent who requests it. Our experienced team aim to ensure that parents have the right support in place so that school attendance remains high.

- Please ensure that all routine, non-emergency medical and dental appointments are made outside of school hours.
- If a child's attendance is already a cause for concern (PA / SPA), parents will be expected to provide confirmation of any emergency or specialist appointments required during the school day.
- If your child arrives late to school following an appointment, it is the responsibility of the parents to contact school transport to ensure arrangements for collection are in place for the end of the school day.
- If a text message/phone call from school is received as a result of your child's absence, it is important that you respond. Leaders should know where your child is for safeguarding reasons.

Please note: you must inform school if a holiday is to be taken in term time, regardless of unauthorised absence. It is a safeguarding issue if school are not aware of a child's whereabouts.

- There may be an occasion when there is an exceptional situation or family matter that cannot be avoided. Please contact school to discuss.

If a pupil is absent, we will:

- Contact the parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 10am. Reasons for absence will be recorded by admin staff. This will enable leaders to monitor absences more effectively.
- If no response is received and the absence is unauthorised, a member of the safeguarding team will decide whether a home visit is required.
- If a child's absences are increasing, and we are not aware of a good reason, the parent will be invited to meet with the Attendance Lead and/or a referral to the Wirral Attendance Service will be made.
- If the parent does not attend the meeting and the pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a term, the parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice Warning letter in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct and in agreement with the Wirral Attendance Service.
- If unauthorised absences persist the Attendance Lead will discuss further actions with the schools allocated Attendance Officer, Wirral Attendance Service.

Please note: The law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Headteachers are not expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and / or can cause disruptions to lessons that have already started. It can be extremely upsetting for the child arriving late as many rely heavily on school routine and structure.

The school day starts for children who arrive on local authority transport at 8:45am. Registers are taken by the class teacher and registration closes at 9.30am or when the last LA vehicle has transported pupils.

Late arrival to school following the close of registers is classified as an absence. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice.

The process for addressing Persistent Absence can be found in Appendix 1 'Absence & Lateness Flowchart' If a parent has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the school office or class teacher who will inform the Attendance Lead who will offer support to resolve the problem.

APPENDIX

1 – Absence & Lateness Flowchart

2 – Pupil Registration & Codes

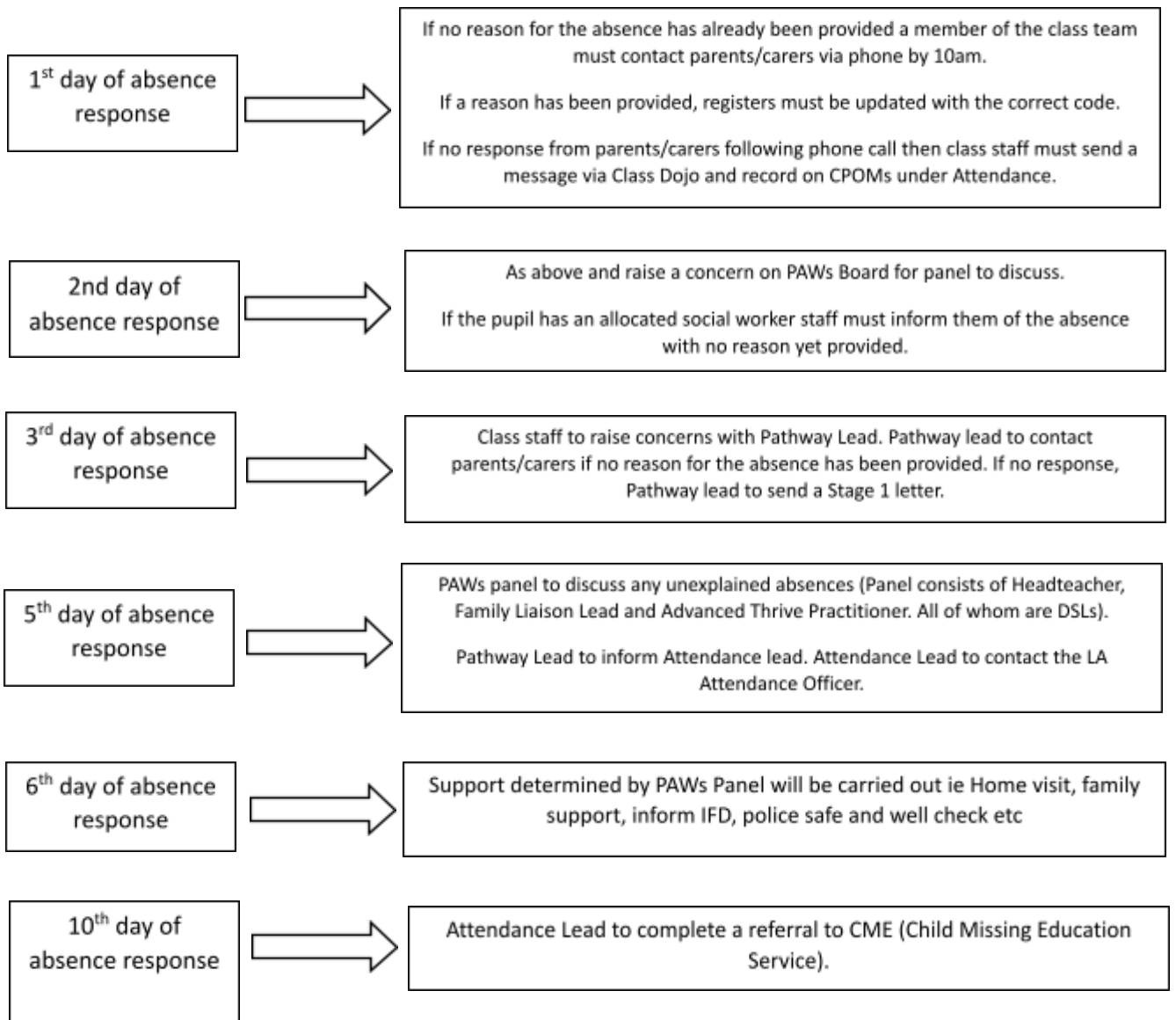
3 – Stage 1 Letter

4 – Stage 2 Letter

5 – Stage 3 Letter

6 – Attendance Expectations Letter (used for persistent absenteeism)

Absence & Lateness Flowchart



Stage 1 Letter

Issued when no reason for absence has been provided and /or parents/carers have failed to communicate with the school. Can be sent from 3 day.

Stage 2 Letter

No response to the first letter within a reasonable timescale. Failing to attend an attendance meeting organised by the school.

Stage 3 Letter

Failure to respond to any previous action.

Attendance data is shared with governors on a regular basis and scrutinised.

At any point of absence, if deemed appropriate, a referral or contact may be made to;

**Integrated Front Door or Social Care for Safeguarding.
Schools allocated Attendance Officer, Wirral Attendance Service.**

Pupil Registration & Codes

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, and once during the second session. On each occasion, it must be recorded whether each pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent

School must then follow-up on all pupil absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for absence
- Make sure that any safeguarding action is taken if needed
- Identify the correct registration code to insert in the electronic register

Nationally prescribed registration codes should be used consistently by all schools. These codes are used to give depth of meaning to the register and to provide statistical meaning to absences. Codes are all collected by DfE via download to the School Census System.

CODE	MEANING	CRITERIA	STATISTICAL VALUE
B	Attending any other approved Educational Activity	<p>B code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity under arrangements by school or LA in the session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place of the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p>	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
C	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	<p>Exceptional circumstances</p> <p>No blanket approach</p> <p>School discretion</p> <p>Generally a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure</p>	Authorised absence

		and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance	
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	Exceptional circumstances If the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part time temporary	Authorised absence
I	Illness (not medical appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (Both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.	Authorised absence
K	Attending Education Provision arranged by LA	The nature of provision must be recorded. Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
L	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed	Attending (present)
M	Leave of absence for Medical or Dental Appointment	Agreement in advance Application by parent child normally lives with Minimum time necessary Where pupil is absent at registration	Authorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Where absence is recorded as code N in the attendance register, the correct code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session. Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, school must amend the pupil's record to Code O	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be	Unauthorised absence

		recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised	
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil whose home is in England if (a) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty (b) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil and have failed to discharge that duty or (c) the school is an independent school that is not a qualifying school and (i) the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home (ii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school and (iii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home.	Not possible attendance
R	Religious Observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves)	Authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All school are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.	Unauthorised absence
V	Attending an Educational Visit or trip	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip Arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

W	Attending work experience	<p>W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity under arrangements by school or LA in the session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p>	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	<p>For part time attendance</p> <p>Absence for timetabled sessions to use appropriate code and not X</p>	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is not able to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or Local Authority is not available	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local national or international emergency	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being	Where a school was planned to be open for a session but the school is closed unexpectedly (eg due to adverse weather) the attendance register is not taken as	Not a possible attendance

	unexpectedly closed	usual because there is no school session. Instead every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed	
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	<p>The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are :</p> <p>In police detention</p> <p>Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing or</p> <p>Detained under a sentence of detention</p> <p>A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based part of a sentence of detention, referral order or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day</p>	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	<p>The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:</p> <p>Contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or</p> <p>Prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease</p>	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	<p>This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at the school does not , in itself mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause.</p> <p>Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause.</p>	Not a possible attendance

Foxfield School



Together we L.E.A.R.N.

New Hey Road
Woodchurch
Wirral
CH49 5LE

Tel: 0151 6418810

Email: schooloffice@foxfieldschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Becky McBride

[First name / surname]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Postcode]

DATE

Attendance Concern Stage 1 Letter

Dear [insert parent / carer name],

Foxfield School has tried to contact you regarding your child's recent absence from school.

Your child, (insert pupil name) was absent on (insert date/dates) and the school are yet to be provided with a reason for this absence.

It is essential that our records are accurate and up to date to prevent the notification of a child missing in education being triggered. Please contact Foxfield School at your earliest opportunity to provide the reason for your child's absence to avoid an Attendance Concern stage 2 Letter being issued.

Yours sincerely

Life skills

Enjoyment

Achievement

Respect

New experiences



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[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Postcode]

DATE

Attendance Concern Stage 2 Letter

Dear [insert parent / carer name],

Foxfield School has tried to contact you regarding your child's recent absence from school.

Your child, (insert pupil name) was absent on (insert date/dates) and the school are yet to be provided with a reason for this absence.

It is essential that our records are accurate and up to date to prevent the notification of a child missing in education being triggered.

You failed to respond to An Attendance Concern Stage 1 Letter which was issued on (insert date).

Please can you attend an Attendance Review Meeting with (insert staff names) on (insert date/time/location) to discuss your child's absence and how we can work together to support and improve their attendance.

Yours sincerely

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DATE

Attendance Concern Stage 3 Letter

Dear [insert parent / carer name],

Foxfield School has tried to contact you regarding your child's recent absence from school.

Your child, (insert pupil name) was absent on (insert date/dates) and the school are yet to be provided with a reason for this absence.

It is essential that our records are accurate and up to date to prevent the notification of a child missing in education being triggered.

You failed to respond to An Attendance Concern Stage 1 Letter which was issued on (insert date). You failed to respond to An Attendance Concern Stage 2 Letter which was issued on (insert date).

Please can you attend an Attendance Review Meeting with (insert staff names) on (insert date/time/location) to discuss your child's absence and how we can work together to support and improve their attendance. The Local Authority Attendance Officer will/will not be in attendance during the meeting.

Yours sincerely

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[Address 2]

[Address 3]

[Postcode]

Attendance Expectations Letter

Dear [insert parent / carer name],

If your child's attendance is below 90% they are classed as a 'persistent absentee'. We understand that children can be absent due to illness, however, we need to ensure that all children are accessing the good teaching and learning we offer to succeed, not just at Foxfield, but when they leave for further education and later on in life.

If your child's attendance falls below 90% and has absence due to illness we may require medical evidence. This could be in the form of a doctor's note or prescription for medication. This is important for us to be able to maintain accurate records. It also helps us identify areas where we can support too. If we fail to receive evidence, the absence may not be authorised.

Please be aware that as part of the ongoing support we are offering parents to improve attendance, we may contact you via telephone, write to you or make a home visit to see how we can work together to improve your child's attendance. If your child's attendance does not improve you are liable to prosecution by the Local Authority, but it is our aim to support you and your family to see that attendance is improved so this does not happen. We look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely

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