



**ATTENDANCE
DEFAULT
GUIDELINES**

Primary
Secondary

FEBRUARY 2011

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BACKGROUND

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980

Failure of parents¹ to provide education for their children

Section

35 (1) Where a child of school age who has attended a public school on one or more occasions fails without reasonable excuse to attend regularly at the said school, then, unless the education authority have consented to the withdrawal of the child from the school (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld), his parent shall be guilty of an offence against this section.

- (2) For the purposes of this section, a child who has been required to discontinue for any period his attendance at a school on account of his parent's refusal or failure to comply with the rules, regulations or disciplinary requirements of the school, shall, unless the court otherwise determines, be deemed to have failed without reasonable excuse to attend regularly at the school.

Section

36 (1) It shall be the duty of the education authority if they consider that a parent has committed an offence against section 35 of this Act in respect of a child resident in their area, to serve a notice on the parent requiring him, within such time as may be specified in the notice (not being less than forty-eight hours or more than seven days from the service thereof) to appear (with or without the child) before the authority and explain the reason for the absence of the child from school. If the parent fails to satisfy the authority that he had a reasonable excuse, the authority may instruct that he be prosecuted forthwith under section 43 of this Act, or may warn the parent and postpone for a period not exceeding six weeks a decision as to whether to prosecute.

- (2) Where an education authority in the exercise of the powers conferred upon them by subsection (1) above postpone a decision as to whether to prosecute a parent, they may, if the child is still of school age, make an attendance order in respect of the child in accordance with the provisions of section 38 of this Act requiring the parent to cause the child to attend the public school which he has been attending, or, if the child has changed his residence, a school attended by children residing in the same neighbourhood as the child.
- (3) Without prejudice to the institution of proceedings for an offence against section 35 of this Act or the exercise of the power conferred by section 44(1) of this Act, where a child of school age has failed to attend a public school regularly, the education authority may refer the child to the reporter of the appropriate local authority; and in this subsection "local authority" has the same meaning as in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

¹ The term "parent" refers to parent, guardian, carer

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995

Parental responsibilities and parental rights

Non-resident parents

Section

- 1 Where a parent has parental rights and responsibilities they should be included in all matters relating to attendance unless there are legal reasons to the contrary. Both parents should be included in all correspondence and invited to all meetings.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It is expected that all schools will promote a culture which encourages pupils to attend school. Central to that aim is the development of an ethos which consolidates early and effective partnerships with parents to address jointly any emerging attendance problems. The attendance default guidelines provide a framework to assist Head Teachers in managing non-attendance issues within the context of a legal framework. Further guidance is detailed in pages 27-33 of the Support for Learners Policy² and for primary schools in HTA3594 (Appendix 10) and for secondary schools in HTA3592 (Appendix 11).
- 1.2 **Where there are concerns about a child's unexplained absence from school the procedures detailed in these HTA circulars must be followed. If the child is looked after or known to Social Work & Health, school staff should contact the child's Social Worker, if known, otherwise they should make immediate contact with the Intake Team on 01307 473751.**
- 1.3 A school should only initiate formal Attendance Default Procedures where a pupil's unexplained attendance falls below 80%, or when the parent has not advised the school their child is absent, or the school believes the reason for absence may not be legitimate. Further guidance is detailed in the Scottish Government "Included, Engaged and Involved: Attendance in Scottish Schools 2007.
- 1.4 If the school decides to initiate formal action, early discussion is encouraged with the appropriate support services as described in the Support for Learners Policy. Normally the School and Family Support Service (SFSS) would be contacted for Attendance Default but also, possibly, the Education Psychology Service (EPS) if "school refusal" is suspected. Similarly, if a school is uncertain about whether or not formal action ought to be initiated, a brief informal discussion with School and Family Support Service ought to take place.
- 1.5 Records of all communication between the school and the home, whether written or oral, should be dated and retained for possible future reference in the event of legal proceedings. For personal or telephone contacts, a brief, dated note indicating that a conversation had taken place should be retained as an aide memoire noting the reason given – if any – for the child's absence. **All staff should be informed of this requirement.**
- 1.6 There are two formal routes which the school can follow in dealing with a pupil's non-attendance, these are:
- a) Children's Hearing System
 - b) School Attendance Sub-Committee.

If either of these formal routes is being considered, discussion with the SFSS should help to determine the most appropriate course of action.

² <http://sr3county2k304/staffnet/Policies/PoliciesAtoZ/2006/SfL%20Policy.pdf>

2 REFERRAL TO THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

- 2.1 Key staff in school should monitor attendance regularly and identify periods of recurring absence including those which are self-certified by parents. Where these periods of absence become frequent and/or unreasonable the situation should be referred to medical professionals for clarification. Thereafter, if there is no known medical reason for absence, Letter **A1a** (see page 8 for sample) should be sent, further absence recorded as unauthorised and contact made with SFSS.
- 2.2 The initial step in the Attendance Default Procedure is for the school to send out an **A1** letter (see page 9 for sample). Schools should note that the principal purpose of this letter is to ensure that parents are aware of their child's absence(s). Should the issue of the letter fail to elicit an appropriate response (after 3 calendar days), then move on to send Letter **A2** (see page 10 for sample). **This is a formal process which must be followed if major difficulties with non-attendance are to be addressed.**
- 2.3 If the **A2** letter fails to get a response from parents after 3 days the school should contact the SFSS and issue the appropriate version of Letter **A3** (see page 11 for sample).
- 2.4 If no response to Letter **A3** is received within 3 days the Head Teacher in collaboration with SFSS should refer to the staged intervention process by convening a Stage 2 case conference or referring the matter to Social Work & Health or to another agency.
- 2.5 If parental contact fails to resolve the non-attendance or, if parental contact resolves the non-attendance for a short period only, a school should maintain communications by sending out another Letter **A3**.

The school can then await the developments of the School and Family Support Service's contact with the parents and any further action would be determined by the findings and recommendations of the SFSS Worker. It is important to keep in mind that these findings may lead to complex issues of a personal and domestic nature surrounding the attendance problem, and that these issues may also involve protracted contacts with other individuals and agencies. Therefore, **no formal action will be taken during this period** until both the school and the Support Worker have met to fully discuss and consider any possible strategy or action. This period of time can be extended provided the school and the School and Family Support Service are in agreement that there are areas which need further exploration or indications that some untried action could possibly resolve the attendance difficulty.

- 2.6 However, if the problem remains unresolved, a Stage 3 Case Conference should be convened (see page 12 sample Letter **A4**).

In the event of the problem being resolved for a short period only, it is not necessary to return to the beginning of the procedure. A Case Conference Review should be convened. Similarly if, at any stage parents indicate a wish to educate their child at home, there is no need to abandon this procedure; in

such circumstances schools should follow existing guidance on Education at Home³, including contact with SFSS.

2.6 Should the decision be reached that the problem would be best served by a referral to the School Attendance Sub-Committee, then the school should:

- ◆ Consult with School and Family Support Service
- ◆ Send letter **A5** to parents, (see page 13 for sample)
- ◆ Send letter **A6** (see page 14 for sample) with Report **A7 – signed and dated by the Head Teacher** (see page 15 for sample) to the Principal Officer, School and Family Support Service.

Include:

- relevant correspondence between the parents and the school
- letters covering absence and notes of telephone calls
- A Certificate of Attendance (A9) signed and dated by the Head Teacher
- SEEMIS print-out (see end of Appendix 7)

It is essential that the attendance data corresponds across all documents.

When a date has been set for the School Attendance Sub-Committee the school must send an appropriate member of staff to present the school's position at that meeting. **An updated SEEMIS print-out of the pupil's attendance report must be submitted at the meeting.** A member of the School and Family Support Service will also be present at the School Attendance Sub-Committee Meeting, and will submit a report relating to SFSS involvement with the family. Where a child is known to the Social Work and Health Department, contact should be made with the child's social worker. The social worker should be invited to all attendance related meetings.

2.7 **Case Recalled**

A case will be recalled where there has been a continuance for six weeks following the Attendance Sub-Committee meeting. In these circumstances the school should:

- ◆ Update school report **A7 – signed and dated by the Head Teacher.**
- ◆ Include relevant correspondence between the parents and the school, an updated Certificate of Attendance (A9) – **signed and dated by the Head Teacher** and SEEMIS printouts.

It is essential that the attendance data corresponds across all documents.

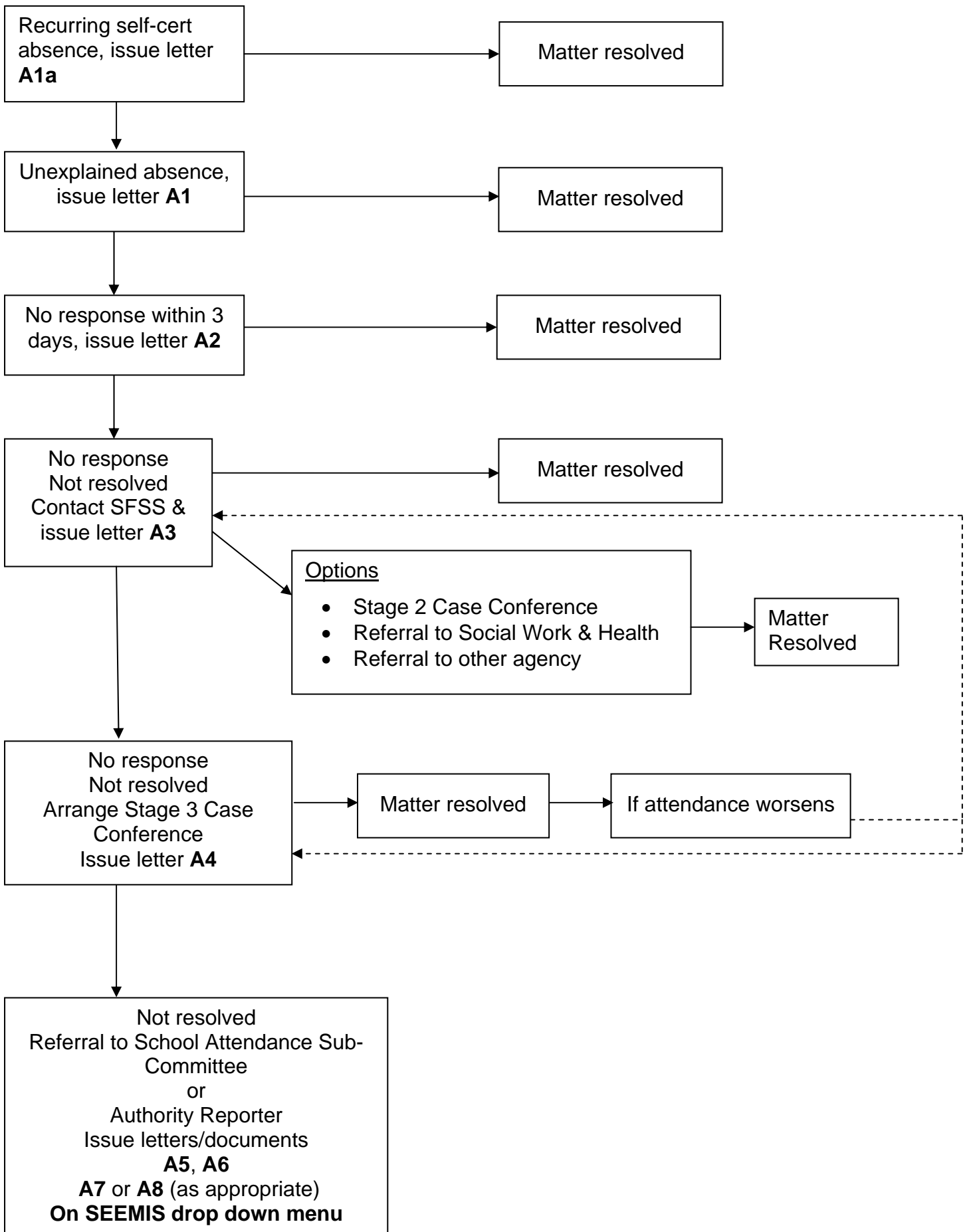
³ <http://archive.angus.gov.uk/ccmeetings/reports-committee2005/education/604.pdf>

3 REFERRAL TO THE AUTHORITY REPORTER

If it is decided that the attendance problem would best be addressed by referring the matter to the Authority Reporter, then the following documentation must be submitted by the school.

Send report **A8** (see page 20 for sample).

ATTENDANCE DEFAULT PROCEDURAL FLOWCHART



Sample A1a

Use School Headed Paper

Ref:

Date:

Name

Address

Dear

I am writing to advise you that _____ has had _____ days absence which the school has recorded as self certified. This period of absence is now causing the school concern and is having an impact on _____'s education. Whilst I sympathise, unfortunately, I cannot accept further parental sick notes. As from today, any further absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless written confirmation is received from a medical professional. This could lead to the school commencing Attendance Default Procedures.

Please contact me to discuss and confirm the reason for the absence.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher/Principal Teacher

Sample A1

Use School Headed Paper

Ref:

Date:

Name
Address

Dear

I am writing to advise you that was absent from school on the following dates

As yet no reasons for these absences have been received.

It is important that the school receives explanations of all pupil absences, and I would be grateful if you could complete the tear-off slip below and return it to me as soon as possible. Alternatively, if you wish to meet with me to discuss the matter, please telephone to arrange an appointment. The times at which I am available are noted below:

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher/Principal Teacher



Name of Child	D.O.B.	Class
Dates of absence		
Reason		
.....		
.....		
Date		
Signature of Parent/Carer		
Please return to		

Sample A2

Use School Headed Paper

Ref:

Date:

Name
Address

Dear

I have previously written to you seeking an explanation for
absences on I note that I have not as yet received an
explanation for these absences.

I would ask that you call to see me so that we may discuss the situation. Times at
which I am available are given below. If these times are inconvenient, please
contact the school to arrange an appointment at a mutually convenient date and
time.

If I do not hear from you within the next three days, I shall ask a member of the
School and Family Support Service to make contact with you to offer any help or
advice which may be required.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher/Principal Teacher

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Sample A3

Use School Headed Paper

Ref:

Date:

Name
Address

Dear

*Since our contact on/I refer to my previous letters of I have continued to be concerned about’s absences from school and I have therefore asked a member of the School and Family Support Service to visit you to offer any necessary help or advice.

I would also ask that you make an appointment to see me in school as soon as possible to discuss this matter. The times at which I am available are given below.

If these times are inconvenient, please contact the school to arrange an appointment at a mutually convenient date and time.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher/Principal Teacher

- Monday
- Tuesday.....
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

* Delete as appropriate

Sample A4

Use School Headed Paper

Ref:

Date:

Name
Address

Dear

I refer to previous correspondence and I would like to invite you to a meeting to find a way to resolve.....'s attendance difficulties.

I must advise you that failure by a parent to secure the attendance of his or her child at school may constitute a criminal offence. Accordingly, it is in the interests of both you and your child to attend the meeting in school.

You should be aware that the outcome of the meeting may be to make a referral to The Authority Reporter and/or the Local Authority's school Attendance Sub-Committee in respect of your 's absence from school.

The date and time of meeting:

Please bring to the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher/Principal Teacher

Sample A5

Use School Headed Paper

Ref:

Date:

Name
Address

Dear

I refer to previous correspondence and to the meeting held on
As we have not been able to resolve’s attendance
difficulties I have no option but to refer this matter to the Council’s Attendance Sub-
Committee.

The Council’s Head of Law and Administration will advise you in due course of the
arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher/Principal Teacher

Sample A6

Use School Headed Paper

Ref:

Date:

For the attention of:
Principal Officer
School and Family Support Service
Education Department
Montrose Road Centre
Montrose Road
Forfar
DD8 2HT

Dear

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DEFAULT

I have exhausted all prescribed means of ensuring regular attendance at school of the under-noted pupil. I would therefore ask you to pass this case to the Head of Law and Administration for submission to the School Attendance Sub-Committee of the Education Committee.

I enclose all the relevant documentation together with correspondence and replies in respect of:

Pupil's name

Date of Birth

Address

.....
.....

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher/Principal Teacher

Enc

Angus Council Education Department

School Report for use by School Attendance Sub-Committee (A7)

(A7)

Section A - Identification of the young person

Name		Reporter's Ref No	
Address		School	
		Type of Course	
		Year Group/Stage	
Date of Birth			

Section B - How the young person is getting on

Attendance:

	Previous Session	Current Session
From (date)		
To (date)		
All Absences & Exclusions (half days)		
Unauthorised Absences (half days)		
Occasions Late (half days)		
Exclusions (half days)		
No. Exclusions		
Possible Attendance (half days)		
Attendance Rate (%)		

B1 - Describe the young person's attendance pattern -

B2 - Describe the young person's health with reference to any disability if applicable -

B3a - 5-14 Current Achievements as appropriate.

Reading Writing Mathematics

B3 - Describe the young person's educational potential and actual achievement -

B4 - Describe the young person's relationships in school (with pupils/staff in/out of the classroom) -

B5 - Describe the young person's interests/hobbies/extra curricular activities (if known) -

B6 - Medical Information as supplied by Parent / Carer

Condition(s) Noted:

Section C - Contacts made with specialist agencies and parents

C1 - Please indicate any referral of the young person to School & Family Support Service, Educational Psychology Service, School Medical Officer, or other specialist agency -

C2 - Describe any details of contact between the young person's home and the School.

C3 - Use this section to record any additional information (eg exclusions/matters of special note) or to amplify any of your previous responses.

Section D - Historical Summary

D1 - Please summarise the Education Department's involvement with the young person and the family including comments relating to attendance record, schools attended, involvement with support services, educational progress/attainments, and relationships with peers/adults parents/teachers

D2 - Have you discussed this report with the pupil? Yes [] No [] If No, please Comment

D3 - Pupil's Views and comments

Report compiled by -

Name _____

Title _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Notes -

A copy of this report will be provided to the parents of the young person.

The contents of this report are subject to the Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003.

The compiler of this report may be invited to attend any meeting which is arranged and may also, in certain circumstances, be required to give evidence in Court.

Legend

- Present	[Bus Late	\ School Closure for bad weather
] Transport Failure	~ In school but not in class	A Other Authorised Absence
B Sickness with educational provision	C Closed (e.g. election)	D Self Certified
E Authorised Parental Holiday	F Medically Certified	G Parental Holiday
H Holiday	H Should Not Attend	I In-Service
J Late (arrives before mid-opening)	K Late (arrives after mid-opening)	M Missing
N Other unauthorised absence	O Other attendance out of school	P Medical or Dental Appointment
Q Exceptional domestic circ. (authorised)	R Exceptional domestic circumstances	S Study Leave
T To be Confirmed	U Truancy or Unexplained Absence	V School Visit
V Field Trip	W Work Experience	X Exclusion
Z Extended leave with parental consent		

Date	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Unath. absence	Auth. absence	Exclusions
28/Jul/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
04/Aug/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
11/Aug/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
18/Aug/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
25/Aug/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
01/Sep/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
08/Sep/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
15/Sep/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
22/Sep/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
29/Sep/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
06/Oct/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
13/Oct/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
20/Oct/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
27/Oct/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
03/Nov/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
10/Nov/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
17/Nov/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0
24/Nov/08	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0

Certificate of Attendance (A9)

(Issued in terms of S.86 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980)



I the undersigned, being the Head Teacher of the school at which the undernoted pupil is enrolled, hereby certify that the information given below and in the Appendices attached hereto is a full and accurate record of the child's attendance at the school, issued in accordance with S.86 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

1.	Full name of pupil: _____		
2.	Address: _____	Date of Birth: _____	

3.	Full name(s) and address(es) of parent(s)/guardian(s):		

4.	School: _____		
5.	Attendance Information:	Last Session:	Current Session:
	(half days)	From: _____ To: _____	From: _____ To: _____
	Possible Attendance:	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
	Actual Attendance:	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
	Number of Absences:	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
	Number of absences for which parental reasons given; and		
	(a) Accepted as reasonable excuse(s):	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
	(b) Not accepted as reasonable excuse(s):	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
	Number of absences for which no reason given:	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
	Number of absences caused by exclusion:	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
	Signature of Head Teacher: _____		
	Name <i>(please print)</i> : _____		
	School: _____		
	Date: _____		

This document may be produced in evidence in relation to legal proceedings in court



School Report for use by Reporter/Hearing (A8)

Section A – Identification of the young person

Name		Reporter's Ref No	
Address		School	
		Type of Course	
		Year Group/Stage	
Date of Birth			

Section B – How the young person is getting on

Attendance:

	Previous Session	Current Session
From (date)		
To (date)		
Total Absences (half days)		
Unauthorised Absences (half days)		
Occasions Late (half days)		
Exclusions (half days)		
No. Exclusions		
Possible Attendance (half days)		
Attendance Rate (%)		

B1 – Describe the young person's attendance pattern –

B2 - Describe the young person's health with reference to any disability if applicable –

B3a – 5-14 Current Achievements as appropriate.

	Reading	<input type="text"/>		Writing	<input type="text"/>		Mathematics	<input type="text"/>	
--	---------	----------------------	--	---------	----------------------	--	-------------	----------------------	--

B3 – Describe the young person’s educational potential and actual achievement –

B4 – Describe the young person’s relationships in school (with pupils/staff in/out of the classroom) –

B5 – Describe the young person’s interests/hobbies/extra curricular activities (if known) –

B6 – Medical Information as supplied by Parent / Carer

Condition(s) Noted:

Section C – Contacts made with specialist agencies and parents

C1 - Please indicate any referral of the young person to School & Family Support Service, Educational Psychology Service, School Medical Officer, or other specialist agency –

C2 - Describe any details of contact between the young person’s home and the school –

C3 - Use this section to record any additional information (e.g. exclusions/matters of special note) or to amplify any of your previous responses.

Section D - Historical Summary

D1 – Please summarise the Education Department’s involvement with the young person and the family including comments relating to attendance record, schools attended, involvement with support services, educational progress/attainments, and relationships with peers/adults/parents/teachers

D2 – Have you discussed this report with the pupil ? Yes No If No, please comment

D3 – Pupil’s views and comments

Report compiled by –

Name				Title		
Signed				Date		
		Head Teacher				

Notes -

A copy of this report will be provided to the parents of the young person.

The contents of this report are subject to the Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003.

The compiler of this report may be invited to attend any meeting which is arranged and may also, in certain circumstances, be required to give evidence in Court.

Guidance attendance report for -

Attendance

Legend

- Present	[Bus Late	\ School Closure for bad weather
] Transport Failure	~ In school but not in class	A Other Authorised Absence
B Sickness with educational provision	C Closed (e.g. election)	D Self Certified
E Authorised Parental Holiday	F Medically Certified	G Parental Holiday
H Holiday	H Should Not Attend	I In-Service
J Late (arrives before mid-opening)	K Late (arrives after mid-opening)	M Missing
N Other unauthorised absence	O Other attendance out of school	P Medical or Dental Appointment
Q Exceptional domestic circ. (authorised)	R Exceptional domestic circumstances	S Study Leave
T To be Confirmed	U Truancy or Unexplained Absence	V School Visit
V Field Trip	W Work Experience	X Exclusion
Z Extended leave with parental consent		

Date	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Total
	Unath.	Absence				
30/Jul/07						0
06/Aug/07	HH	HH				0
13/Aug/07	II	--				0
20/Aug/07	--	--				0
27/Aug/07	--	--				0
03/Sep/07	--	--				0
10/Sep/07	--	--				0
17/Sep/07	--	--				0
24/Sep/07	--	--				0
01/Oct/07	HH	HH				0
08/Oct/07	HH	HH				0
15/Oct/07	--	--				0
22/Oct/07	--	--				0
29/Oct/07	--	--				0
05/Nov/07	--	--				0
12/Nov/07	--	--				0
19/Nov/07	--	--				0
26/Nov/07	--	--				0
03/Dec/07	II	II				0
10/Dec/07	--	--				0
17/Dec/07	--	--				0
24/Dec/07	HH	HH				0
31/Dec/07	HH	HH				0
07/Jan/08	--	--				0
14/Jan/08	--	--				0
21/Jan/08	--	--				0
28/Jan/08	--	--				0
04/Feb/08	--	--				0
11/Feb/08	--	--				0
18/Feb/08	HH	--				0
25/Feb/08	--	--				0
03/Mar/08	--	--				0
10/Mar/08	--	--				0
17/Mar/08	--	--				0
24/Mar/08	--	--				0
31/Mar/08	HH	HH				0
07/Apr/08	HH	HH				0
14/Apr/08	--	--				0

“EXEMPT
(not for publication by virtue of Paragraph(s) 3 and 5
of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the 1973 Act)”

[new case]

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SUB-COMMITTEE – [DATE]

[CASE NO/YEAR] – [CHILD'S NAME]

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This Report appries the Sub-Committee of the school attendance record for the child, [name] and seeks a decision from the Sub-Committee under Section 36 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub-Committee is asked, in terms of Section 36 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, to hear the [parent/parents] of [child's name], and thereafter proceed as follows:-

- (i) to confirm by reference to the Certificate of Attendance that the child [name] has failed to attend school regularly;
- (ii) to confirm that there is no reasonable excuse for such failure; and
- (iii) (subject to (i) and (ii) above), to determine the most appropriate course of action in terms of the powers set out in Section 4 below.

2. FAMILY AND SCHOOL DETAILS

Pupil: [Name], [Address] [date of birth]

Parent(s) [Name], [Address] [date of birth]

School: [Name], [Address], [date of admission], current year/class

3. BACKGROUND

[This section should include relevant details of the case. It should:

- Narrate steps taken by both school and School and Family Support Service (and any others) to address the non-attendance problem, including case meetings, in chronological order. Attach any relevant detailed papers as appendices (eg A7 Report by school). Also address existence of any other significant steps taken in respect of the child – eg referral to the Children’s Reporter, making of supervision requirement (including terms of such) by Children’s Hearing.
- Summarise attendance record and append Certificate of Attendance and Seemis System printout. Include number of days attended out of possible, percentage improving or worsening pattern.

- Address the department’s view of the absence of a reasonable excuse (by way of example only: “the first excuse is not applicable for this child as he lives within walking distance of Grange Primary School, the school at which he is enrolled. A small proportion (2%) of his non-attendance has been reported to the school on the grounds of sickness. As such, sickness has not been a material factor in the child’s overall non-attendance. There are no other circumstances known to the department which would amount to a reasonable excuse for the child’s non-attendance”.]

4. LEGAL POWERS

If a child has not attended school regularly, then the parent is required to appear before the Sub-Committee to explain the reason for the absence. If the parent fails to satisfy the Sub-Committee that there was a reasonable excuse, then the Sub-Committee has three options:

- to instruct the Council prosecute the parent
- to report the circumstances to the Procurator Fiscal
- to warn the parent and postpone a decision on court action for a maximum of 6 weeks, with or without making an attendance order

The Sub-Committee may also remit the child’s case to the Children’s Reporter.

The question of regular attendance is a matter of fact and can be determined by reference to the Certificate of Attendance (and Seemis System printout) which are annexed to this Report. If the parent is present, he/she may challenge these facts.

The definition of a “reasonable excuse”, is defined in Section 42 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. In summary, a reasonable excuse exists if:

- there is no school available to the child within walking distance of his home and suitable school transport arrangements have not been made by the Council (except where that circumstance has been allowed by a successful placing request); or
- the child has been prevented from attending school by sickness; or
- there are other circumstances (possibly including those of the parents) affording a reasonable excuse.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The action proposed in this Report is in support of [child's name] Human Right to receive education in accordance with Article 2 of the First Protocol to the Convention. It is in accordance with the legislation outlined in the Report and it is also proportionate given the importance of the aim of the action, namely, to secure [child's name] regular attendance at school.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An equalities assessment is not required.

7. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within Angus Single Outcome Agreement:

Young people in Angus maximize their potential through learning opportunities.
(National Outcome 3)

Children and young people in Angus will have access to positive learning environments and opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem to the fullest potential.
(National Outcome 4)

Children and young people in Angus and their carers will have access to high quality services and be assisted to overcome the social; educational; physical environmental; and economic barriers that create inequality.
(National Outcome 7)

Children and young people in Angus will be involved in decisions that affect them, have their voices heard and be encouraged to play an active and responsible role in their communities.
(National Outcome 11)

8. CONSULTATION

The Head of Law and Administration has been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

9. CONCLUSION

[Summarise the above and make provisional recommendation, subject to the Sub-Committee hearing the parents' views.]

NEIL LOGUE
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing this Report.

E-MAIL

JAA/JN/AM/9672 HTA3594

28 November 2006

**EDUCATION**

Director Jim Anderson

County Buildings
Market Street
Forfar
DD8 3WE

DX 530678 Forfar

Tel: (01307) 461460

All Primary Head Teachers

Dear Colleague

PUPIL ABSENCES: REVISED MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

In the light of recent discussions with Head Teachers and staff in the School and Family Support Service the advice contained in HTA3443 (12 May 2006) has been revised to provide greater clarity in respect of home/school contact arrangements where a pupil is absent from school and the parents have not been in touch with the school to explain the reason for absence.

It remains crucially important to safeguard the welfare of all pupils and, whilst developing effective and consistent working practices by school and centrally-based staff, parental responsibilities in this area must be emphasised. Head Teachers are, therefore, asked to issue the information below to parents via a newsletter and, thereafter, to incorporate the text as a standard entry in all future publications of their school's information handbook.

In recent years increasing attention has been paid to the issue of child protection and safety due to reported occasions where children have been seriously or fatally injured because of the inappropriate or criminal behaviour of adults.

Whilst it should be noted that there has been no such instance occurring within Angus it is important that staff and parents do not become complacent and continue to work together to develop and improve upon existing arrangements for monitoring the care and welfare of all children and young people.

With that specific aim in mind, the Education Authority has asked all schools to implement a series of standard procedures to monitor pupil attendance and absence from school and to invite the co-operation of parents in making these changes work. All parents are asked to assist the staff in the schools which their children attend in the manner described below:

2.

28 November 2006

All Primary Head Teachers

Attendance

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. They are also responsible for ensuring the safety of their children on their journeys to and from school.

Regular and punctual attendance is linked closely to achievement and school staff wish to work with parents to ensure that children can reach their full potential. The school is required by law to maintain an accurate record of the attendance and absence of each pupil and parents are requested to assist in this process by keeping the school informed if their child is to be absent for any reason.

It is important to note that if a child does not arrive at school and there is no reasonable explanation provided for his/her absence then members of staff will be required to ascertain the whereabouts and safety of the individual child. In order to avoid causing unnecessary concern for staff and parents the importance of good communication between home and school cannot be over-emphasised.

Parents are asked to assist school staff in the manner detailed below:

- if your child is unable to attend school through illness please telephone the school between 9.00 and 9.45 am on the first day of his/her absence
- if you would find it more convenient to send in a note via your child's brother or sister or a friend that would also be acceptable
- if your child becomes unwell at lunchtime and is unable to return to school in the afternoon please telephone the school before the beginning of the afternoon session to inform a member of staff
- when you contact the school it would be helpful if an indication could be given as to the child's expected length of absence from school
- on your child's return to school a note should be provided explaining the reason for absence and confirming the periods of absence from the school. The note should be signed and dated

3.

28 November 2006

All Primary Head Teachers

Planned Absence

- parents are encouraged not to arrange family holidays during term time but it is realised that, in exceptional circumstances, this is unavoidable. In such cases, parents are asked to provide the Head Teacher with information of the dates when the child is to be absent from the school in good time
- except in cases of emergency, planned appointments for children to attend the dentist or doctor should be made outwith the school day

Contact Details

- parents are asked to ensure that telephone contact numbers – home, work and emergency contact(s) are kept up-to-date and are numbers at which a response can be obtained in all normal circumstances.

Where a child is absent from school, and no explanation has been provided by the parents or a sibling by 9.45 am, a member of staff from the school should take steps to contact the parent/carer on that day via one of the telephone numbers provided. If this proves to be unsuccessful then the emergency contact should be tried. Where it is not possible to reach the parent/carer or emergency contact – **and the Head Teacher has concerns about the situation** – the Head Teacher or senior colleague should liaise with the school's designated School and Family Support Service Worker as soon as possible to jointly consider and agree the appropriate response eg to take no immediate action but keep the position under review, send a letter to the parent, carry out a home visit or, in exceptional cases, make a referral to the Police.

If the pupil is a looked after child contact should be made with the child's Social Worker without delay. If the child's Social Worker is not available contact must be made with the *Intake Team – telephone 01307 473751.

If a parent advises you that his/her child will be absent from school for a fixed period of time the information should be noted and, if the child does not reappear on the day indicated by the parent, the school should take the initiative by contacting the home and enquiring about the child's health and his/her likely date of return.

4.

28 November 2006

All Primary Head Teachers

If the parent is unable to give an indication as to the likely duration of the period of absence during the initial contact **the school should telephone the parent on the child's third day of absence to enquire as to his/her health and likely return date.**

Where children return to school following a period of absence and no note is received from the parent then letter A1 from the Attendance Default Guidelines should be issued. If no reply is received to that letter then letter A2 from the Guidelines should be issued as a follow-up. If neither of these results lead to a response the matter should be referred to the School and Family Support Service for action.

The above guidance has been designed to provide schools with clear advice but, if you require any further information please contact Gillian Strachan, Principal Officer, School and Family Support Service (01307 473969). This process will be kept under review and may be amended in the light of experience.

Yours sincerely

Jim Anderson
Director of Education

***Circular updated 15 October 2007**



EMAIL

JAA/CTC/ZD/HTA3592

24 November 2006

All Secondary Head Teachers**EDUCATION**

Director Jim Anderson

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Dear Colleague

PUPIL ABSENCES: REVISED MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

I refer to discussions at previous Head Teacher Meetings regarding the above subject and advice offered to schools by the Scottish Executive in "It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright" and "Safe and Well". The draft leaflet for parents has now been amended to take account of comments made and I attach a revised version. It should be noted the leaflet has also been shared with Secondary School ICT Co-ordinators to ensure it is consistent with operational requirements associated with Attendance Alert (formerly Truancy Call). In this regard advice has also been issued to schools to ensure Attendance Alert operates as effectively as possible. The leaflet itself should be issued to parents in December 2006 or January 2007 and I would ask that you incorporate the information contained therein as a standard entry in all future publications of the school's handbook.

Where a child is absent from school, and no explanation has been provided by the parents or a sibling by 10.15am, a member of staff from the school should take steps to contact the parent/carer on that day via one of the telephone numbers provided. If this proves to be unsuccessful then the emergency contact should be tried. Where it is not possible to reach the parent/carer or emergency contact – **and the Head Teacher has concerns about the situation** – the Head Teacher or senior colleague should liaise with the school's designated School and Family Support Service Worker as soon as possible to jointly consider and agree the appropriate response eg to take no immediate action but keep the position under review, send a letter to the parents, carry out a home visit or, in exceptional cases, make a referral to the Police.

If the pupil is a looked after child contact should be made with the child's Social Worker without delay. If the child's Social Worker is not available contact must be made with the *Intake Team – telephone 01307 473751.

2

24 November 2006

All Secondary Head Teachers

If a parent advises you that his/her child will be absent from school for a fixed period of time the information should be noted and, if the child does not reappear on the day indicated by the parent, the school should take the initiative by contacting the home and enquiring about the child's health and his/her likely date of return.

If the parent is unable to give an indication as to the likely duration of the period of absence during the initial contact **the school should telephone the parent on the child's third day of absence to enquire as to his/her health and likely return date.**

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The above guidance has been designed to provide schools with clear advice but, if you require any further information please contact Gillian Strachan, Principal Officer, School & Family Support Service (01307 473969). Any queries regarding **Attendance Alert** should in the first instance be directed to Alan Fyffe, ICT Manager (01307 473616). This process will be kept under review and may be amended in the light of experience.

Yours sincerely

Jim Anderson
Director of Education

***Circular updated 15 October 2007**