



Parenting Contract Notes

A Parenting Contract is an opportunity for schools to build a relationship with parents and discuss issues behind low attendance working together to provide solutions and improve attendance. The process is voluntary and it is important to tell parents that it isn't a legally binding contract and the act of signing it at the end is an opportunity for everyone at the meeting to show that they are in agreement that this was what was discussed in the meeting.

It is also important to stress at the end of the meeting that schools expects the key actions to be followed and that if the attendance target is not met by the 6 week review further action would be sought.

For Parents

Punctuality

Remind parent of time school starts, discuss preparation for school e.g. pack bag night before, alarm clocks – taking responsibility for getting self up, making time for breakfast, being aware of child's timetable and helping ensure PE kit etc are ready.

Discuss implications of how lateness affects pupil being prepared for the day, disruption to class as a whole and how 5 mins late a day adds up to 3.4 days a year (poster)

Absence

Remind parent that they need to inform the school in advance (following your protocol) of any absence and any illness school should be contacted by (normally close of registration) with details of illness and expected length of time off.

Share registration cert with parent and discuss periods of absence and reasons behind it. If absence is mainly illness discuss when absence through illness is appropriate (leaflet) and comment on any patterns detected (ie if pupil is off every Monday and Friday).

If absence is more than 10% ask parents to sign the GP permission letter for you to contact their doctor and explain that any future absence (if you feel that the level is unacceptable and there appears to be no real reason for it) will be unauthorised unless evidence is provided of appointments e.g. text, letter or email/ a signed slip from the health care setting etc. A "fit to work/study note" will only be issued for extended health absence. Please note that any hospital inpatient episodes can be checked with the Hospital School.

The parenting contract includes a template for use by families relating to future attendance. It remains the families' responsibility to ensure this is completed at the time of the appointment. Please note any retrospective requests may incur a charge from the GP practice.

Support needed

To discuss, using information already gleaned from the key points spoken about with parents in the meeting, whether additional support through various agencies would be appropriate (e.g HSLW, LCSS (Locality Community Support Service, parenting support etc). Identify any tools kits that can be used to highlight need.

Directions

Make sure that all expectations are clearly spelled out similar to the examples on the parenting contract as these are the start of evidence showing the support and issues discussed by schools should parents be later prosecuted.

For Pupils

If pupil attends meeting (which is preferable to get the whole picture) discuss with them taking more responsibility, where appropriate, for getting to school on time every day with correct equipment.

Discuss what they should do if they need support in school – who to see

Discuss uniform expectations if appropriate.

Discuss whether they need additional support e.g. school work, outside activities, mentors – whatever you feel would best support that particular pupil.

For School

Within this section any issues that parent or pupil raises that need actions from you – e.g. referral to another service, tailoring timetable, discussing additional needs/requests with teachers etc would be entered here.

Other agencies

If an additional agency is already involved for example HSLW or other professional they should be in attendance of the meeting and appropriate actions will be entered here. If you are going to refer to a particular service on behalf of the family enter the key issues and actions you would want the agency to do with the family. A copy of the parenting contract can then be passed on when the referral is made to that agency.

Setting targets

An achievable target attendance should be entered at the top of the first page. If attendance is particularly low to start with setting a target for the pupil to achieve over the four week review period of the PCM to be raised again, if met, at a review meeting is a good way forward. Schools should internally review attendance at 3 weeks or sooner and if the target is clearly not going to be met move to the next stage immediately rather than waiting for the review date. If other agencies were referred to, invite them to the review meeting with parents.

Finally

Read through the key points and actions, make a date for review meeting and ask parent and pupil to sign to say that they agree what has been written is an accurate recording of the meeting.