



**SOUTH ESSEX
ACADEMY TRUST**

> collaboration > challenge
> perseverance > innovation

SEAT Attendance Policy

Ratified by the Directors: 4 JULY 2018

A paper copy of this policy is available at the Academy office.

1. PURPOSE

South Essex Academy Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its pupils. We believe that there are benefits to pupils throughout their lives from teaching them that good attendance and punctuality are crucial life skills. As an Academy, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible. SEAT considers regular attendance to be attending school every day.

Each Academy will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong Home/School links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve these problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

2. IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATED TO ATTENDANCE

- If a child misses two weeks of school they have missed on average 50 hours of education.
- If an Academy can improve attendance by 1%, attainment will also improve by 5-6%.
- 90% attendance is equal to half a day missed every week.□
- If your child has one week off per term for their entire academic life they will have missed whole year of education.
- One school year at 90% attendance equals four weeks of missed lessons.□

3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Academy expects pupils to attend school regularly, be on time, and properly equipped, ready to learn.

- The Academy will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.
- The Academy staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- The Academy will work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues that affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.
- The Academy will include in reports to parents on achievement, pupil's attendance at least□ annually.
- Pupils will be listened to and respected.
- Pupils will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the Academy.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child regularly and punctually attends school, properly dressed, equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn.
- Parents are responsible for immediately informing the Academy of the reason for any absence by telephone call (or text message if applicable to the Academy) on the first morning of any absence **before 9.15am**. Failure to do so could result in an unauthorised absence.
- If attendance problems do develop, the Academy expects parents to work actively with Academy staff and the Attendance & Student Support Officer to solve them.

4. TERM TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Parents do not have a right to take children on holiday in term time. Taking a child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education.

There is no entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time; however, they may apply to the Academy for leave of absence if they believe there are exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the Academy. As from 1st September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 prohibits the proprietor of an Academy from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

If a parent requests leave of absence during term time an 'Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time' form must be completed together with a letter outlining the exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine whether the leave can be granted and the number of school days a child can be away from school.

If the absence is not authorised and the leave is still taken, the case will be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school. If the penalty is not paid within the timescale, the penalty will increase to £120. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, the Missing Education and Child Employment Service will then institute legal proceedings in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure a child attends school regularly.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2, Part 6) the Academy will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority Missing Education and Child Employment Service, which has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

5. TYPE OF REGISTRATION & GENERAL REGISTER MAINTENANCE

All Academies within the Trust use an electronic attendance register (ScholarPack). ScholarPack is used to create a report for each registration period (am and pm), every day and kept in a central location in the school office for instant reference in the event of an emergency.

All notes/letters from parents, regarding a pupil's absence, will be stored in the Academy for three years.

6. START AND CLOSE OF REGISTRATION

The Academy will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

- If a child arrives after the register closes they will be recorded in the register as late.
- If a child arrives 30 minutes after the registers close, an unauthorised late will be recorded, unless there are verifiable extenuating circumstances agreed with the head teacher or deputy and this may lead to a fine where a pattern of persistent lateness is identified.
- If a child is persistently late (e.g. they are late on 10% of occasions or more over the past 12 months) then all late arrivals will be recorded as unauthorised late unless there are verifiable extenuating circumstances agreed with the head teacher or deputy, and this may trigger the same processes used for persistent absence and may lead to a fine.
- Whenever a child is recorded as an unauthorised late, the parent will be contacted.

Some schools within the trust operate a school bus pickup or staff collection service for some pupils.

- Once a pupil is collected, they will be recorded as late if that collection occurs after the registration period has closed.
- If the pupil is collected 30 minutes or more after registration, they will receive an unauthorised late, consistent with pupils who arrive over 30 minutes late at school.

Registration

The schools across the trust have different registration times, listed below: -

	Morning Registration	Afternoon Registration
Westwood Academy	9:00 – 9:15am	1:00 – 1:15pm
Bardfield Academy	KS1 and EYFS: 8:45 – 9:00am KS2: 8:40 – 8:55am	EYFS and KS1: 12:40 – 12:55pm Y3 and Y5: 12:40 – 12:55pm Y4 and Y6: 1:00 – 1:15pm
Winter Gardens Academy	8:45 – 9:00am	EYFS & KS1: 12:45 – 1:00pm KS2: 1pm – 1:15pm
Parkwood Academy	8:45am - 9:00am	1:00pm - 1:15pm

7. THE LEGAL STATUS OF REGISTERS

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case, if authorised or unauthorised. A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child’s regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil. Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

8. STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR PROCESSES

The Headteacher is responsible for attendance issues and will be provided with attendance reports on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns. The Headteacher will meet regularly with the Attendance and/or Student Support Officer to discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The School Office is responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals, and is responsible for logging attendance information onto the computerised system.

The class teacher is responsible for taking the register daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session. The class teacher is also responsible for register maintenance of his or her own class register.

These include the following:

- using the correct codes;
- ensuring that symbols used are appropriate;
- ensuring all mistakes are amended;
- ensuring the registers are completed promptly for use in an emergency situation – i.e. during a fire procedure.

The Academy will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law as required. Each pupil should be called by name when the register is being taken.

9. PROCEDURES FOR FOLLOWING UP ABSENCE

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the Academy on the first morning of the child's absence **before 9.15am**. Failure to do so could result in an unauthorised absence. If this contact is not made the Academy will contact the parent by telephone or text message.

Attendance is monitored weekly and a review of attendance percentages is undertaken after each half term, to identify pupils with less than the school's target of **97%** attendance.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the current procedural flowchart related to pupil attendance.

10. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the DFEE Circular No.10/99 states that parents may not authorise absence, only schools can do this.

EXAMPLES (this is **not** an exhaustive list)

Absence for the following reasons could be **authorised** where parents have confirmed the absence by telephone or writing prior to the absence.

- Sickness;
- Emergency medical/dental appointments;
- Days of religious observance;
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement;
- If permission for absence has been granted in advance by the head teacher;
- Transport arranged by the Local Authority has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance.

Absence may be recorded as **unauthorised** when due to:

- Shopping;
- Haircuts;
- Missed bus;
- Slept late;
- No uniform;
- Looking after brothers or sisters or unwell parents;
- Minding the house;
- Birthdays;
- Unapproved holidays.

It may be necessary for the Academy or the Attendance Officer to ask the parent/carer to provide the Academy with written evidence of reason for absence, e.g.

- Appointment cards/letters
- Medical certificate
- Letter from GP

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons, the Academy or the Attendance Officer may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

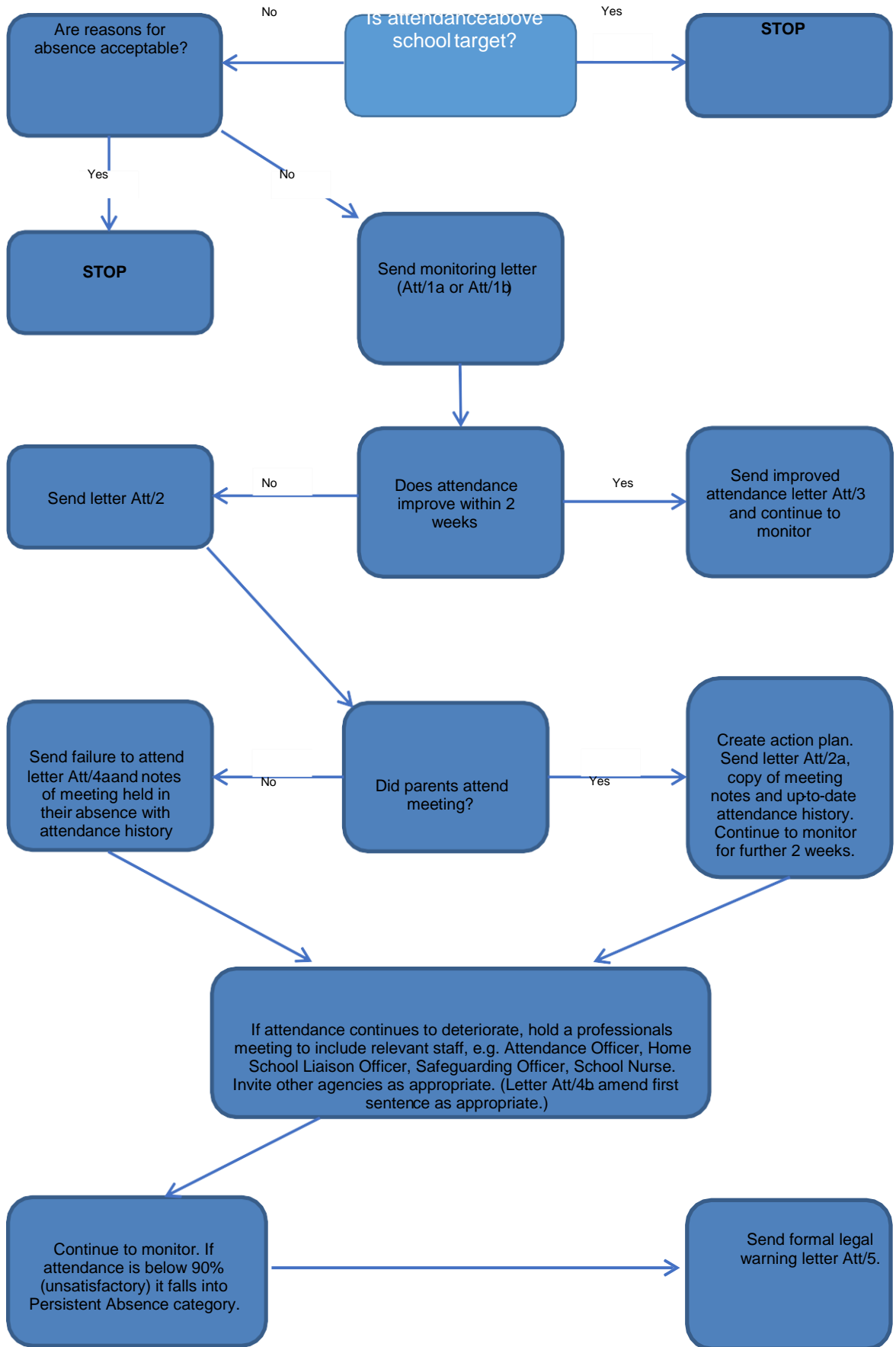
11. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

- Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in a variety of ways, e.g. at the Induction Meeting, website, Academy Information Leaflet and Newsletters.
- Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports will be used.
- Parents, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- From 1st September 2015, the Government reduced the persistent absentee threshold from 15% to 10%. This now classes a student with attendance below 90% as a persistent absentee. Minor ailments, such as a headache or slight cold, are not acceptable reasons for failing to attend school. Repeated absences may require the school to request you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery as recommended by the Government.
- Pupils with a known attendance problem being admitted to the Academy will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement.
- Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.
- All issues which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties will be investigated by the Academy, and supported, i.e. temporary need for taxi transport etc.
- Pupils who suffer with diagnosed conditions that sometimes prevent them from attending school on a full-time basis will receive recognition for good attendance (Equality Act 2010).
- The Academy will have regular meetings with appropriate staff in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

The Academy encourages and rewards good attendance which may include:

- There are special termly and annual assemblies to celebrate pupils who have achieved 100% attendance, including stickers and certificates.
- The Academy encourages punctuality with a range of stickers, certificates and vouchers.
- Every week, the class with the highest overall attendance wins the Academy's attendance 'mascot', which they retain in their classroom for the following week.
- At the end of the year, every child with 100% attendance is rewarded with a certificate and entered into a raffle to win a prize.

APPENDIX 1



If no improvement, refer to MECES

MODEL LETTER: Ref Att/1a

Dear

Re: Attendance for >>>> – DOB >>>>

I am writing in connection with >>>>'s irregular attendance at school. I am concerned that he/she is not meeting the Government's attendance target of at least 95% and, therefore, it is a possibility he/she is falling into the Persistent Absence category. Please find enclosed a copy of his/her attendance history and a copy of the school's attendance procedure for your information.

XXX Academy works in partnership with the Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES) to ensure the regular attendance of all pupils in the school and, as such, a review of the registers is undertaken regularly.

The school is committed to improving the attendance and attainment of all its pupils and I would therefore ask for your co-operation to ensure that >>>> attends regularly and punctually in the future.

Please be aware that I will be monitoring your child's attendance over the next half term. If >>>>'s attendance does not improve to a satisfactory level, and you have not informed us of any mitigating circumstances that would justify his/her absence(s), you will be invited to attend a School Based Meeting to discuss why there has not been an improvement.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to make an appointment to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

By Law, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable full-time education. As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice or being taken to court. A penalty notice of £60.00 may be issued by the Local Authority as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. Failure to pay will lead to prosecution. Parents can be fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

MODEL LETTER: Ref Att/1b

Dear

Re: Attendance for >>>> – DOB >>>>

I am writing in connection with >>>>'s irregular attendance at school. I am concerned that he/she is not meeting the Government's attendance target of at least 95% and, therefore, he/she has fell into the Persistent Absence category. Please find enclosed a copy of his/her attendance history and a copy of the school's attendance procedure for your information.

XXX Academy works in partnership with the Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES) to ensure the regular attendance of all pupils in the school and, as such, a review of the registers is undertaken regularly.

The school is committed to improving the attendance and attainment of all its pupils and I would therefore ask for your co-operation to ensure that >>>> attends regularly and punctually in the future.

Please be aware that I will be monitoring your child's attendance over the next half term. If >>>>'s attendance does not improve to a satisfactory level, and you have not informed us of any mitigating circumstances that would justify his/her absence(s), you will be invited to attend a School Based Meeting to discuss why there has not been an improvement.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to make an appointment to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

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MODEL LETTER: REF Att/2

Dear

School Based Meeting Re: >>>> DOB >>>>

I write to advise you that >>>>'s attendance continues to be a cause for concern. Please find attached his/her attendance history for your information.

To ensure that your child receives the maximum benefit from his/her education it is essential that an immediate improvement is made. You are therefore invited to a School Based Meeting with me and NAME OF MEMBER OF STAFF on **DATE** at TIME to discuss this in more detail.

This meeting will be an opportunity to discuss any issues that may be affecting your child's attendance at school and consider strategies for improvement. Can you please bring with you any evidence which supports >>>>'s absences?

If you are unable to attend this meeting please contact me so an alternative date can be arranged. Yours

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

MODEL LETTER: Ref Att/3

Dear

Re: >>>> - DOB >>>

Following the attendance letter sent to you on DATE, I am pleased to see that >>>>'s attendance has shown an improvement. His/her attendance to date is >>>>% which although below the Government target of 95%, has shown signs of improvement.

I will continue to monitor >>>>'s attendance, and must advise if the improvement is not sustained you will be invited into school to discuss strategies to improve your child's attendance.

I would like to say well done and thank you for your co-operation in ensuring that >>>>'s attendance improved. I attach an up to date attendance history so that you can discuss >>>>'s improvement with him/her.

I am confident that this improvement will continue, enabling you to support >>> to access an efficient full-time education suited to his/her age, ability and aptitude.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

MODEL LETTER: Ref Att/4a

Dear

Failure to attend School Based Meeting Re: >>>> DOB >>>>

I am disappointed that you did not attend the School Based Meeting (SBM) which had been arranged in school today to address concerns regarding >>>'s poor attendance.

I am sure you will appreciate regular school attendance is crucial to sound Education attainment.

An action plan has therefore been agreed in your absence. Please find a copy of this plan attached for your attention.

The action plan will be reviewed on DATE and I must advise if there are still concerns regarding his/her attendance a referral will be made to The Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES).

I have also attached a copy of >>>'s up-to-date Attendance History for your information.

Please note that any future absences will be unauthorised unless supported by medical evidence.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

MODEL LETTER: Ref Att/4b

Dear

Professionals Meeting Re: >>> DOB >>>

I am disappointed to see that you failed to attend the School Based Meeting that had been arranged for you to attend on DATE.

Due to >>>'s attendance continuing to be a cause for concern, you are now being invited to a Professionals Meeting on DATE at TIME. The meeting has been arranged to discuss any issues which may be preventing >>>'s regular attendance.

(INSERT NAMES OF PEOPLE ATTENDING THE MEETING WITH THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER)

..... and I will be attending the meeting with you.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

MODEL LETTER: Ref Att/5

Dear

Pre-referral Letter Re: >>> DOB >>>

I am disappointed to see that>>>> has been absent from school again. (An up-to-date attendance history is attached for your information.)

I must now advise you that a referral will be made to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES). Please note that his/her recent absence(s) will remain unauthorised due to no medical evidence being brought into school.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to make an appointment to discuss this matter further with either myself, or NAME, the school's Attendance Officer.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

MODEL LETTER FOR NON STATUTORY SCHOOL AGE ABSENCE

Dear

Non-Compulsory School Age Attendance for >>>> - DOB >>>>

I am writing in connection with your child's attendance record.

NAME OF ACADEMY works in partnership with Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES) to ensure the regular attendance of all pupils in the school and as such a review of the registers is undertaken regularly.

Although your child is non-statutory school age until the >>> term (from Thursday 5th January 2017), a register review has highlighted >>> as having an irregular pattern of attendance. Please find enclosed a copy of his/her up to date attendance history.

If for any reason your child is not well enough to attend school please phone the school office, if possible before 9.30 am. If you are unable to phone then please send a letter in with your child when they return to school explaining their absence. Thank you in advance.

The school is committed to improving the attendance and attainment of all its pupils and I would therefore ask for your co-operation to ensure that >>>> attends regularly and punctually in the future.

Please note: Once your child is Statutory School Age, poor attendance will be referred to (MECES) who may issue a penalty notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) **to each parent for each child**

Please do not hesitate to contact the school office on TELEPHONE NUMBER if you would like to make an appointment to discuss this matter further with either me or NAME, our Attendance Officer.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher