

Saintfield High School



Managing School Attendance

June 2023

Introduction

At Saintfield High School, we champion excellent school attendance. We believe that consistent attendance is paramount to pupils attaining personal success. By valuing and encouraging high levels of attendance, we aim to foster academic progression across all subjects, elevate educational standards, and ensure that every child has full access to our wide-ranging curriculum.

Within this school community, we understand that regular school attendance goes beyond academic achievements. It plays a vital role in the holistic development of our pupils, nurturing their emotional and mental well-being. Through consistent interaction with peers, pupils have the opportunity to form meaningful connections and feel an integral part of their form class and the wider school community.

Our school is dedicated to creating an ethos and culture that fosters good attendance. We strive to make every pupil feel valued and secure, knowing that their presence is essential to the vibrant learning environment we cultivate.

All members of staff are committed to working closely with pupils and their families to address any barriers to attendance and ensure that each student can fully benefit from the educational opportunities Saintfield High School has to offer. Together, alongside all other stakeholders within the school community, we embrace the value of consistent attendance and work tirelessly to support pupils on this journey.

Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of the school's Managing Pupil Attendance policy are as follows:

- To encourage high levels of attendance among all pupils in order to enhance educational progression;
- To promote a culture where attendance is valued and seen as a fundamental part of being a member of the Saintfield High School;
- To praise and reward pupils with excellent attendance by fostering a sense of achievement and encourage other students to strive for similar attendance records;
- To instil a sense of responsibility and ownership amongst pupils regarding their attendance;
- To provide support, advice, and guidance to pupils and parents/carers who are experiencing challenging circumstances resulting in reduced attendance at school;
- To ensure a consistent approach when dealing with attendance promoting transparency and fairness;
- To foster positive relations with external agencies who support pupils with attendance issues, such as the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

- The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance, however, the Vice-Principal, Heads of School and Form Tutors also play a critical role in monitoring and acting upon matters relating to attendance;
- The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and ensuring attendance is placed as an agenda item at each meeting;
- Teaching staff regularly monitor attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded through SIMS at the beginning of each lesson.

Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a crucial role in ensuring their child's regular school attendance. The following points outline their responsibilities in relation to school attendance:

- **Legal Duty:** Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude. This is obtained through regular school attendance
- **Reporting Absences:** If a pupil is absent from school for three consecutive days without prior notification, parents/carers should contact the Form Tutor to provide an update on the situation. Regular communication helps maintain a strong partnership between parents/carers and the school. If a child's absence is expected to be prolonged, it is important for parents/carers to inform the school so that appropriate arrangements can be made
- **Punctuality:** Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child arrives to school on time. Pupils are expected to be in school for registration. Lateness is recorded at registration and reflected in the child's attendance record. Furthermore, persistent lateness will result in an appropriate sanction
- **Communication and Support:** If a child appears reluctant to attend school, parents and carers should promptly discuss the matter with their child's Form Tutor. This allows for open communication and ensures that the pupil receives the necessary support to address any concerns or issues related to attendance

- Encouragement: Parents should encourage and support their child in maintaining good attendance throughout their school career. This involves creating a positive attitude towards education and emphasising the importance of regular attendance for academic success and holistic development
- Attendance Meetings: In cases where it is deemed necessary, parents/carers may be required to attend attendance meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns or barriers to attendance and work collaboratively towards a solution.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, parents and carers actively contribute to their child's educational journey and demonstrate their commitment to their child's academic progress and overall well-being.

The Role of the Vice Principal

The Vice-Principal plays a crucial role in managing attendance within the school. Their responsibilities include:

- **Overview of Attendance Record.** The Vice-Principal has an overview of the school's attendance record. They monitor and track attendance data, including overall attendance rates, patterns, and trends. This information helps to identify areas of concern and develop strategies for improvement;
- **Responsibility for Attendance Policy:** The Vice-Principal is responsible for the development and implementation of the attendance policy. They ensure that the policy aligns with the school's goals and guidelines while complying with relevant education regulations. The Vice-Principal may periodically review and update the policy
- **Follow-up on Referrals:** The Vice-Principal follows up on referrals from Form Tutors regarding attendance issues. They review reports and communicate with Form Tutors to gather additional information about specific cases. This allows them to address attendance concerns promptly and take appropriate action
- **Personalised Attendance Cards:** For pupils with attendance issues, the Vice-Principal or Heads of School provide a personalised attendance card. This card helps track and monitor the student's attendance over a specified duration. The responsibility of updating the card lies with the pupil, reinforcing their accountability for their attendance
- **Liase with Form Tutors and Parents/Carers:** The Vice-Principal collaborates with Form Tutors and communicates with parents or carers regarding pupil absences. They share information about attendance records, discuss concerns, and work together to address any underlying issues affecting attendance. Regular communication amongst stakeholders helps ensure that all are aware of the importance of regular attendance
- **Analysis and Reporting:** The Vice-Principal analyses attendance figures on a monthly basis. They cross-reference absences with notes in the General Office to gain a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for non-attendance. This analysis helps identify patterns, address systemic issues, and guide interventions
- **Distribution of information:** The Vice-Principal distributes monthly information on attendance to Form Tutors/Heads of School, keeping them updated on attendance trends, notable improvements, or areas of concern. This information empowers Form Tutors to support students in maintaining good attendance and intervene when necessary

- Liaison with Education Welfare Officer (EWO): The Vice-Principal collaborates with the Education Welfare Officer, including making written referrals for investigation into absences. They provide relevant information to support the EWO's efforts in addressing attendance issues. This partnership ensures a coordinated approach to attendance management and support for students
- Attendance Certificates and Statistics: The Vice-Principal organizes attendance certificates for the annual prize giving ceremony
- Reward and Celebration: The Vice-Principal organizes rewards or celebrations for students with 100% attendance. This recognition encourages and motivates students to maintain regular attendance.

Role of Form Tutors

Form Tutors play a vital role in raising awareness among pupils and parents/carers about the importance of regular attendance. Their role includes:

- Actively monitoring the attendance of their form class. By closely tracking attendance, form tutors can detect patterns of non-attendance, maintain records, and promptly address concerns. If a pupil's attendance drops to 95%, without a valid reason, a letter will be sent home.
- Form tutors engage in discussions with individual pupils about their attendance, emphasising the significance of consistent school attendance for their educational development and future prospects
- Foster proactive measures to maintain contact with parents/carers by initiating home contact after three consecutive days of absence. This can be done through telephone calls, and in such cases, the call is recorded on SIMS Communication Log. Alternatively, if contact is made via a letter, a copy is retained in the pupil's file
- Organise attendance meetings with parents/carers, ensuring that pupils are also present, particularly pupils whose attendance is between 90%-95%. Such meetings provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns or barriers to attendance, while collaboratively developing strategies to improve attendance rates
- When concerns about attendance arise, especially if a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, form tutors are responsible for referring the pupil to the Head of School/Vice-Principal. This referral ensures that appropriate actions can be taken to address the attendance issue and provide necessary support
- Nurture a positive view of good attendance among their form class. Form Tutors actively encourage and celebrate instances of good attendance, reinforcing the importance of regular school attendance and its positive impact on academic progress and personal development
- In cases where a pupil is absent for an extended period, Form Tutors coordinate with the relevant teachers to arrange for necessary work to be uploaded onto google classroom or alternatively sent home
- Form Tutors diligently follow the school's procedures for registering attendance maintaining accurate and up-to-date attendance records, which are essential for monitoring trends, identifying patterns, and addressing any concerns promptly.

The role of the Form Tutor in promoting good school attendance is multifaceted. Form Tutors act as advocates for attendance, liaising with

parents/carers, identifying issues, providing support, and working collaboratively with the school administration team.

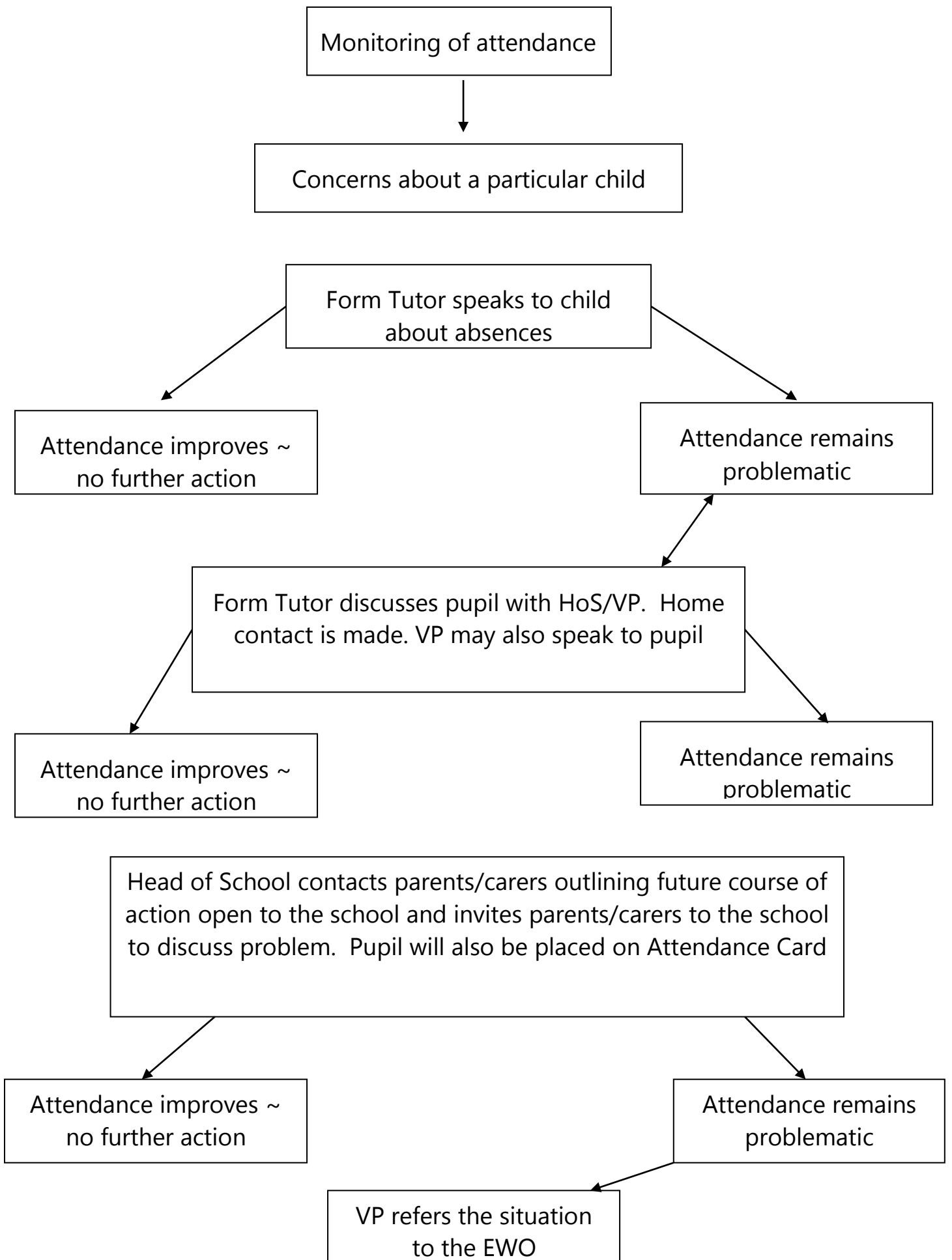
Role of Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) serves as a liaison between the school, students, parents/carers, and other relevant agencies to ensure the welfare of the students and promote regular attendance. Their support includes:

- The EWO is responsible for identifying and addressing any concerns related to a student's welfare that directly impact their education. This may include issues such as poor attendance, punctuality, disengagement, or other factors affecting the student's well-being and ability to fully participate in school activities
- Actioning attendance referrals: In partnership with school and home, the EWO will investigate the reasons behind the attendance issues and will take appropriate actions to improve attendance
- Providing advice and guidance: The EWO plays a crucial role in providing advice and guidance to the school and other agencies involved in supporting students' welfare and attendance. They assist in developing and implementing strategies, interventions, and support systems to address attendance issues effectively
- The Education Welfare Officer acts as a bridge between the school, students, and parents/carers, ensuring that any concerns impacting a student's welfare and attendance are promptly addressed. By collaborating with various stakeholders and providing guidance, the EWO contributes to creating a supportive and inclusive school environment that promotes regular attendance and enhances the educational outcomes of all students.

Strategies to Promote Good Attendance

- Monthly attendance figures and discussions: Form Tutors receive a breakdown of the attendance figures in their Form Class each month. They discuss these figures with individual pupils and if necessary contact home
- Recognition for high attendance: The school recognises the classes with the highest monthly attendance percentage, highest number of 100% monthly attendance percentage, and the class with the most improved percentage. These classes are announced during whole-school assembly, and extra break-time is given as a reward
- Attendance noticeboard: Attendance figures are displayed on the school corridor's Attendance noticeboard, making attendance data visible to the school community
- Reporting attendance and lateness: Attendance and lateness figures are included in termly reports as well as the end-of-year report they are colour coded according to the DE tier system
- Targeting Year 8 pupils: The school focuses on Year 8 pupils to establish good attendance habits early on, emphasising the importance of regular attendance
- Positive points for full attendance: Pupils earn a positive point for each month of full attendance, providing additional motivation for regular attendance
- Reporting significant improvements: Form Tutors are requested to inform the Vice-Principal on a monthly basis about any pupils whose attendance has significantly improved, a note of encouragement will be sent home to acknowledge this achievement
- Attendance certificates: The school presents attendance certificates at the annual prize-giving ceremony, recognising and rewarding pupils with exceptional attendance
- Yearly and termly attendance reward: A reward is given to the class with the highest attendance each term as well as for the entire academic year, encouraging consistent attendance throughout the year
- Discouraging term-time holidays: The school discourages holidays during term time due to their negative impact on pupils' learning.



Practical Arrangements

- At the beginning of each day, the Form Tutor will take registration on SIMS. Furthermore, each period pupil registration is completed by each Teacher for his/her class (Appendix 1)

On the Monday morning following each week of school, Form Tutors complete the absence report form for each pupil who was absent for any of the previous week;

A list of codes is given in Appendix 2. Any queries about which code to apply should be referred to the Vice-Principal

- After three days of any pupil's absence, the Form Tutor contacts home by telephone or letter and keeps a log of contacts made via the Communication Log on SIMS
- When a pupil returns to school after an absence a **written** note must be collected by the Form Tutor, even if a telephone call has been made by either teacher or parent/carer
- Notes brought in to explain absences are signed and dated by the Form Tutor and placed in the roll book for filing. Any queries or information from these notes must be reported to the appropriate members of staff
- If a pupil needs to leave school during the school day then an authorised request from the home must be made. This is usually via a written note and this note is placed in the roll book. An authorisation note (blue in colour, Appendix 3) should be filled in by the Form Tutor or Teacher marking the roll and given to the pupil so that this note can be presented to the Class Teacher when the pupil asks out of class. The pupil must then take this note to the school reception before leaving the school. Pupils must be collected and signed out by the parent or guardian or other person listed on the contact list
- Pupils returning to school after appointments should report to the General Office in order to register that they are now back on school premises
- Pupils who arrive late to school:
 - (a) If they arrive while Assembly or Form Period is in session, ie after the first bell, their names are registered in a late book giving time and reason for lateness. The pupil waits with the teacher responsible for lates before joining their classes for lessons to begin.
 - (b) If they arrive after classes have started, ie after the 8.35am bell, they go the General Office to be registered. Office staff contact parents and carers after 3 incidents of lateness. After six incidents of lateness an

afterschool detention will be given by the teacher in charge of lates or Head of School. The late book is monitored and signed by the Head of Early/Junior/Senior School on a regular basis

The late book is available in the General Office for monitoring by Form Tutors, Heads of School and any member of staff.

Appendix 1

Edit Session Marks - W/b 04/11/2019 - 13B

Save Undo Print Refresh Codes Overwrite Minutes Late Comments Vertical Links

Previous Week Next Week Select All Show only students with Unexplained Absences today

Name	Reg	Mon 04/11		Tue 05/11		Wed 06/11		Thu 07/11		Fri 08/11	
		AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
Armstrong, Terry	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Blokey, Oliver	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Carpenter, Alicia	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Cheng, Tao	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Clarkson, Annabel	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Cox, Andrew	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Diana, Victoria	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Easley, Terrence	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
El Aswar, Jared	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Ferdinand, Lois	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Foad, Deborah	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Froch, Julie-Ann	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-
Giffley, Kevin	13B	x	x	/	\	/	\	/	-	-	-

ABSENCE CODES: GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	STATISTICAL MEANING
/ \	Present / = (AM): \ = (PM)	Present
A	Artistic Endeavour	Authorised Absence
B	Bereavement	Authorised Absence
C	Suspended	Authorised Absence
D	No reason provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
E	Educated Off Site	Approved Educational Activity
F	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Other absence – not acceptable	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	Authorised Absence
J	Extended Leave with Consent	Attendance not required
L	Late (before registration closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence (temporary code only)	Unauthorised Absence
O	Other Exceptional Circumstances	Authorised Absence
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Educational Activity
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study Leave	Approved Educational Activity
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (after registration closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational Visit	Approved Educational Activity
W	Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity
X	Only Staff should attend	Attendance not required
Y	Exceptional Closure – whole school closure	Attendance not required
*	Not on roll	Attendance not required
#	Holiday for all	Attendance not required
!	No attendance required	Attendance not required
1	Alternative Education Provision - (organised by the EA)	Approved Educational Activity
2	Home/hospital tuition - (organised by the EA)	Approved Educational Activity
3	Elective Home Education	Attendance not required
4	Pupil Referral Unit	Approved Educational Activity
5	Another mainstream school (under	Approved Educational

	Entitlement Framework – EF)	Activity
6	Training Organisation (under EF)	Approved Educational Activity
7	FE College (under EF)	Approved Educational Activity
8	Intensive Support Learning Unit	Approved Educational Activity
9	CAMHS	Approved Educational Activity

AUTHORISATION NOTE FOR LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY

Pupil Name and Class _____

Reason for leaving school early: _____

Time of Departure: _____ Initials of Form Teacher: _____

Date: _____ Expected Time of Return _____
(if applicable)