



**Attachment Aware
Schools Award**



Attachment Aware Schools: Managing appointments for children and young people during the school day

**Issues arising from appointments
during the school day**

Advice to parents and carers

Children and young people sometimes have worries about leaving or returning to their class when they have an appointment or personal meeting during the school day. These concerns include anxiety about the reaction from a member of staff or from their peers if they have to ask to leave the classroom or to miss a lesson. They may also worry about negative attention that may be attracted by being fetched by a member of staff who is known to work with those who have additional needs or who are looked after.

These worries may cause children and young people to find it difficult to settle into learning in the time around these appointments and they may become preoccupied with the 'story' they will need to tell peers when it is time to leave the lesson. This may affect not only their sense of belonging in school and with their peers, but also the benefit they derive from the therapy or other input.

Students can also miss valuable lessons through visits arranged during school hours by the local authority.

What can you do?

Try to make sure that appointments outside school are not booked during school hours. For every 5% of school absence, a student falls two grades at GCSE*.

Every attempt should be made to book an appointment outside of school time.

In your conversations with school, raise awareness of the impact missing lessons can have upon the student. Talk to the child or young person and to the school's designated teacher about an appropriate way to help them withdraw from their lesson if missing school is unavoidable.

In general, students should not start a lesson that they then need to leave to attend an appointment. This avoids the stressful situation of walking out of a lesson or of being collected by someone. If it is necessary to leave mid-lesson, their teacher can ask them to run an errand, with this being their cue to leave.

Maintain positive communication with the school and inform them in advance of any need to miss a lesson. The school can then offer some thinking time, where needed eg, after a therapy session and provide an appropriate space for them to self-regulate prior to returning to lessons. If you are able to make the school's designated teacher aware of these appointments in advance, they can prepare staff so that they use sensitive approaches rather than challenge behaviours in lessons following an appointment.

If these issues are occurring with your child, please contact the assistant or deputy headteacher who leads your area at AfC's Virtual School so that we can support ways of working with the school's designated teacher.

Headteacher: Suzanne Parrot

AfC Virtual School contact: 020 8831 6037

Richmond: paul.chapman2@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Kingston: clare.farley@achievingforchildren.org.uk

RBWM: christina.buckley@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Post 16 students: michael.guard@achievingforchildren.org.uk

*from Sebba et al (2015). The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data

www.education.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Linking-Care-and-Educational-Data-Overview-Report-Nov-2015.pdf