



# Attendance and Absence Policy

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## Statement of intent

The staff Brookvale Primary School are committed to ensuring the highest possible school attendance for all pupils and understand that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. We will do this so that we can ensure that our children have the best possible chance to achieve at school and that they can begin their adult lives with at least the same chances as those others they will be competing with in their future lives of training and employment.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behavioural Procedure
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and fulltime basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive education. Estranged parents with whom the child has had regular contact may be prosecuted as well as the day-to-day carer. Each situation must be dealt with on an individual basis, always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern. The term 'parent' also includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children Act 1989 or who have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1996.

## 2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

### **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave

- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

**Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Collection from school for no reason during the day

**Persistent absenteeism:**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

***The Trust Governing Board has overall responsibility for:***

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

***The Head Teacher is responsible for:***

- The day-to-day implementation, management, monitoring and review of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Ensuring that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources to support good attendance are provided.
- Ensuring key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with parents and other staff in school.

***Staff are responsible for:***

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

***The attendance officer is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:***

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Have been permanently excluded.

***Parents are responsible for:***

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

***Pupils are responsible for:***

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

## **4. Training of staff**

Staff at Brookvale Primary School understand that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

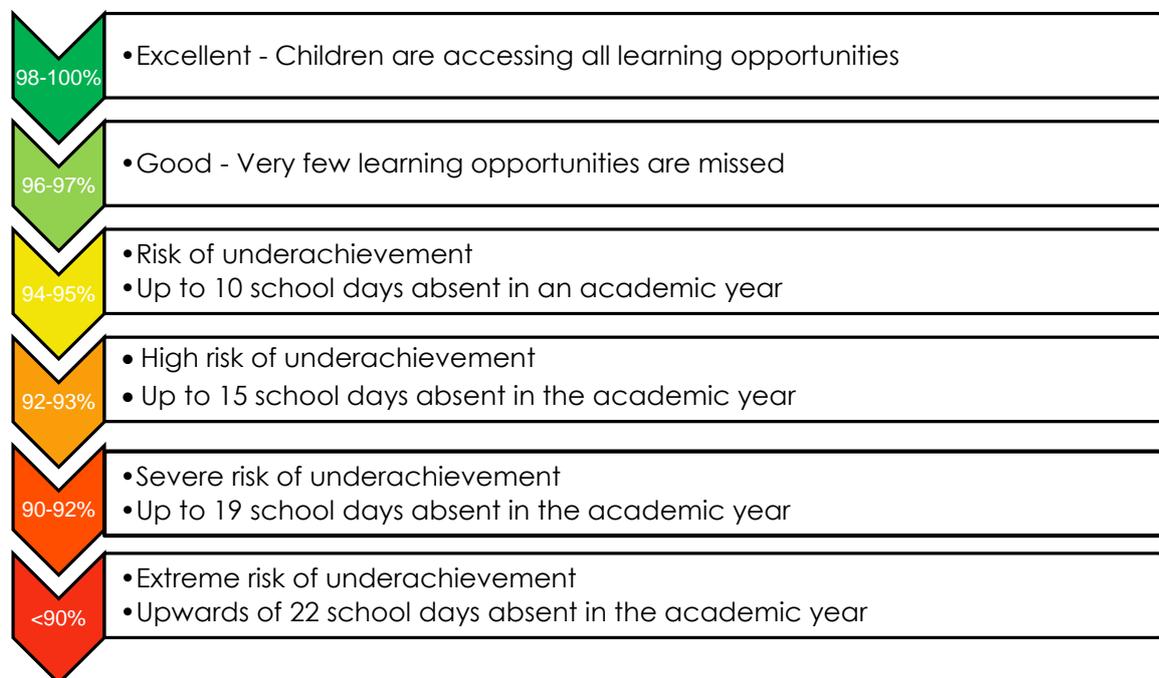
Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

## **5. Attendance Expectations**

Pupils will be expected to attend school every day they are required to be at school and parents will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year acknowledging and agreeing to this expectation. The school will also expect all pupils to attend lessons punctually.

Pupils and parents will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

At Brookvale Primary School we expect all children to achieve attendance that is **at least 96%**.



## 6. Pupils at Risk of Persistent Absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing PA, the Senior Leadership Team will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in-line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Holding attendance meetings with parents
  - Developing personalised attendance plans
  - Engaging with Local Authority attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.
  - Creating attendance clinics.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome the pupil back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.

- Meet with the pupil to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

## 7. Absence Procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone by 9.30am on the first day of their child's absence. They will also be required to send a note in on the first day that their child returns to school with a signed explanation of why they were absent. This is required even if the parent has already contacted the school. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

Parents who have not contacted the school office by 9.30am will be sent a text message to ascertain a reason for the child absence from school. If there is still no response by 11.00am, a telephone call will be made to the parent.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

**Note: Not all illnesses require children to be absent from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school they should follow the above absence process. We would encourage parents to send their children into school for the afternoon session if their child's condition/illness improves.**

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to a member of the senior leadership team. The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, the attendance officer/pastoral lead will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where school staff have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, they will use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated (DFE Attendance guidance 2020)

This process, as detailed in Appendix 1, includes:

- additional telephone calls to parents/other emergency contacts by the senior leadership team
- home visits carried out by the attendance office, pastoral lead and/or the senior leadership team
- a referral being made to the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT)
- a referral being made to Children Advice and Support Service (CASS)/Birmingham Children's Safeguarding Board (BCSB)
- a request for the police to arrange a safe and well check.

## **8. Supporting Evidence**

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

It is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- A child is absent and there are frequent odd days absences due to a reported illness
- A child is absent and the same reasons for absence are frequently given
- A child is absent and attendance is below expected levels/disproportionate to that of their peers
- There is a concerning pattern of absence/reasons for absence.
- Where there is a medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

## **9. Parental Involvement**

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.

- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

## 10. Attendance Register

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register
- 

## 11. Attendance Officer

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance officer/pastoral lead who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence, and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

## 12. Lateness

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

When a child arrives late at school he/she misses the teacher's instructions and the introduction to the lesson. The child may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. Frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning lost (table below), and can seriously disadvantage the child.

Minutes later per day	Equivalent number of days of teaching lost in a year	
	KS1	KS2
5 minutes	3.7 days	3.4 days
10 minutes	7.4 days	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.0 days	10.3 days
20 minutes	14.7 days	13.8 days
30 minutes	22.0 days	20.7 days

Doors open at 8.45am each day. The school day starts at **8.55am**. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. It is expected that all children arriving late will be accompanied into the building by an adult (Parent/carer) as a reason will need to be given and recorded for the late arrival.

Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by **9:10am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at **9:30am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence (U code) if they do not attend school before this time.
- After lunch, registers are marked by **1:00pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at **1:10pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- Pupils attending after **9:30am (e.g. following a medical appointment)** will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

Registers are monitored daily to identify pupils who are arriving late. Pupils with U codes may be referred to the Education Legal Intervention Team for consideration of legal action.

## 13. Term-Time Leave

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement in the immediate family or serious illness.

Head teachers are not permitted to grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Holidays, weddings and non-religious celebrations during term time will not be granted under any circumstance.

Applications for leave during term time must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Applications for leave which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

All matters of unauthorised absence during term time will be referred to Birmingham Local Authority through the FAST-track attendance procedure.

Any requests for leave during term time will be reviewed on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be considered.

## **14. Religious observances**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals. Parents must inform the school at least **7 days** in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

## **15. Appointments**

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card or letter will be sent to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **16. Young Carers**

The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.

The school will take a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **17. Exceptional Circumstances**

Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school, LA or parent is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.

The use of the 'Y' code for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

## **18. Rewarding Good Attendance**

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance in the following ways:

- Reward afternoons for children with 98-100% attendance
- Prizes for highest attendance

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Half termly attendance certificates
- Termly report cards issued to parents
- Celebration assemblies for good attendance
- Weekly celebration of class attendance through social media + extra playtime for class with highest attendance
- Half termly reward for class with highest attendance

## **19. Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education**

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. All staff at Brookvale Primary School are committed to safeguarding children and follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools are required to notify the local authority of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who has been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poorer outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties.

In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the [statutory guidance](#) to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

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 under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies, including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

## 20. Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform our school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from roll at Brookvale Primary School until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving our school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the child will be reported missing from education.

## 21. Monitoring and Review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the headteacher. **The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2023.**

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

## Appendix 1: Attendance Monitoring Procedures

1. A red, amber, green (RAG) rated spreadsheet will be sent weekly by the attendance officer to senior leaders (including Head Teacher) and pastoral lead detailing weekly and annual attendance figures to date.
2. Attendance will be discussed weekly by senior leaders and any attendance/punctuality trends/key children will be identified for early support/intervention.
3. Contact will be made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. A text message will be sent where no reason has been provided by 9.30am.
4. Where a reason has still not been provided by 11am, the Assistant/Deputy Head or Pastoral Lead will attempt to contact parents (and/or carry out a home visit).
5. Second day N codes will be sent to the Assistant/Deputy head or Pastoral Lead – contact should be made with parents/carers
6. Any N codes not established after a week will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
7. Where pupil attendance drops below 96 percent, the Assistant/Deputy Head or Pastoral Lead will speak to pupils to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. AHT/DHT/PL will make a phone call home to discuss decline in attendance.
8. Pupil attendance drops below 95 percent – a letter will be sent home raising concerns that attendance has fallen below the school target of 96 percent. The letter will also have a leaflet attached outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to help improve attendance.
9. Pupil attendance drops below 93 percent – a letter will be sent home explaining that a pupil's absence is now being monitored. Attendance will then be monitored for two weeks. If attendance has not improved, then parents will be required to attend a meeting in school with the AHT/DHT/PL. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, a referral may be required to the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT).
10. If attendance has not improved within the two-week monitoring period (likely to be close to 90 percent or below), or if attendance has fallen rapidly, parents will be invited to either: a school attendance meeting with AHT/DHT/PL if appropriate, or a medical action planning meeting with the school nurse, HT and SENDCo.. Provision will be discussed and targets will be set for raising attendance on an individualised attendance improvement plan (Appendix 3) . This will be monitored over a further two-week period.
11. After the two-week monitoring period, if targets are met, a letter will be sent home from the leadership team to congratulate the pupil and the family. Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilises – if targets are not met, the AHT/DHT/PL will make a referral to ELIT.

12. ELIT procedures will be followed and a parental contract will be drawn up – there will be a four-week monitoring period. No improvements in this time will result in a final written warning. If there is still no further improvement following this, then a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

## Appendix 2: Annual Attendance Agreement Form

### Parental Attendance Agreement

I understand that it is my legal responsibility to send my child to school. I understand the importance of regular attendance in securing the best possible academic, personal, social and emotional outcomes for my child and agree to send my child to school every day.

When my child is absent from school due to illness or exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

I agree to work with the school if my child's attendance becomes a cause for concern and understand the consequences if I fail to send my child into school regularly.

<b>Parent name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Attendance Officer/Pastoral Lead</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## Appendix 3: Attendance Improvement Plan

Name of Child..... Start of Plan..... End of Plan.....

**Current Attendance:**     *(Note any Historical attendance that is relevant)*

**Target Attendance:**

**Issues/Barriers Identified at Meeting**

	School will...	Parents/Carers will...
<b>Target 1</b>		
<b>Target 2:</b>		
<b>Review 1 (Date)</b>		
<b>Review 2 (Date)</b>		

