



Attendance Policy

Principles

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that we make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

We work in partnership with parents, carers, support agencies and the local community to encourage and support all students to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality. Where attendance levels falls, we will work with the Local Authority to make full use of statutory duties available to encourage and ensure excellent levels of attendance. Should these efforts fail to improve attendance the school will actively seek, in liaison with the Education Attendance Service, the use of legal remedies, including Penalty Notices and parental prosecutions.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. **All pupils should achieve at least 95% attendance**, with the aim of 100%. This policy is in line with other schools in the area and reflects county and national policy.

Safeguarding: Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. Within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- E-Safety

Failing to attend school on a regular basis may be considered as a safeguarding matter.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2007 supports offences under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This Code of Conduct complies with these statutory Instruments.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

This policy is also informed by the DfE Document:

[Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour](#)

To ensure that regular attendance is promoted we will:

- Celebrate successful attendance by awarding termly attendance certificates
- Monitor attendance by checking class registers daily and support successful attendance by regularly reporting children's attendance to the parents, carers, staff and Governors
- We will keep and maintain registers by ensuring that the attendance data is regularly updated to reflect the attendance within individual classes and throughout the school
- We will liaise regularly with other agencies, including the Education Attendance Officer and Children's Social Care

Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities

School and Staff

It is expected that all teaching, teaching support, administration staff and senior management act as positive role models by arriving at work in good time for the school day.

It is the role of all class teachers (including support staff and supply cover) to:

- mark registers accurately, each day, indicating if pupils are in school on time/late (before and after registers close) or absent
- inform the office staff of any absence they have not been made aware of by 9.00

It is the responsibility of the School Attendance Administrator to:

- phone the child's/children's parent/carer by 9.30 if no reason has been given for an absence
- keep trying throughout the day if no response from parent/carer
- if no response in 2 days report to EAO.
- if the child is under a CP Plan, report to the EAO on the first day of absence if no reason is given and contact cannot be made with the parent/carer.
- Inform the class teacher of any reason for absence on the child's return and file absence notes in the class register box.
- If the absence is unexplained on the child's return, send a letter to the parent requesting a reason for the absence.
- If the absence is still unexplained for a week, the administrator will send a reminder letter home to the parent/carers.
- If the absence is still unexplained after a fortnight the Headteacher will contact the parents for an explanation of the absence
- send a letter to the parent/ carer of the child/children who are persistently late
- If the child/children continue to be late the headteacher will meet with the parent/carer to discuss how the school, parents and other agencies can work to improve attendance.

Pupils

It is the responsibility of the pupils to be in school by 8:40am by helping their parent/carer. They can help their parent/carer by making sure they are dressed and ready to go to school on time.

Parents/carers

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to:

- inform the school, by 9.00am, that their child/children will be absent from school
- ensure their child/children are on school premises by 8:40am

Governors

It is the responsibility of the Governors to:

- know about the school's attendance and how it compares with National figures.
- support the school's endeavours to ensure that there is an excellent attendance rate within the school
- challenge attendance rates within the school if required

ABSENCE REPORTING

Guidance for parents/carers

Absence Due To Illness

DAY 1	Parent/carer to contact the school by 9.00am on the first day of absence to confirm the following: • Child's name • Reason for absence ("unwell" is not sufficient) – to be recorded on electronic register • Time/date of doctor appointment (if made)
DAY 2	As DAY 1
DAY 3	As DAY 1

Note: If your child does not return to school on DAY 3, then from DAY 4 onwards, the school may require supporting medical evidence – e.g. appointment card/letter; note from doctor; specialist report; copy of prescription etc. – before consideration will be given whether or not to authorise the absences (wholly or in part)

DAY 4+	Parent/carer to contact the school by 9.00am on each subsequent day of absence until either: • Child returns to school, or • As otherwise agreed with a senior member of school staff.
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Any child accumulating 15 school days (30 sessions) of authorised absence due to illness within an academic year (consecutively or non-consecutively) will be required to provide sight of relevant medical evidence to support every absence due to illness from Day 16 onwards. This is to ensure that the school is appropriately meeting the individual child's educational needs.

The coding of any absence from school, for whatever reason(s) given, is ultimately at the sole discretion of the Head; therefore the school may request sight of relevant evidence to support an absence of any length of time. Where coding is unclear, the head may seek advice from the Education Attendance Officer

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to obtain the relevant evidence to support any absence from school.

Unauthorised absences of 5 days (10 sessions) or more in any 12 week period may result in your child's case being referred to the Education Attendance Service with a request for the consideration of a Penalty Notice to be issued to the parent(s)/Carer(s) responsible for the child's regular school attendance.

Further details of the Penalty Notice process may be obtained from the Education Attendance Service: [EAS Guidance Docs.](#)

Term-time Leave Requests, inc. holidays

Parents/carers have no entitlement to take their child out of school during term-time. Any requests for term-time leave must satisfy the following conditions before they will be considered by the Head:

1. Exceptional circumstances apply – e.g. forces personnel; seasonal employment restrictions (a letter from the employer stating to this effect must be provided); unforeseen family circumstances, including the funeral of a relative.
2. A definite return date is provided – any child not returned to school on the expected date will be considered a 'Child Missing from Education' and will be referred to the Education Attendance Service as a safeguarding concern. This may trigger a home visit and involvement from the local police.

Additional guidance:

- Weddings of parents and siblings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs

of the couple getting married. Leave will only be authorised for this purpose when the headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

- Financial reasons are NOT an exceptional circumstance.
- It is the view of the Local Authority that restrictions arising as a result of being self-employed are NOT an exceptional circumstance.
- The headteacher should consider whether the absence coincides with statutory assessments.

DfE guidance states:

'Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advanced notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.'

For details of the Penalty Notice procedure, provided by our Education Welfare Officer, please see appendix 1 below.

Monitoring

The headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance at the school and ensuring that regular updates about the school's attendance figures are provided to parents, carers and governors.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the headteacher implements this policy effectively.

Approved by governors 1/11/2016

Due to be reviewed: Autumn 2018

Appendix 1 **Guidance on the procedure for the issuing of penalty notices**

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority. The Education Attendance Service (EAS) will manage this to ensure consistency and prevent conflict with other enforcement sanctions for poor school attendance.

3.2 Headteachers and the Police are accredited persons able to issue Penalty Notices. It has been agreed that only the Local Authority will issue Penalty Notices. If a Headteacher or Police Officer feels it is appropriate for a Penalty Notice to be issued they must consult with the EAS. This avoids a Penalty Notice being issued when the EAS is already instigating legal intervention proceedings for irregular school attendance.

3.3 The EAS monitors the issuing of Penalty Notices and has a dedicated officer.

4. Use of Penalty Notices

Penalty Notice Code of Conduct is considered in the following circumstances:

4.1 There have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the last 12 school weeks and the school, in consultation with the EAS, believe this early intervention will resolve the poor attendance and stop the matter moving toward a prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

4.2 If a Headteacher does not authorise a request from a parent/carer for term time leave and the parent takes the leave. (School must advise parents of this and how the action conforms to the school's attendance policy.) There must be at least 10 continuous sessions of unauthorised term time leave taken.

4.3 A pupil is stopped on a school attendance sweep out of school without reason.

4.4 An excluded pupil is found in a public place, without their parent, during the school day. (A school is not deemed to be a public place for the purposes of this legislation.)

4.5 Penalty Notices should not be issued for children in care. Any attendance concerns will form part of their PEP.

4.6 For pupils with a Statement for Educational Needs an annual review should be held before considering a Penalty Notice request.

5. Procedure for Issuing Penalty Notices

5.1 The Local Authority will consider Penalty Notice providing:

5.1.1 All relevant information is supplied in the specified manner.

5.1.2 The pupil's absence meets the terms of the Code of Conduct.

5.1.3 Issuing a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other interventions or statutory work.

5.2 A school's Attendance Policy must clarify to its parents the importance of full school attendance and that it will seek the use of statutory duties when required by liaison with the Local Authority.

5.3 Schools must record how they have tried to engage parents to bring about change in their child's poor school attendance.

5.4 All requests to consider a Penalty Notice should be discussed and agreed with the EAS.

Unauthorised Absence

5.5 If there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence, as described in 4.1 above, the school will complete a request for a Penalty Notice to be considered (**Appendix A**) and forwarded to the EAS. A warning letter will be sent to each parent requiring they ensure their child attend school over a 15 day school period, where there should be no unauthorised absences. If there are any unauthorised absences in this period then a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent.

5.6 If the 15 day monitoring period is passed the parent will receive a letter explaining that a Penalty Notice will not be issued on this occasion. The letter will also contain an expectation that the good attendance will continue and that if there are further unauthorised absences within 3 months following this letter, a Penalty Notice may still be issued or legal action under section 444 Education Act 1996 taken.

Unauthorised Term Time Leave

5.7 Any parent who takes their child out of school for term time leave of 10 continuous sessions, not authorised by the school, may receive a Penalty Notice. The school must complete a request for a Penalty Notice to be considered (**Appendix A**) as 5.5 above and letter sent.

However, this could be dealt with as in 5.5 above and a warning letter used. Headteachers need to be aware that if used solely for unauthorised term time leave and the Penalty Notice not paid, they will be required to explain to court their reasons for not authorising the leave and how it meets their school attendance policy.

5.8 There are three exceptions to the above – parents on active military service, exceptional family circumstances and employment restrictions (confirmation from the employer can be requested).