



Local Authority Final Attendance Panel

Parent Information Guide

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive suitable education. Failure to ensure regular attendance at the school at which he/she is a registered pupil is a criminal offence under the Education Act 1996.

What is a Final Attendance Panel?

A Local Authority Final Attendance Panel (LA FAP) is convened when attendance has not improved despite support offered by the school. The LA FAP is chaired by the local authority attendance service manager and is the final meeting offered to parents before a decision is made whether to refer the case to legal services for consideration of prosecution.

Who should attend the meeting?

It is important parents attend the meeting to explain the reasons why their child's school attendance is below expectations and to share any information that may be relevant to the situation. Where parents have the support of other services, such as early help or social care, they are welcome to invite their caseworker to the meeting for support. We encourage children of secondary age to attend to share their views and opinions on their school attendance, however the meeting is not suitable for children of primary school age. Representatives from the child's school also attend to share their concerns and to offer support to help the child return to school or improve their school attendance.

What happens at the meeting?

The chair will explain the law related to school attendance and will introduce the agenda of the meeting. This will include introductions of all attendees and an opportunity for all participants to contribute their views. Following discussion a parent contract will be created with specific actions required for all parties to address the areas of difficulty and provide suitable support to the parent and child.

What is a Parent Contract?

Section.19 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 promotes the use of Parent Contracts in cases of irregular school attendance. A parent contract is a formal written agreement between parents, the school and the local authority. It is a statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a six week period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract and a statement by the local authority and school agreeing to provide support to the parents to help comply with the actions. This will include specific support for the child and referrals to services that can offer additional parental or family help.



What happens if I do not attend the meeting?

If parents are unable to attend the meeting they should contact the local authority as soon as the invitation is received to explain why they are unable to attend and to request a new arrangement is made. The local authority will consider all exceptional reasons and will offer new appointments where possible. The meeting can only be rearranged once. If parents do not attend the meeting and no contact has been made, the meeting will take place in the parent's absence.

Do I have to agree a Parent Contract?

Parents are encouraged to engage with the contract to enable a plan to be put in place to improve school attendance and to enable support to be secured from the school and local authority. The contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route when school support or early help has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. A parent contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.

What happens if I do not comply with the Parent Contract?

Where a parent does not comply with the requirements set out in the contract, the local authority or schools attendance officer will contact the parent and seek an explanation and decide whether it is reasonable. Where no explanation is given, or the local authority or schools attendance officer is not satisfied with the explanation, the local authority may serve the parent with a warning to explain that the contract is not working and may be terminated.

What happens after the meeting?

Following the LA FAP meeting a copy of the discussion record and parent contract will be sent to parents. The parent contract will be in place for 6 weeks and will be reviewed after 3 weeks. Where concerns are raised parents will be contacted by the local authority or school attendance officer. The parent contract will be monitored for a further 3 weeks when a decision will be made at the end of the 6 week period whether to sufficient improvement has been made or whether the case should be referred to legal services for consideration of legal action.

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