

School Registration/Attendance

We would also like to acknowledge that this document has kindly been supplied and supported by West Dunbartonshire Council and is used with their permission

1.0 For ease of reference this circular is divided into the following sub-sections:

- a) Positive Promotion of Attendance
- b) Maintenance of School Registers
- c) Criteria for Attendance
- d) Criteria for Absence
- e) Procedures to Improve Attendance
- f) Attendance Review Committee
- g) Looked After and Accommodated Learners
- h) Exemption from Attendance

2.0 Section A Positive Promotion of Attendance

2.1 Inverclyde aims to promote good attendance at school. Absence from school disrupts learning, whatever the cause. Good attendance is central to our aim to help learners become confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful learners

2.2 Given the close link between attendance at school and development of these four capacities, schools should adopt pro-active strategies to promote good attendance for all Learners. Class teachers have initial responsibility for promoting good attendance and punctuality.

This will include for learners:

- regular rehearsal of the importance of attendance in terms of individual development and progress, and the achievement of the school;
- emphasis on praise and reward for good attendance, or improved attendance;
- a positive, inclusive ethos which encourages learners to participate actively in school activities;
- obvious, concerned monitoring of non-attendance

and for parents:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ information through the school handbook on pupil absence statistics; ▪ regular updates on the importance of attendance in terms of attainment and other health and safety considerations and clear information about the procedures in place to monitor and support attendance; ▪ opportunities to share concerns about attendance difficulties and receive support at an early stage
2.3	Parents, carers and families are the most important influences on learner's lives. Parents must have an opportunity to be involved fully in discussions and decisions affecting their child. Their support can play a vital role in supporting good attendance at all stages of education. All learners should also have the opportunity to make their views known about decisions which affect them.
2.4	Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school until he or she reaches school leaving age. In the case of Looked After and Accommodated learners the Corporate Parent will hold that responsibility.
3.0	Section B Maintenance of School Registers
3.1	In having due regard to pupil care and welfare and exercising appropriate vigilance in relation to health and safety, schools must be in a position to account for those present within the establishment at any given time.
3.2	The education authority is required to report on school attendance in general. There are further statutory obligations, as a result of the issue of Regulations by the Scottish Government Schools Directorate to report in particular on pupil absence statistics, which require to be included in the school handbook.
3.3	Head teachers are required to ensure that the following are maintained and up-to-date in their establishment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A register of admissions to, and withdrawals from, school; ▪ A daily register containing the name of each pupil admitted which records half day attendance and absence; ▪ A note of any unauthorised pupil absence from individual classes during the school day; ▪ A summary register that will provide information on attendance for inclusion in the school handbook and in returns required by the local authority; and ▪ Such documentation on individual pupil attendance as may be required by the Corporate Director of Education, Communities & Organisational Development for statutory and other purposes.
3.4	During exceptional circumstances, e.g. fuel shortage, fire, elections, strikes etc., where a school is closed for a whole day the number of school openings will be reduced accordingly and registers will not be marked.
3.5	Where only a minority of learners are in attendance for the whole or any part of the day, the school will be regarded as closed for the purpose of formal registration and the number of half day openings will be reduced by the number of day's partial closure and registers will not be marked. However, where it is possible to provide education for the majority of learners, this should be regarded as a normal opening and the learners who cannot be accommodated should be given credit for attendance which they might have made in normal circumstances.
3.6	The total number of attendances at the end of the year should indicate the number of possible half day openings approved by the Corporate Director of Education, Communities & Organisational

Development less the number of non-attendance days due to exceptional circumstances and nationally agreed in-service days. The reason for the non-attendance must be marked on the register. Where schools are deemed to be closed for the purpose of formal pupil registration, but some educational provision is on offer to any group of learners, then a note must be kept of those learners present at each class which is held, both to cover possible emergencies which may arise during the course of the day and for future reference should this prove to be necessary.

3.7 The information required as indicated above is to be maintained in a computerised system, in this case SEEMIS.

For attendance codes see appendix 1.

4.0 Section C Criteria for Attendance

4.1 Attendance

Attendance is defined as participation in a programme of educational activities arranged and agreed by the school, including:

- Attendance at school
- Learning out with the school provided by a college, off-site unit or other learning provider while still on the roll of the school
- Personal Learning Pathways
- Work Placements Standard
- Educational visits, day and residential visits to outdoor centres
- Interviews and visits relating to further and higher education or careers events
- Debates, sports, musical or drama activities in conjunction with the school
- Study leave for learners participating in preliminary and national exams, if arranged by the school
- Receiving tuition via hospital or outreach teaching services

4.2 For most learners, it may be necessary at some time to attend medical and dental appointments during school hours, which schools currently record as attendance. However, parents and learners should continue to be encouraged to arrange appointments as far as possible outwith school hours.

4.3 School policies and procedures

4.3.1 Inverclyde Council must ensure that all schools in their area have in place policies and procedures on the management of attendance and absence. Consistency of approach in all educational establishments helps learners and parents to understand expectations through transitions.

4.3.2 Regular reviews of policies and procedures, in consultation with parents, learners and all staff, help to reaffirm expectations. When schools set specific objectives for good attendance, consultation on how this is to be achieved and feedback on attendance during the year encourages cooperation.

4.3.3 In addition, the importance of promoting good attendance at school is also highlighted by concerns about the safety and wellbeing of learners who are not at school. Child protection is of paramount importance and non-attendance at school may indicate a child is at risk.

4.4 Wherever learning takes place

4.4.1	More learners are now learning in a variety of settings, gaining specific support for learning or accessing learning provided by other agencies in partnership with schools. The schools' policies and procedures for managing attendance and absence will be agreed with every organisation involved in providing learning for learners. Communication systems must be in place to enable centralised recording of attendance and absence for each pupil, by the school in which the pupil is registered. Where the pupil is not in school and is accessing learning provided by other agencies, any absence will be recorded by the other agency and the school notified on a regular basis.																												
5.0	Section D Criteria for Absence																												
5.1	Pupil absence from school falls into two broad categories: Authorised (Approved); and Unauthorised.																												
5.2	<u>Managing authorised absence</u>																												
5.2.1	Parents are defined under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as including a guardian or any person who is liable to maintain or has the actual custody of a learner. For Looked After learners the term parent should be taken to also mean carer.																												
5.3	<u>Authorised absence</u>																												
5.3.1	<p>Schools may authorise absence when they are satisfied of a legitimate reason, usually provided by the parent or other service provider (via a note, email or phone call).</p> <p>For example:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>REASON</th> <th>#CODE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sickness with no learning provision (usually when the pupil is sick at home)</td> <td>D(SEL)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>*Sickness with learning provision</td> <td>B(SEP)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meetings prior to court and within court</td> <td>A(ABS)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attendance at, or in connection with, a Children's Hearing or Care Review, or appointment with another service provider, e.g. social worker</td> <td>A(ABS)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exceptional domestic circumstances</td> <td>Q(DCA)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religious observance/Cultural issues</td> <td>A(ABS)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bereavement</td> <td>Q(DCA)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Weddings or funerals of those close to the family</td> <td>Q(DCA)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Arranged absence in relation to learners of Gypsy/Traveller families</td> <td>Z(EXL)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Participation in non-school debates, sports, musical or drama activities agreed by the school</td> <td>A(ABS)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Family holidays, but only as agreed by the school in exceptional circumstances</td> <td>E(PHL)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>During exclusion (to be recorded in a separate category)</td> <td>X(EXC)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lack of transport - including due to bad weather</td> <td>A(ABS)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	REASON	#CODE	Sickness with no learning provision (usually when the pupil is sick at home)	D(SEL)	*Sickness with learning provision	B(SEP)	Meetings prior to court and within court	A(ABS)	Attendance at, or in connection with, a Children's Hearing or Care Review, or appointment with another service provider, e.g. social worker	A(ABS)	Exceptional domestic circumstances	Q(DCA)	Religious observance/Cultural issues	A(ABS)	Bereavement	Q(DCA)	Weddings or funerals of those close to the family	Q(DCA)	Arranged absence in relation to learners of Gypsy/Traveller families	Z(EXL)	Participation in non-school debates, sports, musical or drama activities agreed by the school	A(ABS)	Family holidays, but only as agreed by the school in exceptional circumstances	E(PHL)	During exclusion (to be recorded in a separate category)	X(EXC)	Lack of transport - including due to bad weather	A(ABS)
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	School medical or dental examination	P(PER)
	Medical or dental treatment	P(PER)
	# See code list in appendix 1.	
5.4	<u>Diverse school communities</u>	
5.4.1	Some groups of learners may require authorised absence because of their religious or cultural practices, In such circumstances; these should be considered as ‘extended leave with parental consent.’ The following would be included in this category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gypsy/travellers may travel as part of their tradition for family connections or work commitments. Their absence is authorised at their ‘base school’ (school the child attends for most of the year) and learners may enrol temporarily in other schools as they travel. Further information on supporting Gypsy/Traveller learners is available. ▪ Learners of all faiths may take authorised absence to enable them to participate in religious observance ▪ In some cultures, family weddings or funerals are major events which may require learners to travel (e.g. overseas) or participate in extended preparations. 	
5.4.2	In all cases, school staff will be best placed to judge the school’s most appropriate response to requests for absence to be authorised, and to decide on what attendance /absence code to use in the event of an absence in relation to this policy.	
5.5	<u>Managing Unauthorised absence</u>	
5.5.1	<u>Action in the event of Unauthorised Absence from School</u> <p>When a pupil’s absence from school is known or suspected to have been due to truancy, or condoned absence, or when attempts to obtain a satisfactory written explanation for the absence have been unsuccessful, it is important that the first stage in the investigation of such unauthorised absence should be conducted by the school. The most important principle in preventing an unexplained absence or a pattern of such absences from developing into chronic non-attendance is early intervention. When unauthorised absence is identified at an early stage and the co-operation of parents is obtained in addressing the problem, it is much more likely that a pupil will return to a pattern of regular attendance at school than if the school is unaware of, or treats lightly, the first signs of a breakdown in a pupil’s attendance.</p>	
5.5.2	National research shows that the first signs of a breakdown in a pupil’s attendance often occur in the upper primary school and it is in the primary stages, or in the early stages of secondary education, that intervention is most likely to succeed.	
5.5.3	As the school leaving age draws near, some learners and parents may express a preference for work experience or employment. While schools may develop programmes of learning with vocational and work experience elements, in partnership with other agencies, ad hoc arrangements should be discouraged and a Pupil Plan put in place. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school until he or she reaches school leaving age. In the case of Looked After and Accommodated learners the main carer, e.g. foster carer or residential carer, will hold that responsibility.	
5.5.4	An unauthorised absence is any absence which is not approved by the head of establishment. This would include truancy, when a pupil absents himself/herself from school without the	

permission either of a member of staff or of her/his parent.

- 5.5.5 Unauthorised absence also includes pupil absences which are condoned by a parent but where there is no valid reason for the pupil not to attend school. This category of absence is difficult to identify and even more difficult to prove. Nevertheless, it is sometimes possible to establish that an absence or a pattern of absenteeism is condoned by parents and such absences should be recorded as “unauthorised.”

5.6 Unauthorised absence

5.6.1

Schools must record absence as unauthorised when there is no satisfactory reason provided. Such absence is likely to include:

REASON	#CODE
Most family holidays (unless there are exceptional circumstances). For example, where a family need time together to recover from distress, or where a parents' employment is of a nature where school holiday leave cannot be accommodated e.g. armed services or emergency services	G(UPH)
Parent-condoned absence where the school does not agree there is a legitimate reason for absence	U(UNA)
Truancy, with or without the knowledge of the parent	U(UNA)
All other unexplained absence is recorded as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation is subsequently provided	T(TBC)

See code list in appendix 1.

5.7 Immediate action when an absence is noted

- 5.7.1 If a child does not attend school, the noted absence should be checked against details of contacts made by parents. If a parent has not advised the school their child will be absent, then it must be assumed that the parent is unaware of the absence and that the pupil is either missing or truanting. This should be recorded as unauthorised absence until an explanation is received by the school.
- 5.7.2 Information should be passed to a member of staff with responsibility for attendance who can consider the information in the light of known attendance problems, support needs or current concerns about the pupil. This member of staff will be responsible for assessing what further action is required and the implications for additional support to resolve any difficulties, and will also be familiar with the school's child protection procedures.
- 5.7.3 However, the first step will be to contact the parents, ascertain that the learner is safe and note the reason for absence.
- 5.7.4 In the case of Looked After, Looked After and Accommodated or highly vulnerable learners where a learner does not attend school, this should always be followed up immediately.
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5.8	<u>Contacting parents</u>
5.8.1	<p>Inverclyde Council has introduced automated call systems to some establishments, to assist schools to contact parents when a child does not attend as expected.</p> <p>Automated call systems or other methods of contacting parents is regarded as good practice and sends a clear signal that attendance at school is important and is monitored on a daily basis. If attempts to contact the parent are not successful, then emergency contact numbers should be used.</p>
5.9	<u>Follow up absence</u>
5.9.1	If a pupil's absence is authorised through parental contact, then an expected date of return to school, or further advice from parents, should be noted. If discussions between the parent, pupil and member of staff responsible for pastoral care are required to resolve any difficulties, then this should be arranged as soon as possible. It is not necessary to wait for the pupil to return to school to have these discussions.
5.9.2	If a pupil returns to school, but a pattern of absence is noted, then discussion with pupil and parent is also important. In schools which have successfully improved attendance, pro-active personal contact with parents has often been effective in securing improvement.
5.9.3	In the case of Looked After and Looked After and Accommodated learners the designated senior manager within the school should be aware of any particular issues which may impact on attendance and should look to find ways of supporting the young person through these. Persistent lateness, lack of preparedness for lessons or emotional distress observed during the process of noting attendance and absence may be signs of difficulty that the school can then try to support.
5.9.4	Inverclyde schools contact parents by letter to advise them when attendance has fallen below a threshold of 90% in any six week period. Where written communication is used, contact details should be provided of the member of staff who can support the pupil and parent to improve attendance. Parents should also be advised of any local parent support initiatives, and of any advocacy service in their area. Schools should consider the possibility that literacy levels may be poor in some families.
5.9.5	<p>If staff have to contact parents where potential communication difficulties may exist such as sensory impairment, literacy or English not being the first language, full use should be made of available resources. In other instances learners can easily intercept mail obviously sent from the school. The following action should be taken, not always in sequence, to ensure that pupil absences from school are always for acceptable reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registration should always be carried out rigorously and registers amended in line with the school's rules on late coming; ▪ In secondary schools, measures should be in place to discourage absenteeism - subject teachers should automatically check the register each period and should cross check with the daily absence list electronically, where possible; ▪ All pupil absences should be covered by an explanatory note, dated and signed by the parent. These notes should be retained and, if there is any doubt about the validity of a note, the writing should be checked against earlier examples or the parent or guardian asked to confirm its validity.
6.0	Section E Procedures to Improve Attendance
6.1	Underlying all actions to promote good attendance will be a robust, universal pastoral care system to meet the needs of all learners. Where non-attendance is a factor affecting a child's learning,

	support should be initiated through GIRFEC pathways. Taking account of the ten standards of personal care outlined in Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential, a response in incremental steps should follow when it is established that a pupil's absence from school is without good reason. (Appendix 2)
6.2	<u>Step 1 - Parents are Informed of Attendance Record</u>
6.2.1	Where attendance is a cause for concern and falls below 90% within 6 weeks, or earlier if appropriate, parents should be contacted and given clear information about the child's attendance record. (Letter 1) (Appendix 3)
6.2.2	The situation should be fully discussed with the parent/carer and their co-operation sought to ensure that the problem is resolved.
6.2.3	Careful monitoring and speedy follow-up by key school staff, on unexplained absences, have been shown to reduce non-attendance for a significant number of learners.
6.2.4	Subsequent absences should be monitored. Where a pattern of absence warrants further action, head teachers, or their representative, should arrange for the matter to be investigated. It may be appropriate for the Pupil and Homelink, Family or Home Support Worker to be involved at this stage. It is important that regular checks be made on the reasons for absence, and to impress upon parents and learners that irregular attendance patterns have been noted.
6.3	<u>Step 2 - Maximising attendance meeting</u>
6.3.1	If there is no sustained improvement in attendance within 4 weeks of issue of Letter 1, or no improvement at all within 2 weeks of issue of Letter 1, the parent/carer will be invited to attend a maximising attendance meeting to be held within the school. (Letter 2a)
6.3.2	This meeting will normally involve a member of the senior management team and other staff as appropriate. At this meeting attempts should be made to establish the root cause of the problem.
6.3.3	Where it emerges that non-attendance may be due to additional support needs arising from the learning environment, family circumstances, disability or health needs or social and emotional factors, further advice should be sought in line with Inverclyde's GIRFEC pathways. What the pupil does and where he or she goes when absent from school should be carefully explored.
5.3.4	Should the parent fail to attend the maximising attendance meeting, step 3 procedures will be followed. (Letter 2b)
6.4	<u>Step 3 - Multi-agency planning</u>
6.4.1	If there is no sustained improvement in attendance within 4 weeks of issue of Letter 2a, or no improvement at all within 2 weeks of issue of Letter 2a, parents are contacted and procedures put in place to involve other appropriate agencies. (Letter 3a)
6.4.2	In early year's establishments and primary schools this will involve a multi-agency case conference while in secondary schools it will mean referral to the Joint Agency Team (JAT).
6.4.3	Should the parent/carers withhold consent for involvement; a referral will be made to the Children's Reporter. (Letter 3b)
6.5	<u>Step 4 - Referral to Attendance Review Committee (Appendix 4)</u>
6.5.1	If there is failure to cooperate with multi-agency recommendations within the agreed timescale and there is no improvement in attendance, parents will be called to an Attendance Review Committee to provide an explanation for their learner's non-attendance. (Letter 4, Letter 5)

6.5.2	Schools will submit a completed referral form GIRFEC single agency plan (Appendix 4a) to the chair of the ARC
7.0	Section F The Attendance Review Committee
7.1	<p>The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 allows for an education authority to require a parent to provide an explanation for non-attendance, if it believes there is not a reasonable excuse for non-attendance.</p> <p>The Attendance Review Committee (ARC) will meet monthly to provide an opportunity for parents to explain non-attendance that has persisted to step 4 of the procedures to improve attendance. (Appendix 4) To allow the parent to prepare for the meeting, it will not be held within two days of the notification but not later than seven days after the notification.</p> <p>The Attendance Review Committee will be chaired by the appropriate member of Education Services Senior Management Team and comprise of representatives of the relevant Primary and Secondary schools for the pupil concerned and with other services and partners in attendance, as required.</p> <p>If the parent fails to satisfy the committee that there was a reasonable excuse for the pupil's non-attendance the committee may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Postpone the decision to report for a maximum of six weeks. Where a decision to postpone is made, the committee may, if the pupil is of school age (5-16), make an Attendance Order (Appendix 5); or ▪ Refer the pupil for medical examination, if appropriate; or ▪ Refer to the Children's Hearing System; or ▪ Refer to legal services
7.2	Section 36 of the Education Act (Scotland) 1980 gives powers to education authorities to call a parent to the ARC or prosecute a parent in respect of a learner resident in their area . The result of this is that Inverclyde education authority has no powers to call parents of a child resident outwith the council boundary. However, a learner who is failing to attend school regularly and who is resident outwith the council boundary can be referred to the Children's Reporter, responsible for the area where the learner resides.
7.3	<u>Referral to the Reporter to the Children's Panel</u>
7.3.1	Referral to the Reporter may be an option considered by the ARC in conjunction with the other approaches as noted above, or more usually separately at step 3 as an important stage in engaging the child and the parent in compulsory interventions to improve outcomes for the child.
7.3.2	Scottish Government has reviewed the children's hearings system and is preparing for legislation to formally introduce the recommendations of ' <i>Getting it Right for Every Child</i> ' (2005). This aims to reduce pressure on the children's hearings system by ensuring that learners referred to it have serious welfare or offending concerns. It will not normally be appropriate for learners to be referred to the Children's Reporter solely on the grounds of failing to attend school, unless it is extreme and the parent has failed to co-operate voluntarily with measures aimed at resolving the problem. However, non-attendance may be a factor considered alongside other grounds for referral where there are a range of concerns about the learner.
7.3.3	It is helpful for education authorities and Reporters to work together to make panel members aware of the range of approaches that schools and education authorities may have already tried, to improve a child's school attendance. It is also helpful to consider with other services which may provide interventions recommended by the Children's Panel, how reintegration into school can be

The term school covers all establishments of Inverclyde Council Education Service
The term learner will cover children and young people

planned for during their work with the child.

8.0 Section G Looked After Learners

8.1 This refers to learners who are Looked After and Accommodated away from home in either a Children's Unit or foster placement.

Schools should take particular care to promote good attendance for this vulnerable group of learners. At the point when a learner who is Looked After and Accommodated first enrolls, or when a learner in the school is first accommodated, the most appropriate senior member of staff should provide information on attendance matters to the carer and establish:

- key point of contact in school in relation to authorised and unauthorised absence;
- key point of contact at home/in the Unit re attendance issues;
- agreed timescale for exchanging information regarding absence e.g. school will phone the foster carer or Children's Unit on the first day of absence if no notification has been given to the school by 10am;
- the level of involvement/responsibility of the natural parent(s) in terms of the child's attendance;
- the name and contact number of the case Social Worker and their level of involvement/responsibility in terms of the pupil's attendance; and
- any special circumstances which may affect attendance.

Where non-attendance threatens to become a problem the school should ensure an early referral to JAT (secondary) or call a case conference (primary).

8.2 An up to date list should be maintained for all Looked After and Accommodated learners enrolled at the school.

8.3 At the end of each session Education Services will require schools to provide specific information on the attendance of learners who are Looked After and Accommodated.

8.4 This data will be reviewed by Education Services on an annual basis and used as a quality indicator for the purpose of supporting learners who are Looked After and Accommodated.

9.0 Section H Exemption for Attendance

9.1 Exemption from the obligation to attend school may be granted by the authority as prescribed in Section 34 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

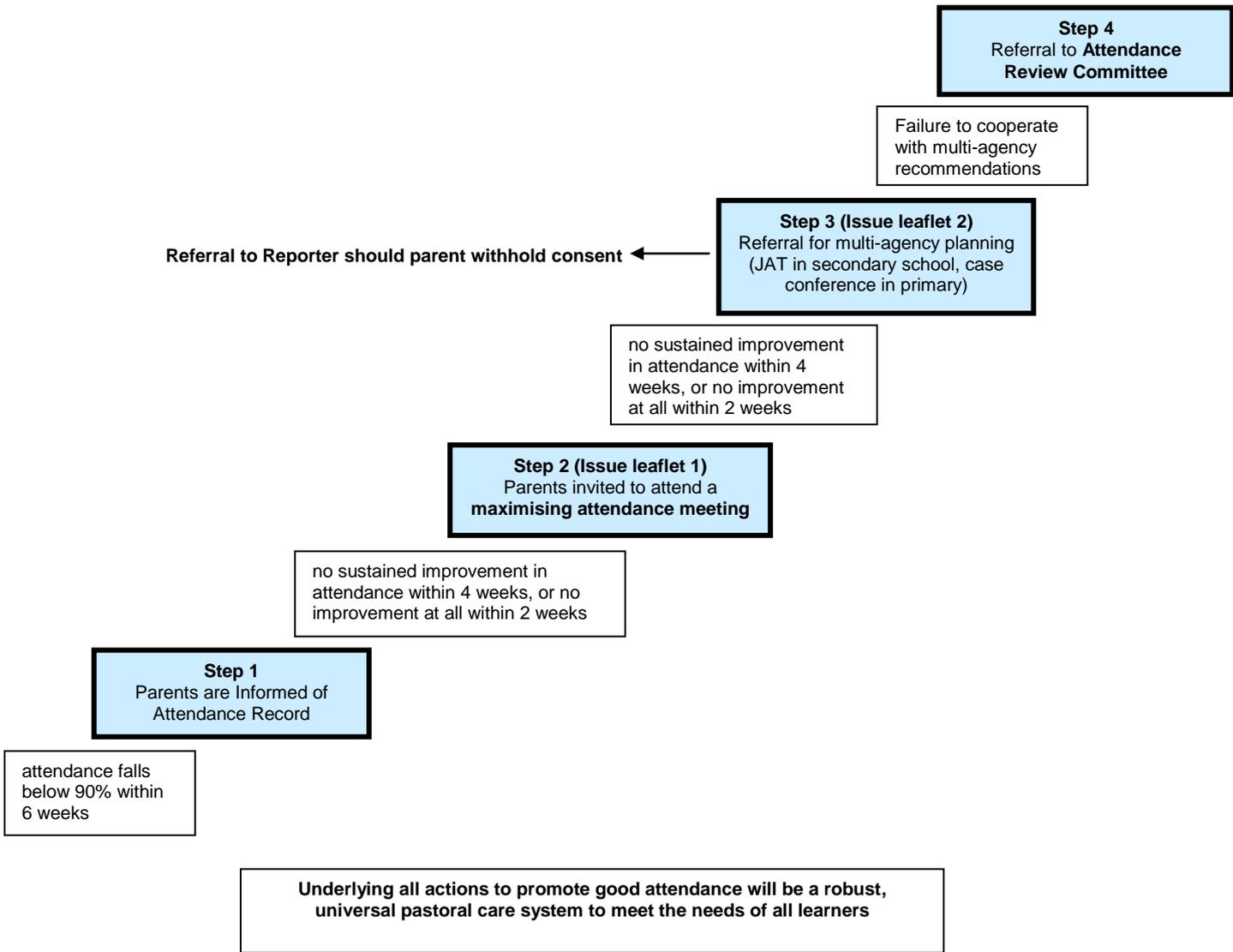
Such exemptions are applicable only in respect of learners over 14 years of age and would be granted by reason of exceptional hardship at home (but not financial hardship).

9.2 Applications by the parents or guardians require to be made through the Attendance Review Committee who, upon receipt of the application, will first consult the head teacher of the school and, where appropriate, obtain the views of the Community Medical Officer.

9.3 A recommendation will then be made by the Attendance Review Committee which is empowered to grant a temporary exemption for a term at a time. The exemption may be reviewed provided the total period would not exceed one year. The Attendance Review Committee will report to the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development annually the number of applications received for exemptions and the details of those granted.

SEEMIS attendance/absence codes 2006/07 (Please note that the final codes will be released with the amended version of Engaged and Involved: Attendance in Scottish Schools)

Code	Short Code	Description	SEED	Poss	Att	Abs	Unauth
HOL	H	Holiday					
CLO	C	Closed (e.g. election)					
INS	I	In-Service					
SNA	H	Should Not Attend					
EXL	Z	Extended leave with parental consent	02				
---	-	Present	10	*	*		
PER	P	Medical or Dental Appointment	10	*	*		
MIS	M	Missing	10	*	*		
FLD	V	Field Trip	10	*	*		
VIS	V	School Visit	10	*	*		
STY	S	Study Leave	10	*	*		
LAT	J	Late (arrives before mid-point)	11	*	*		
WRK	W	Work Placement	12	*	*		
SEP	B	Sickness with educational provision	13	*	*		
SCH	~	In school but not in class	10	*	*		
OAT	O	Other attendance out of school	10	*	*		
MED	F	Medically Certified	20	*		*	
SEL	D	Self-Certified	20	*		*	
LT2	K	Late (arrives after mid-point)	21	*		*	
PHL	E	Authorised Parental Holiday	22	*		*	
DCA	Q	Exceptional domestic circumstances (authorised)	23	*		*	
ABS	A	Other authorised Absence	24	*		*	
TBC	T	To be Confirmed	31	*			*
UPH	G	Parental Holiday	30	*			*
UNA	U	Truancy or Unexplained Absence	31	*			*
DCU	R	Exceptional domestic circumstances (unauthorised)	32	*			*
OUA	N	Other unauthorised absence	33	*			*
EXC	X (/Y)	Exclusion	40	*			*

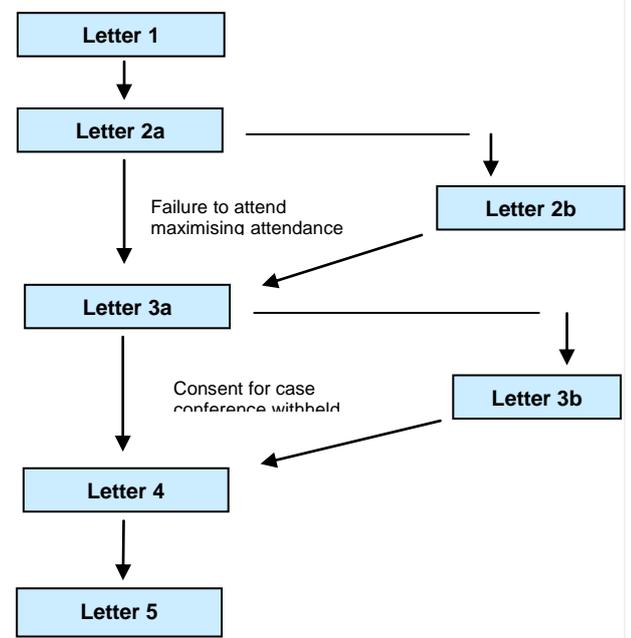


NB The sequence of letters issued at the different steps should run successively and not be restarted with the school session.

Standard letters are provided for both primary and secondary sectors.

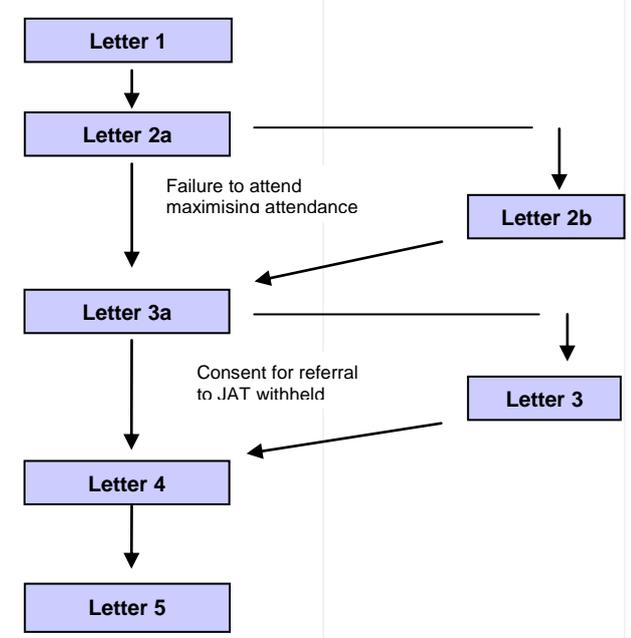
Letters for Primary Learners

- Where there is no satisfactory explanation and attendance is less than 90% in a 6 week period
- Where there is no sustained improvement 4 weeks after letter 1, or no improvement at all after 2 weeks
- Where there is no sustained improvement 4 weeks after letter 2a, or no improvement at all after 2 weeks
- Referral to Attendance Review Committee
- Letter inviting parent to attend Attendance Review Committee



Letters for Secondary Learners

- Where there is no satisfactory explanation and attendance is less than 90% in a 6 week period
- Where there is no sustained improvement 4 weeks after letter 1, or no improvement at all after 2 weeks
- Where there is no sustained improvement 4 weeks after letter 2a, or no improvement at all after 2 weeks
- Referral to Attendance Review Committee
- Letter inviting parent to attend Attendance Review Committee



Our Ref: Attendance / S / 1 /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 1 – less than 90% attendance in a 6 week period

..... (*school*) attaches great importance to good attendance and good timekeeping. We are aware that most parents/carers share this attitude and give us their support.

It is possible that you did not know of the extent of the absences and late comings recorded below. I would be obliged, therefore, if you would telephone the school to discuss the situation with me. If there are particular problems in your child's case, please bring them to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Principal Teacher of Pastoral Care

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / S / 2a /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

**Re: Step 2 – no sustained improvement 4 weeks after letter 1,
or no improvement at all after 2 weeks**

Given the close link between attendance and progress in school, your child's attendance record continues to be a cause for concern. The enclosed record falls well below what is required.

I would like to invite you to a maximising attendance meeting on:-

Time	
Date	
Place	

The aim of this meeting is to explore more fully the reasons for your child's non-attendance and to identify any strategies we can put in place to support your child's improved attendance at school.

I look forward to seeing you. Please telephone to arrange another time if the one above does not suit you.

Yours sincerely

Depute Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / S / 2b /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 2 > Step 3 – failure to attend maximising attendance meeting

My recent letter to you described my concerns about (name) attendance record. As you failed to attend the maximising attendance meeting on:-

Time	
Date	
Place	

and did not contact me to arrange a more suitable time, I must now move on to the next step to identify ways of supporting your child's improved attendance in school.

I propose to refer your child to the school's Joint Agency Team where representatives from psychological services and social work, as well as school staff, will agree a plan to help support your child in attending school.

A member of the group will contact you to seek your agreement to this referral and thereafter to arrange a meeting to discuss your child's support plan.

The purpose of the support plan is to enable your child to attend school regularly in order to learn and make the best possible preparation for their future life.

Yours sincerely

Depute Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / S / 3a /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 3 – no sustained improvement 4 weeks after letter 2a, or no improvement at all after 2 weeks

The attendance record below indicates that there has been little or no improvement in your child's attendance at school since the maximising attendance meeting. The agreed strategies put in place to support your child, have had no effect. As a result, I now propose that your child is referred to the school's Joint Agency Team (JAT) where representatives from educational psychology service and social work, as well as school staff, will agree a plan to help support your child in attending school.

Your child's guidance teacher will contact you to seek your agreement to this referral and thereafter to arrange a meeting to discuss your child's support plan.

The purpose of the support plan is to enable your child to attend school regularly and continue to make educational progress.

Yours sincerely

Depute Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / S / 3b /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 3 – consent for referral to JAT withheld

My recent letter to you described my concerns about (*name*) attendance record and my proposal to refer your child to the Joint Agency Team (JAT). As you are not in agreement with this referral, I must now refer your child to the Children's Reporter.

In due course, you may be contacted by the Reporter giving details of how ~~he~~ they intend to proceed.

Yours sincerely

Depute Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / S / 4 /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 4 – Referral to Attendance Review Committee

The previously agreed support plan has not led to sufficient improvement in your child's attendance. As a result, the Joint Agency Team (JAT) has decided to make a referral to the Attendance Review Committee. The purpose of the referral is to allow you an opportunity to explain your child's non-attendance at school before it is decided whether further action is required.

This Attendance Review Committee can take the following actions:

- Postpone the decision to report for a maximum of six weeks. Where a decision to postpone is made, the committee may, if the pupil is of school age (5-16), make an Attendance Order (Appendix 5); or
- Refer the pupil for medical examination, if appropriate; or
- Refer to the Children's Hearing System; or
- Refer to legal services

In due course you will receive a letter giving the time and date of the Attendance Review Committee Hearing. If you or your representative does not attend, the Committee will make a decision in your absence and inform you by letter of the action to be taken.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / S / 5 /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Letter inviting parent to attend Attendance Review Committee

Your child (*name*) has been referred to Inverclyde's Attendance Review Committee by the Joint Agency Team of (*school*).

You are invited to attend this meeting where you will be asked to explain your child's continued non-attendance at school. If you wish, you may bring someone to support you.

A letter will follow from the chair of the Attendance Review Committee informing you of the time, date and place of the meeting.

Failure to attend this meeting or to provide a reasonable excuse will mean that a decision is made in your absence. You will be informed, by letter, of the action to be taken.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / S / 6 /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Attendance Review Committee

You are requested to appear with your child
(*name*), before Inverclyde Council Attendance Review Committee

Time	
Date	
Place	

to explain why he/she has been absent from (*school*)
during the period from (*date*) to (*date*)
when he/she had (*no of*) attendances out of a possible (*no of*).

If not satisfied with the explanation given, the Attendance Review Committee may take one or more of the following actions:

- Refer the pupil for medical examination, if appropriate; or
- Refer to the Children's Hearing System; or
- Refer to legal services; or
- Postpone the decision to report for a maximum of six weeks

If the decision is made to postpone the decision for six weeks, an Attendance Order may be issued.

If there is no further improvement in your child's attendance the matter will be referred back to the Attendance Review Committee who may decide to, among other options, to consider prosecution.

Please find enclosed the school report which has been prepared for the committee.

Yours sincerely

Head of Service

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Enclosed:

- Attendance Review Committee leaflet
- Scottish Government Attendance leaflet

Our Ref: Attendance / P / 1 /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 1 - less than 90% attendance in a 6 week period

..... (school) attaches great importance to good attendance and good timekeeping. We are aware that most parents/carers share this attitude and give us their support.

It is possible that you did not know the extent of the absences and late comings recorded below. I would be obliged, therefore, if you would telephone the school to discuss the situation with me. If there are particular problems in your child's case, please bring them to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Depute Head Teacher (Primary)

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / P / 2a /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 2 - no sustained improvement 4 weeks after letter 1, or no improvement at all 2 weeks after letter 1

Given the close link between attendance and progress in school, your child's attendance record continues to be a cause for concern. The enclosed record falls well below what is required.

I would like to invite you to a maximising attendance meeting on:-

Time	
Date	
Place	

The aim of this meeting is to explore more fully the reasons for your child's non-attendance and to identify any strategies we can put in place to support your child's improved attendance at school.

I look forward to seeing you. Please telephone to arrange another time if the one above does not suit you.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / P / 2b /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 2 > Step 3 – failure to attend maximising attendance meeting

My recent letter to you described my concerns about (name) attendance record. As you failed to attend the maximising attendance meeting on:-

Time	
Date	
Place	

and did not contact me to arrange a more suitable time, I must now move on to the next step to identify ways of supporting your child's improved attendance in school.

I propose to call a multi-agency case conference where representatives from educational psychology service and social work, as well as school staff, will agree a plan to help support your child in attending school.

A member of the group will contact you to seek your agreement to this referral and thereafter to arrange a meeting to discuss your child's support plan.

The purpose of the support plan is to enable your child to attend school regularly and continue to learn and enjoy the life of the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / P / 3a /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 3 - no sustained improvement 4 weeks after letter 2a, or no attendance at all 2 weeks after letter 2a

The attendance record below indicates that there has been little or no improvement in your child's attendance at school since the maximising attendance meeting. The agreed strategies put in place to support your child, have had no effect. As a result, I propose to call a case conference, where representatives from psychological services and social work, as well as school staff, will agree a plan to help support your child in attending school.

A member of the group will contact you to seek your agreement to this referral and thereafter to arrange a meeting to discuss your child's support plan.

The purpose of the support plan is to enable your child to attend school regularly and continue to make educational progress.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / P / 3b /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 3 – consent for multi-agency case conference withheld

My recent letter to you described my concerns about (*name*) attendance record and my proposal to call a case conference. As you are not in agreement with this procedure, I must now refer your child to the Children's Reporter.

In due course you may be contacted by the Reporter giving details of how they intend to proceed.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / P / 4 /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Step 4 – Referral to the Attendance Review Committee

The previously agreed support plan has not led to sufficient improvement in your child's attendance. As a result, the school has decided to make a referral to the Attendance Review Committee. The purpose of the referral is to allow you an opportunity to explain your child's non-attendance at school before it is decided whether further action is required.

This Attendance Review Committee can take the following actions:

- Postpone the decision to report for a maximum of six weeks. Where a decision to postpone is made, the committee may, if the pupil is of school age (5-16), make an Attendance Order (Appendix 5); or
- Refer the pupil for medical examination, if appropriate; or
- Refer to the Children's Hearing System; or
- Refer to legal services

In due course you will receive a letter giving the time and date of the Attendance Review Committee Hearing. If you or your representative does not attend, the Committee will make a decision in your absence and inform you by letter of the action to be taken.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Enclosed:

- Attendance Review Committee leaflet
- Scottish Government Attendance leaflet

Our Ref: Attendance / P / 5 /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Your child (name) has been referred to Inverclyde's Attendance Review Committee by (school).

You are invited to attend this meeting where you will be asked to explain your child's continued non-attendance at school. If you wish, you may bring someone to support you.

A letter will follow from the chair of the Attendance Review Committee informing you of the time, date and place of the meeting.

Failure to attend this meeting or to provide a reasonable excuse will mean that a decision is made in your absence. You will be informed, by letter, of the action to be undertaken.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Our Ref: Attendance / P / 6 /

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Your Ref:

Municipal Buildings
Clyde Square
Greenock
PA15 1LY

Date:

RECORDED DELIVERYadmin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Attendance Review Committee

You are requested to appear with your child (name),
before Inverclyde Council Attendance Review Committee at :-

Time	
Date	
Place	

to explain why he/she has been absent from.....
(school) during the period from (date) to
(date) when he/she had (no of) attendances out of a possible..... (no of). Each opening
represents one half day.

If not satisfied with the explanation given, the Attendance Review Committee may take one or more of
the following actions:

- Refer the pupil for medical examination, if appropriate; or
- Refer to the Children's Hearing System; or
- Refer to legal services; or
- Postpone the decision to report for a maximum of six weeks.

If the decision is made to postpone the decision for six weeks, an Attendance Order may be issued.

If there is no further improvement in your child's attendance the matter will be referred back to the
Attendance Review Committee who may decide, among other options, to consider prosecution.

Please find enclosed the school report which has been prepared for the committee.

Yours sincerely

Head of Service

Absences to date:	
Possible attendance:	
Attendance %:	
No of times late:	

Enclosed: -

- Attendance Review Committee leaflet
- Scottish Government Attendance leaflet

1.0	The Attendance Review Committee (ARC) will meet monthly to provide an opportunity for parents to explain non-attendance that has persisted to step 4 of the procedures to improve attendance.
2.0	The Attendance Review Committee will be chaired by the appropriate member of Education Services Senior Management Team and comprise representatives of the relevant Primary and Secondary schools for the pupil concerned and with other services and partners in attendance as required.
3.0	The school will refer the parent to Inverclyde's Attendance Review Committee where all steps of Attendance Intervention have been followed and there is concern that the parent/carer is, for whatever reason, not ensuring that their child attends school regularly either by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failing to provide a reasonable excuse for the child's absence from school; or • not effectively addressing the matter of their child's absence or truancy from school
4.0	Letter 4 will be sent by the school to the parent informing them of the decision to refer to the ARC.
5.0	The ARC paperwork (Form 4a) is completed by the school.
6.0	Forms are submitted by email to admin.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk email address 2 weeks prior to the ARC meeting.
7.0	The chair of the ARC will write to the parent and school (Letter 6-recorded delivery) informing them of a time and date where they should attend the ARC. To allow the parent to prepare for the meeting, it should not be held within two days of the notification but not later than seven days after the notification.
8.0	A representative from the school and the parent/carer will be expected to attend the ARC meeting.
9.0	At the start of each case the chair of the ARC will explain the purpose of the meeting and will seek an update from school representative prior to questioning the parent.
10.0	The parent will be required to provide the ARC with the reasons for their child's absences from school and the steps they have taken to address the matter.
11.0	Having heard all the evidence the chair will request that the parent and school representative withdraw briefly. They will be recalled to hear the ARC's decision. The ARC may decide to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer the pupil for medical examination, if appropriate; or • Refer to the Children's Hearing System; or • Refer to legal services; or • Postpone the decision to report for a maximum of six weeks.
12.0	A written copy of the decision will subsequently be posted to the parent and to the school (Letter 7-recorded delivery). The school copy must be retained in the child's PPR.
13.0	If there is a recurrence of concerns about a parent/carer's response to the child's non-attendance following a decision of the ARC, the case should be re-referred to the ARC for consideration for prosecution. (Form 4b)

1.0	The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 allows for an education authority to require a parent to provide an explanation for non-attendance, if it believes there is not a reasonable excuse for non-attendance.
1.1	The education authority notifies the parent that a meeting is required. To allow the parent to prepare for the meeting, it will not be held within two days of the notification but not later than seven days after the notification.
1.2	If the parent fails to satisfy the authority that there was a reasonable excuse for the pupil's non-attendance the authority may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proceed to prosecution through the Sheriff court, or ▪ Report the circumstances to the Procurator Fiscal, or ▪ Warn the parent and postpone the decision to report for a maximum of six weeks.
1.3	Where the education authority decides to postpone the decision it may, if the pupil is of school age (5-16) make an attendance order. An attendance order requires the parent to ensure the child attends the school which he or she has been attending or another local school.
1.4	An attendance order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires the parent to ensure the attendance of the child at a school named in the order, ▪ Requires that the views of the parent on which school should be named should be considered by the authority ▪ May name a public school, or other school which is willing to receive the child. A school at which the parent will be required to pay fees will not be named within the order unless at the request of the parent ▪ Shall not name a special school unless the child has additional support needs requiring the education or special facilities normally provided at the school
2.0	Right of appeal
2.1	If parents are unhappy with the making of an attendance order, they may, within 14 days of being served with the order, appeal against it to the Sheriff. The Sheriff is able to amend, confirm or annul the order. The decision of the Sheriff is final.
3.0	Amending an attendance order
3.1	If the Attendance Order is later amended (e.g. a different school is named) the education authority should inform the parent of the proposed amendments and allow the parent fourteen days to make objections. If objections are made and not upheld by the authority, the parent can appeal to the sheriff as above.
4.0	Moving between authority areas
4.1	A child who is the subject of an attendance order may move to another authority. The new authority may notify the parent of their intention to amend the attendance order by changing the school named to a school which is attended by the child in the new authority.

4.2	Where a child is attending a school in another authority area and the education authority providing education believes that a parent should explain the non-attendance of a child at school, the authority in which the child resides would be responsible for arranging a meeting or hearing and serving notice on the parent to attend the meeting or hearing for an explanation to be provided.
5.0	Good practice
5.1	It is likely that by the time an Attendance Order is being considered, there will have been difficulties in the relationship between the school/education authority and the parent. Advocacy or mediation services may be used to ensure that the parent understands the process and has support to express views or appeal. Further disengagement or conflict during the Attendance Order process will make positive outcomes for the child an even more distant prospect.
5.2	Learners who have sufficient understanding of the process and judged to have reached the age of legal capacity (assumed to be 12) should be kept informed of the process. They may attend meetings or hearings with their parent. The child should be consulted with the parent on the named school or subsequent amendments. However, the action is clearly being taken against the parent who has legal responsibility for ensuring the child attends school and it is for the parent to appeal, not the young person (a child of legal capacity may appeal in the case of exclusion, see circular 8/03).
5.3	The Attendance Order should be regarded as a step in an ongoing process. The child may attend school following an Attendance Order, but support arrangements and long term monitoring of attendance and support needs will be required.