



ATTENDANCE POLICY 2019

INTRODUCTION

Parents of compulsory school age children (children aged between five to sixteen years) have a legal duty to ensure their children receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at a school (this includes home education). If a child is registered at school, parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly. Should a child fail to attend regularly legal action may be taken against the parents under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

Education Law defines a *parent* as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child on a daily basis.

It is important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the child that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential—pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Therefore, it is essential that the expectation that a child attends school regularly is instilled from their very first day in order that the child may make the progress expected of them to achieve the appropriate milestones in relation to their age.

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. The school ethos ensures that children feel that their presence in school is important; that they are missed when they are absent or late. Appropriate action will be taken when necessary in order to promote the aims of the policy.

Aims

- To maximise attendance of all children.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely and make full use of the support of the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

- **Governing Bodies (FGB)**
 - To monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

- **Headteacher**
 - To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
 - As part of their monitoring of attendance, know how many children are absent each day, including any children who are absent who are Looked After or subject to Child Protection, Child in Need or Team Around the Child procedures.
 - To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
 - To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.
 - To provide FGB with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
 - To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
 - To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.

- **Class Teacher**
 - To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
 - To respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of registers by Office Staff.
 - To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

- **Office Staff**
 - To accurately prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of SIMS Management Information System for recording pupil attendance.
 - To record the reasons for absence given to them using the appropriate code.
 - To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
 - To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason if they have not been contacted by a parent to provide a reason for absence.
 - To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
 - To make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- To flag up to Headteacher any child who is absent who is subject to a child protection, team around the child procedures or any other child who the Headteacher has concerns about. The Headteacher will identify the children who they wish the office to identify.
 - To complete attendance monitoring information for the Headteacher and FGB.
- **Education Welfare Officer**
 - To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
 - To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.
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- **Parents / Carers**
 - Ensure regular and punctual school attendance.
 - To inform the school by 9.00am if their child is sick or away from school for any reason. This is especially important as the school is legally required to report reasons for absence. The school will ring home if no notification has been received and may contact the school's attendance officer or social care if there are concerns around a child's whereabouts.
 - Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments and make every effort to make these appointments outside of the school day.
 - To inform the school in advance and show the school the appointment card/letter and if necessary speak to the Head Teacher, if there is an unavoidable medical appointment that a child has to attend.
 - Where a child has to be collected during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by arrangement with the office staff. Children **cannot** be allowed to meet parents / carers off school property and they must be picked up by an adult.
 - Only request leave of absence if it is for exceptional circumstances.
 - Actively work with the school staff, attendance officer and relevant multi-agency staff to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur.

CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN:

Where school has concerns about a child's attendance, they will notify Children's services and report the concern to the identified person for the child immediately. If the family cannot be contacted that day a home visit will be made by the attendance officer at the earliest opportunity.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN:

Where school has concerns about a child's attendance, they will notify the relevant team and report the concern to the identified person for the child immediately.

School will also report the attendance of any looked after child via Welfare Call when they

are engaged by the relevant Local Authority.

ADMINISTRATION

- Under the 2006 Education Regulations **it is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day**
- The School uses the SIMS Management Information System to store and monitor it's legal responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are saved and returned to the School Office after the closure of the registration period.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

ABSENCE

Illness

Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and where possible on each subsequent day of absence.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence. It is for the school to determine if an absence is to be authorised (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

- Where Office Staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will, wherever possible, contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the school has two up-to-date contact numbers per child on role.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher should be informed.
- If parents / carers do not inform the school of their child's reason for absence, this matter should be dealt with by informing the parent of the school policy via letter. If the parent / carer still does not follow the policy a meeting should be arranged with the Headteacher.

Medical or Dental Appointments

- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.
- Where absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment cannot be avoided, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments and also bring their child into school either before or after the appointment so that full sessions are not missed.

Holidays During Term Time

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. The Headteacher has the discretion, in exceptional circumstances, to authorise short periods of time off school.

If a parent / carer considers that they have circumstances that may be deemed exceptional, they should make a request in writing to the Headteacher via a form available from the school office. The Headteacher will then make a decision and inform parents / carers whether the request has been granted.

The school will monitor all absences during term time and challenge those parents that do not adhere to the legislation. Any unauthorised absence will be dealt with through non-attendance procedures.

Other Absence

Other absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or un-authorise the absence

LATENESS

- Children arriving any later than school start time will be marked as L
- Pupils arriving late must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Regular reviews of punctuality take place. Any irregular pattern will result in intervention to address the matter via a letter informing parents / carers of the problem, a meeting in school, a home visit by our attendance officer and regular reviews thereafter.

REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS

The school will raise the awareness of the implications of poor school attendance through:

- Newsletters
- Parents Evenings
- Induction Meetings

- Home-school agreements
- Rewarding good attendance and punctuality
- Periodically reminding parents of the school's procedures for notification of absences

The school will actively pursue “truancy” whether it is intentional on the part of the child or is condoned by parents [ie unauthorised absence]. If school has evidence of truancy, the Headteacher will confirm the absence as “unauthorised” to the parents in writing and request a meeting. Where absence is persistent and the child’s welfare can not be confirmed, referrals to Social Services and Education Welfare will be made.

The procedure outlined below is a staged response to irregular school attendance and poor punctuality. The school works hard to regularly monitor attendance and punctuality. It is hoped that problems about attendance can be resolved swiftly. Concerns raised about a child’s absence are discussed. Information is shared openly and reasons for absence are discussed.

All absences both authorised, unauthorised absence and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of each term and the end of the academic year within ‘traffic light’ attendance letters and their child’s report.

In order to give parents/carers a benchmark to their child’s attendance against national indicators, the following grades will be used :

100%	Excellent
99.9% - 98%	Very Good
97.9% - 96%	Good
95.9% - 95%	Satisfactory
Under 95%	Requires Improvement

REWARDS

- Children who achieve 100% attendance at the end of the year will be acknowledged and/or rewarded in an attendance assembly.
- Good attendance is rewarded in a tangible way for classes and individuals for example through positive comments, certificates, stickers and prizes.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Attendance data will be collected on a fortnightly basis for each class and vulnerable groups to establish patterns of irregular attendance. The school will monitor attendance on a fortnightly basis. School level monitoring will include: children with incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence; periods of unauthorised absence; and all children who are deemed to be

‘persistent absentees’ whose attendance is below 90%. This data will be discussed with the Attendance Officer on a regular basis.

- The Headteacher and Attendance Officer will discuss the impact of the School’s Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend an attendance target to the Governors.

PROCEDURES THE SCHOOL WILL USE TO FOLLOW UP IRREGULAR/NON ATTENDANCE

The school will rigorously monitor attendance. Any child who is below 96%, or has unauthorised absences, has their attendance monitored each week until the end of the school year. Any child whose attendance is 96% or below at the end of a school year, will be monitored from the outset of a new school year.

Any child highlighted with attendance of below 96% will automatically be discussed by the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer on a weekly basis. Following this discussion, the following procedures will be followed. The Headteacher will know of any mitigating circumstances, such as serious medical conditions, that have contributed to low attendance and will be mindful of this situation when flagging children to commence non-attendance procedures.

At any time in the school year, where there are concerns around a child’s attendance, a Parenting Contract may be drawn up to address attendance issues (See Appendix 1).

Any pupil with patterns of irregular attendance i.e. incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; periods of extended absence; periods of un-authorised absence, etc., will begin formal Non-Attendance proceedings as detailed below. At any point during this procedure a parent / carer may be notified that the school will no longer authorise a child’s absence without legitimate medical proof which validates the reason for absence provided.

Non-Attendance Procedures

Stage 1

Any pupil whose attendance falls below 96% may be sent a concern letter from the school, which may come from the attendance officer acting on behalf of the school. The child will be set a target for improvement over a four week period. If the child’s attendance does not improve and the child does not meet the target, the Headteacher, supported by the attendance officer, should decide whether to continue to monitor the child under stage 1 procedures or whether it is necessary to progress the child to Stage 2 procedures. Following a letter being issued, further contact can be made should no improvement occur.

Stage 2

Parents and/or carers will be invited to a meeting with the attendance officer, and any member of school staff deemed appropriate, to discuss reasons for absence and any support required to facilitate an improvement, such as a referral to outside agencies for support.

Further meetings will be scheduled following the meeting if required to review and monitor any improvement and any intervention which may be required which was not discussed in initial meeting.

A maximum of 3 meetings will be held in any academic year. Should attendance fail to improve, or parents or carers not engage, a letter will be issued requesting medical evidence to support reasons for future absences, such as a Doctor's note, an appointment card or a copy of medication prescribed to treat an ailment. Failure to provide this will result in absences being deemed unauthorised and the matter will be considered for a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team for consideration of formal proceedings taking place.

Please note all referrals are done on an individual case basis and could be done without all of the above if it is felt by Attendance Officer and Head Teacher that this is required to prevent a child missing further time from school.

Following a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team, they will investigate absences and deem whether or not formal proceedings should be brought against a parent under the legislation set out in the Education Act (1996) in which it states that it is a parents responsibility to ensure a child of statutory school age receives an education suited to their age and ability.

Formal enforcement includes

- A fixed penalty notice
- A fine of up to £2500 and or 3 month imprisonment

Fixed Penalty Notices

Local Authorities are granted the power to issue FPN under the Education Act 1996, section 444. Following agreement with key staff, school have endorsed this decision and will be following this guidance.

When a FPN will be used.

- 1) A FPN warning letter may be issued if a child has 20 or more unauthorised absences in a 10 week period.
- 2) A FPN may be issued to a parent if their child has further unauthorised absences during the 15 days following the receipt of a FPN warning letter.
- 3) A FPN may be issued if a pupil has unauthorised absence resulting from an unauthorised holiday in term time.
- 4) A FPN requires payment of £60 in 21 days or £120 within 28 days, and will result in a prosecution for unauthorised absence if unpaid.

See Appendix 3 and 4 for further information.

This policy will be reviewed from time to time following guidance or regulations set from DfE or whenever the school determines that changes need to be made.

Appendix 1

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Name of Student

Class:

First school day of absence: (day)(month)(year)

Last school day of absence: (day) (month) (year)

Number of days requested:

Reason for absence.....

Name:

Relationship to child:

Signed: Date:

Please note:

- Holiday during term time cannot be authorised due to new DFE legislation. From 1.9.13, should you take your child on holiday it will be recorded as an **unauthorised** absence.
- **The current legislations state that leave of absence may only be granted in special circumstances. Please note, holidays cannot be considered special circumstances.**
- If your child is absent without permission you are likely to be visited by the Attendance Officer (Regulation 12 of the Education Regulations 1991).
- If attendance drops below the government target of 96% it will trigger attendance procedures.
- If your child is absent from school for 10 days (or 20 half days) over a ten week period, and the absence is unauthorised, the Local Authority can impose a fixed penalty fine of **£60**. This penalty may rise to **£120** and ultimately a Court Summons if the Penalty remains unpaid.

For office use

Attendance percentage so far this academic year:

School attendance target – 96%

The request for leave of absence has not been granted

The request for leave of absence has been granted

Number of days that have been granted:

Attendance is currently below our school target and will be monitored

Signed:(Head Teacher) Date:

Appendix 2

PARENTING CONTRACT

Personal Details

Pupil's Name:

Carer's Name:

Contact details

Head Teacher's name:

Contact details:

Aim of Parenting Contract

It has been acknowledged by all parties above that 's school attendance is of concern. It was only% betweenand It is hoped that the contract will ensure that 's attendance at school will improve and that this improvement will also be sustained.

A meeting was held on

All agreed to work together to help to attend school more regularly.

The following was discussed:

The following was agreed

School's Agreement

- Contact parent on first day of the child's absence, where notification has not been provided by parent.
- will be available as named persons to be contacted if parent would like to discuss anything.
- Respond to any problems reported that impact on 's attendance and education.
- Make any referrals that are appropriate to support an improved level of attendance.
- If attendance and punctuality do not continue to improve to look at legal monitoring.

Parent's Agreement

- To continue to notify school immediately upon any changes to any contact details.
- To continue to contact school on the first day of absence, providing a full reason for the absence and giving an estimated date of return.
- To inform school of any issue(s) that impacts on their child's attendance and education.
- To be available for appointments with school and/or EWO/PSA when necessary, or if not available, to contact the relevant person to re-arrange to a more suitable time.
- To work with agencies to improve attendance.

Important Dates

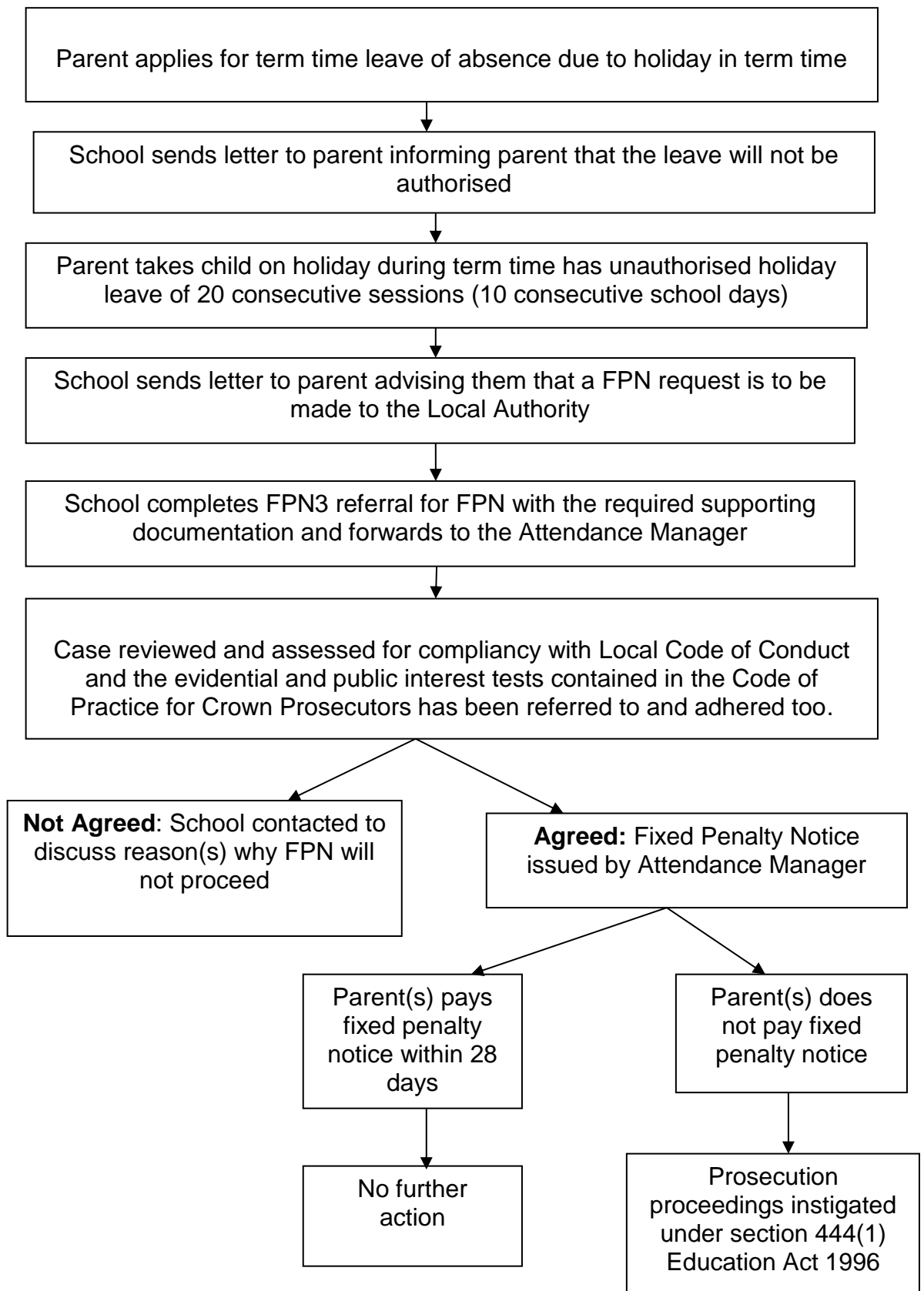
We will next meet on:

We will review this agreement on:

We will end this agreement on:

Appendix 3

Fixed Penalty Notice Process for Unauthorised Leave During Term Time



Appendix 4

Fixed Penalty Notice Process for Unauthorised Absences

