



THE DISTRICT

CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Chair of Local Academy Council	Mr F Maguire
Headteacher	Mrs L Shelford
Date Reviewed: September 2024	Review Date: September 2025

I am the vine; you are the branches.

John 15:5

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John 15:5

Just as the branches need the vine to grow and bear good fruits, so we need each other. Within the District family, each person is valued and loved, reaching out throughout our school, homes, families, and the wider community for a stronger future.

Our Christian values are intrinsically linked to our commitment to provide an innovative, high-quality education, so that children make excellent progress and fulfil their academic potential. Good attendance is key to this.

Aims:

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupil's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to our two-year-old provision, nursery, and reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents, and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.

- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff, and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting, and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping children safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Roles and responsibilities

All members of the school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes more specific lists of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

The Local Academy council

The local academy council (LAC) is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, and parents.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Making sure the school has a high aspiration for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs.

- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance.
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues.
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers.
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners, and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
 - Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the local academy council.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND where pupils with SEND face in school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health, and care (EHC) plan has failing attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Leading, championing, and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tracking absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sue Swift.

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher.
- Working with the designated attendance lead and partner agencies to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Issuing a notice to improve, in order to support parents to improve pupil attendance.
- Initiating early help assessments when attendance is a persistent concern.
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue a fixed-penalty notices.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Contacting parents of pupils where absences are unexplained.
- Issuing of standard attendance monitoring letters to parent/carers supervised by the attendance lead.
- Completing home visits in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy when there is a significant concern regarding attendance or when a child is missing education.
- In some cases, will transport children to school.

The attendance officer is Donna Barker.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parent/carer.
- Informing the pastoral team where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Discussing attendance issues with parents/carers if attendance starts to deteriorate before a pupil becomes a persistent absentee. Identifying and offering support if needed.

School office staff

School administrators and office staff will: -

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording calls on CPOMS.
- Transfer calls from parents to the pastoral team when more detailed support regarding attendance is required.
- Issue standard attendance monitoring letters to parent/carers supervised by the attendance lead.

Parents/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is the most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Those who have a day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e., lives with and looks after them).

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.40 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we require evidence from the doctor or dentist, e.g. appointment card/letter.
- Making requests for leave in term time and providing school with evidence of any exceptional circumstances. Parents should give the school a minimum of a 4-week notice period of any leave.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by speaking to your child's class teacher or by contacting Donna Barker (Attendance Officer) 01744 678250.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and the local academy council at our school, work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. We will endeavor to provide an environment where all children feel valued, welcome, and secure.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. We will work with children and their families/carers to ensure that each child attends school regularly and punctually by:

- Reminding parents/carers regularly of their responsibility in ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Making parents/carers aware of the impact of poor attendance on academic progress. Attendance of less than 90% is known to compromise pupil attainment.

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. The school takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment, and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

School attendance is subject to The Education Act 1996 and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. Our school attendance target of 96.6% reflects the national attendance target.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the national attendance and absence codes from the school attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Absent.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry.
- The amended entry.
- The reason for the amendment.
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school at the following times each morning. - KS1- 8.45 am/KS2 – 8.50 am.

The importance of registration

- Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration periods must have their absence recorded as being either authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. **If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.**
- School acknowledges punctuality as the responsibility of the parent/carer. Punctuality is essential to ensure that the start of the teaching day is uninterrupted and that there is optimum teaching and learning time for all pupils. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.
- Electronic registration facilitates the easy analysis of attendance data, highlighting patterns of lateness or absence which would be reported to parents/carers if necessary.

The importance of parents/carers contacting the school with reason for absence cannot be emphasised enough. We need to ascertain that nothing has happened to the child on his/her way to school.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30 am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via telephone 01744 678250, or by sending a message to the class teacher via class dojo. The attendance officer will then be notified of the pupil's absence and may contact parents later in the day.

Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and attend school either prior to the appointment time if they are able to. Pupils should return to school after a medical/dental appointment if they are well enough to do so.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer, e.g. if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, local academy councillors, parents and pupils.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records which give details of any absence or lateness.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- Inform parent/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- Work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Head of Safeguarding and pastoral team with responsibility for monitoring attendance and implementing legal sanctions.

School Procedures

- Attendance is recorded electronically using Arbor. Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day at 8.45am (KS1) and 8.50am (KS2). Children who arrive at school late before the close of register at 9.30 am will be coded as L, late prior to the close of registration.
- In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.
- Morning registration will close at 9.30 am. Children who arrive after the close of register will be marked as a U and will be classified as any unauthorised absence.
- The afternoon registration will begin at 12.55pm, registration will close at 1.30 pm.

First Day Absence

Parents must contact school explaining the reason for absence by 9.30 am. If parents do not contact the school to indicate the reason for their child's absence school will automatically send a text message to parents. A response to the text message is expected. If there is no response received by school the pupil will automatically be marked as an unauthorised absence. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that school is always updated with new contact numbers. A home visit may take place by school staff if there is a cause for concern.

Third Day Absence

If a pupil is still absent from school on the third day school will again make a follow up telephone welfare call to the home. A home visit may take place if there is a cause for concern by school staff.

Continuing Absence

Absence is marked as unauthorised and a visit from the Head of Safeguarding will be made if the school has not been contacted by the child's parent.

Five Days Absence

Any pupil who is missing education without an explanation for 10 consecutive sessions will be issued with a fixed penalty. School may decide to make a child protection referral if it is felt that parents are failing to safeguard their child. A Child Missing Education (CME) referral will need to be issued if contact cannot be made with a parent and the whereabouts of the child is unknown.

Procedures for recording attendance for learners accessing alternative education provision.

- In line with the recommendations of Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance 2013, all children accessing, provision through PACE will be dual registered on referral from the school.
- Registration will be marked as D on Arbor, as dual registration, i.e., pupil attending another establishment.
- Safeguarding responsibility, although joint, will be primarily lie with PACE on the days that children attend the alternative provision. The District CE Primary School will ensure that attendance will be checked daily for children attending PACE, if the child is reported to be absent from PACE, staff from the District Primary School will carry out a welfare call to the home address.

Returning to school after an absence.

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. Teachers will ensure that the pupil is supported to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be logged onto the school's Arbor system and will be kept for the remainder of the time that the pupil is enrolled at the school. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation the information will be used as potential evidence as a supporting document.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code (U)

Pupils who arrive after the entrance doors close will access school via the main entrance. Parents will accompany their child and sign in using the school's electronic registration system (inventory). Parents will record the reason for attending school late. Pupils attending school after the close of register will be marked with a U mark, which is an unauthorised absence.

Late marks will be monitored on a weekly basis by the attendance officer, a letter will be sent to parents if punctuality continues to become a concern and a signs of safety meeting may be held with parents to offer support and advice to resolve punctuality issues.

Pupil Registration Regulations (England 2006)

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove reference to family holidays and extended leave as well as the Statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from the school if the leave is granted. The new law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

Leave in term time

- Holidays in term time and extended leave are not allowed as a rule and parent/carers are discouraged from arranging any holidays or absence during term time as they are not in the best interest of children.
- Information for parent/carers clarifying their legal responsibilities regarding attendance and highlighting the impact of avoidable absences during term time will be made available via the school website, Home School Agreement, parent evenings and induction meetings.
- **Leave during term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.** Each case will be viewed individually by the Headteacher. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.
- **Parents must apply for permission by using the notification of absence form at least 4 weeks prior to requesting leave of absence (see appendices).** Where unforeseen circumstances occur, e.g., bereavement, parent /carers are still required to contact the school to request leave of absence. Our school will operate a formal process of application and agreement. In addition, the number and frequency of absences taken for this purpose will be recoded throughout a child's school year.

As part of the application process parent/carers will be expected to demonstrate a willingness to make arrangements that cause least disruption to their child's learning. This might involve:

- a) Wrapping days of absence around existing school holiday periods to minimise time out of school.
- b) Considering whether it is wholly appropriate for a child to accompany adults in some circumstances.
- c) Weighing the benefits to the family against detriment to educational process.
- d) Avoiding entirely periods of public examinations and National Curriculum Assessments.

The Headteacher will consider the following factors when considering term time absence requests:

- The age of the pupil.
- The time of year.
- The nature and purpose of the trip.
- The impact on the pupil's education.
- The pupil's ability to catch up on work missed.
- The pupil's educational needs.
- The general welfare of the pupil.
- The overall attendance patterns of the pupil.
- History of previous trips taken.
- Evidence/proof of unavoidable circumstances e.g., parent/carer leave is during a fixed workplace closedown or an inflexible leave allocation in the parent/carers profession.

Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances where a parent/carer requests extended leave totaling more than 10 days per school year each case must be carefully assessed on its merits. Whilst the presumption is to discourage any leave in term time there are circumstances in which the Headteacher might consider such applications sympathetically.

Managing Failure to Return to School by an Agreed Date

Failure to return to school by the agreed date without acceptable cause will jeopardise the pupil's place at school. Where a pupil has been granted 10 days or more days leave and fails to return by the agreed date, a further period of 10 days is allowed for the School and Local Authority to investigate the circumstances before de-registration is considered. This 10-day period of investigation is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If a pupil is unavoidably detained from returning to school by the agreed date the parent/carer must contact school and request an additional period of leave. Such cases will be considered on an individual basis.

Pupils Taking Holidays/Extended Leave without Permission

Where parent/carer takes a pupil out of school in term time without asking for or receiving permission, the absence will automatically be marked as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice may be issued dependent on the number of unauthorised absences, under the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. Failure to return to school within 20 working days places the pupil at risk of losing his/her place.

Penalty Notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 weeks).
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil.
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution.
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

A penalty notice may be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of suspension or exclusion (where school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parent who allowed the absences.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative actions will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with the offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a **final chance** to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#).
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance does not improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided by a case-by-case basis.
- A clear timeframe of between 3-6 weeks for the improvement period.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

Removing Pupils from the School Roll

Where a pupil fails to return by the agreed date, or where permission was not originally given from a holiday in term time the school will make every effort to contact the family and establish the circumstances, including visits to the registered address.

Where contact cannot be made and no acceptable cause can be established and the school has followed procedures by informing the family in writing of the possible consequences of non-return, then that pupil may be taken off the school roll at the conclusion of the 10-day investigation period, although in most cases, the school will continue to liaise with the Local Authority to establish the location of the family.

The school will inform the Local Authority of the removal from roll, which will be backdated to the last actual attendance of the pupil, and the local authority, will continue enquiries about the pupil's future schooling arrangements. The school will always work with the local authority in advance of a possible case of deregistration as it must be agreed that every effort to locate the pupil has failed.

Where a pupil is known to have left the area with the school's prior knowledge, but an alternative school has not been identified, we will contact the Local Authority Children Missing Education Team and liaise with them to support the identification of an appropriate school place. Once this is successful the pupil will be removed from roll and backdated to the date of leaving with the agreement of the Local Authority.

The Education Welfare Service

In the promotion of regular attendance, the school works closely with the Local Authority Education Welfare Service. Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated Local Authority officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27th February 2004. A Penalty Notice may be issued in the following circumstances.

- Overt truancy.
- Parentally condoned absences.
- Excessive holidays in term time.
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed at 9.30 am).

In School Processes

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern a meeting with the Attendance Lead will be arranged to discuss what support can be offered. A school attendance support plan (see appendix a) will be completed to produce an agreed action plan between the school and parent/carers which will be monitored and reviewed over a period of 4 weeks.

If poor attendance or punctuality persists following additional interventions and support the pastoral team will use other strategies to ensure a pupil attends school on time, e.g., holding regular late gates and providing early 'wake-up' calls, to parents prior to the start of school, Initiating Early Help Assessments and support.

The partnership between parents/carers and school

- Parent/carers of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive full time education and so are primarily responsible for ensuring their children attend and stay at school.
- It is the responsibility of the school to support good attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.
- Our home school agreement reflects our understanding that regular and punctual attendance is essential for maximum pupil progress to be attained.
- Parent/carers are also responsible for ensuring that their child arrives at school on time each day, properly attired and ready to learn.

- Parent/carers must see themselves as partners with the school in the education of their children. This means encouraging a respect for education and those who deliver it.

Informing parents/carers

- Our school prospectus and website contain information regarding the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Our Home-School Agreement reinforces the importance of regular attendance and that this is shared responsibility of school, home and where appropriate the child.
- Newsletters, information sheets and letters are sent out on a regular basis to remind parents/carers of their responsibilities and the impact of poor attendance.
- Parent/carers are informed of the common procedures followed by the school and the Local Authority relating to requests for absences other than sickness in term time. Research suggests that children taken out of school may never catch up with the learning they have missed, and this may affect test results and can be particularly harmful in the run up to the end of year examinations. Children who struggle with English and Maths may find it even harder to cope on their return. Younger children may find it more difficult to renew friendships with classmates.
- While the issue of leave in term time is unlikely to be entirely resolved, there is strong evidence that where systematic and consistent approaches are adopted these results in a reduction in the frequency and duration of such absences.

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following systems to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance:

- Certificates.
- Attendance badges.
- 100% attendance badges.
- Letter to parents.
- Postcards home
- Weekly class attendance trophy displayed with whole class photo
- Hot Chocolate Friday held at each half-term with the Headteacher to celebrate those pupils who's attendance has most improved.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets is established and is overseen on a weekly basis by the Headteacher, Attendance lead and Attendance officer.

Monitoring Attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Attendance data is shared with the DfE via the Wonde system. Data is published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the Local academy council.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance.
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families and to Local academy council and school leaders .
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at a risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement with school.
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance.
 - Explain the help that is available.
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence.
 - Review any existing actions or interventions.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, e.g. Early Help Offer and/or in conjunction with the local authority where relevant.
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 12 months by Sue Swift (DSL/Attendance lead) At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local academy council.

We aim for every pupil to achieve 100% attendance, or as close as possible to this target.

The registration system

The school uses Arbor pupil management information system for recording all pupil's attendance. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

Registers by law must be kept for at least 6 years. Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes. Alternatively, electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years. Entries in paper registers must be in ink. All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid).

Appendices

1. Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#)

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register closes
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registration	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absences
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

2: The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable.

[a] To his age, ability, and aptitude and,

[b] To any special needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day- to- day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

3. Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements.
- Field trips and educational visits.
- Sporting activities.
- Link courses or approved education off site.
- Most types of dual registration.

4: Attendance supporting documents

Application For Leave of Absence from School in Term-Time

Dear Parent/Carer,

Before submitting this application, please be aware that parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly (under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996). If a parent intends to remove their child from school for a term-time holiday/LOA it is a legal requirement to obtain the permission of the Headteacher. Parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school for leave during term time and may be issued with a Penalty Notice (£80 per parent per child) if they do so. **The legislation only allows the Headteacher to authorise leave in exceptional circumstances.**

To apply for a child to be granted leave from school, parents **must complete this form and return it to the school office for consideration by the Headteacher well in advance of the proposed leave and before committing to any expense.** Due to the legislation, it is only in extremely exceptional circumstances and with supporting evidence that leave will be granted. **If you believe exceptional circumstances apply, you must provide this information to school at the time of submitting the request.**

Following the submission of the application, the Headteacher or a member of the attendance team will call you or arrange a meeting to discuss your application. Please see the factors that may be taken into account by school when considering a request for leave.

Parents section (applications must come from the parent with whom the child normally resides)

Surname of child:		First name of child:	
Date of Birth:		Class:	
Parent name:		Relationship to child:	
Are there any siblings applying for leave? If so, please add their name/s.		Parent date of birth:	
Home address/Postcode		Telephone number:	
Length of absence: (number of school days)		Destination:	
Start date of absence:		Date returning to school:	

Please provide information regarding the exceptional circumstances supporting this application for leave. What additional documents are you attaching to this application?

Employer Details If you are stating work commitments as an exceptional reason for requesting leave, please complete this section and attach any evidence you have showing why leave cannot be taken during the school holidays.

Name:	
Address:	
Telephone number:	

Parent/carer signature:	
Date of application:	

ADDITIONAL FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Regular attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. All parents/carers must ensure their children attend school whenever possible. Absences during school time is largely prohibited by regulation and hinders academic progress. Even in exceptional circumstances, the following factors may be taken into account when considering an application for leave:

- Will leave at the point in time be detrimental to the pupil's education?
- Will he/she miss any national tests or examinations?
- Is his/her attendance a cause for concern?
- Is the proposed absence during the month of September or any other transition period?
- Has he/she already had leave during term time this year?
- Did he/she have leave of absence during term time in the previous school year(s)?
- Does he/she have any absences which have been recorded as unauthorised this year?

SCHOOL SECTION (Please complete all sections)

Date application received:		Pupil's % attendance:	
Date of meeting/call with parents: (if applicable)		Date letter sent to parents with decision/outcome:	

Leave request approved.	Yes	No
Parent (s) informed of potential consequences of taking unauthorised leave.	Yes	No
Parent(s) informed of potential consequences of failure to return on due date	Yes	No

Reason(s) for decision:

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Number of previous applications granted and reasons why:

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Headteachers signature:		Date:	
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St Helens Local Authority Guidance on Leave of absence for term time holidays:

- Authorisation will be considered in the following *exceptional* circumstances.
- The parent has provided evidence that they are unable to take their holiday during a period of school closure due to their employment.
- The holiday is a unique occasion that can only take place at the time requested.
- e.g., family wedding.
- A close relative of the pupil is seriously ill, and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday.
- There has been a bereavement, separation, or other traumatic event in the child's life, and it is considered that an immediate holiday might have a positive impact on the pupil's wellbeing.
- School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as your child attends school as regularly as possible.

The following circumstances are situations where the Head Teacher may consider that the application for leave of absence *may not be granted*:

- The parent has not indicated any special circumstances for the request.
- The period of the holiday clashes with school tests, SATs, or important revision periods prior to them.
- Where the pupil's attendance at school is below 96%.
- Where valuable group work is being undertaken with other pupils in school that cannot be repeated.
- During the first two weeks of a new school on induction, transition, or transfer where the child needs to familiarise themselves with the new school layout and new peer groups are forming.
- During the early part of the first year in a new school when pupils are building new relationships and may experience difficulties settling in.
- There have been previous periods of absence due to holidays and other unauthorised absences.

A minimum of four weeks' notice must be provided for any holidays authorised through the above exceptional circumstances.

Notice to improve:

Notice to Improve

Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—(a)to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b)to any special educational needs (in the case of a child who is in the area of a local authority in England) or additional learning needs (in the case of a child who is in the area of a local authority in Wales)] he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 7 Education Act 1996

Start date:

Pupil Details

Legal Name:		Address:	
Date of Birth:		Gender:	
Ethnicity:		Home Language: (record/amend as required)	
School:			

Parent Details

Name: <i>(include Title)</i>	Address: <i>(include Postcode)</i>	Relationship:	DOB:	Tel No:
<i>If details have only been provided for one parent, state why:</i>				

Attendance (Please attach registration document)

% attendance:	Late - L (before register closed):
% Unauthorised attendance	
	Late - U (after register closed):

Details of Unauthorised Attendance to be discussed

Reasons stated by Parents/Pupil for poor school attendance:
Previous support offered by School:

Views of the child

<i>Childs viewed captured by trusted adult</i>	Date captured:

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Strategies to be Implemented by School		
Details of strategy (including date commenced)	Purpose of implementing strategy	Member of staff responsible
E.g., daily wake-up calls for two weeks, starting from 16 th October	E.g., to establish an effective morning routine	E.g., parent support worker to carry out calls

Expectations of the Parents		
Details of Expectations	How this has been communicated to the pupil's family?	Monitoring arrangements (who by and when?)
E.g., for parents to phone school before 9 a.m. to report the reason for any absence	E.g., expectations explained during face-to-face attendance meeting and agreed by parents	E.g., attendance officer will monitor this daily

Expectations of the Pupil – if ability/age relevant		
Details of expectations	How this has been communicated to the pupil?	Monitoring arrangements (who by and when?)
E.g., set an alarm for 7 a.m. every day	E.g., discussion with attendance officer and ongoing reminders	E.g., attendance officer will monitor this daily

External Support		
Details of Agency/Partner	Support Being Offered	Date Support Commenced
E.g., social care	E.g., Early Help referral has been made as mother is reporting that she feels overwhelmed	E.g., referral made 2 nd November - currently awaiting first contact

What the Improvement will look like		
Details of Improvement	How this has been communicated to the pupil's family?	Monitoring arrangements (who by and when?)
E.g., to have no lates after registration	E.g., expectations explained during face-to-face attendance meeting and agreed by parents	E.g., attendance officer will monitor this daily, dates of monitoring period.

NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Your child's attendance will be monitored for the following 15 school days between

Insert start date to Insert end date inclusive.

The issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice will be considered on a case by case basis

Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended. For example, a Notice to Improve stated there should be no further unauthorised absences in a 6 week period but the pupil is absent for unauthorised reasons in the first week. The parent should be informed before a penalty notice is issued if it is before the end of the improvement period

Signatures

I/we the named parent/s agree to comply with the actions detailed on this Notice to Improve and understand that failing to comply will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being requested from The Local Authority.			
Full Name		DOB	Signature
Parent 1:			
Parent 2:			
School representative			

Penalty Notice fines are £80 to be paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days, after this time the fine is withdrawn. You are then at risk of prosecution for the original offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school (Section 4441 of the Education Act 1996). This offence carries a maximum fine of £1000.

If a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period the fine will be £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80. A limit of 2 Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period.

At the 3rd or subsequent offence, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution or other Attendance Legal Intervention.

Penalty Notice fines are issued per parent per child.

Definition of a Parent

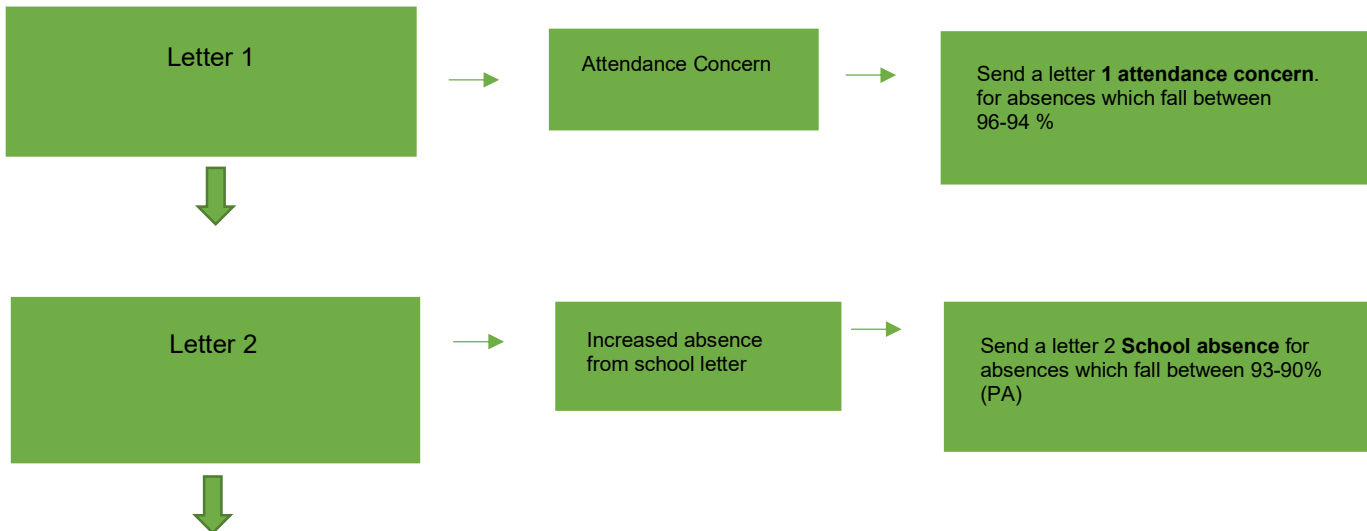
The legislative provisions relating to non-attendance apply to all parents who fall within the definition set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. This defines a parent as: All Natural parents, whether they are married or not.

Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person.

Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person – having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child – is considered to be a parent in education law for these purposes

Graduated response to monitoring and addressing attendance absence.

Procedure to be followed for all **statutory** pupils who are pre-persistent absentees.



Procedure to be followed for all **statutory** pupils whose attendance continues to be a cause for concern. A penalty notice **must be considered if a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absences within a rolling 10-week school period.** School should make an assessment on a case-by-case basis whether a penalty notice should be issued.

Request Meeting with parent/s
Notice to improve to be issued
If parent/s attend the meeting, follow the following process

Send Local Authority letter 1 U.A invitation to parent/s (e-mail or hand deliver if possible).

If parent/s attend the meeting, issue a **notice to improve** to parents, discuss offers of support if applicable as follows:

- Show copies of all attendance letters sent, including late letters
- Show pupil's attendance certificate highlighting concerning patterns of attendance and lates, discuss reasons provided for absences
- Ensure that parent/s are aware of the consequences of receiving a penalty notice?
- Discuss and assess any support needs, referrals to partner agencies and school support, needed to improve attendance.
- If applicable discuss an EHAT assessment (consent based) if it is felt that a multi-agency support plan is needed
- **Discuss and obtain consent to open an EHAT single agency assessment if no multi-agency support is needed.**

All the above should be recorded clearly on the Notice to improve and a review date (15 day monitoring period) should be recorded by the attendance officer. Parents are issued with a Notice to improve 15 day monitoring at the meeting.

If attendance improves during this period and parent/s engage with support, no further action may be needed.

If there is no improvement in attendance during the monitoring period (15days), the Notice to improve has failed send parent/s a copy of the **LA letter 3 U.A. Failed notice to improve. Complete the FPN form.**

Request Meeting with parent/s
Notice to improve to be issued
If parent/s fail to attend the meeting,
follow the following process



1. In the first instance attempt to call parent/s to discuss the reason for failing to attend the meeting. Record reasons. Discuss the Notice to improve and inform parent/s of the review period and actions noted.
2. **Send Local Authority letter 2 U.A. Invitation to meeting failed to parent/s with the Notice to improve – Failed to Attend Form. (e-mail or hand deliver if possible)**
3. If attendance improves during this period and parent/s engage with support, no further action may be needed.
4. If there is no improvement in attendance during the monitoring period (15days), the Notice to improve has failed send parent/s a copy of **the LA letter 3 U.A. Failed notice to improve. Complete the Penalty Notice Form.**

Procedure to be followed for all **statutory** pupils if a pupil has **10 sessions of unauthorised absences within a rolling 10-week school period or more and parent/s have failed a Notice to Improve 15-day monitoring plan and/or have not engaged with support offered to improve their child's attendance issue a Penalty Notice Request.**

A fixed penalty request cannot be made if a pupil's attendance is below 70%



Penalty Notice Request



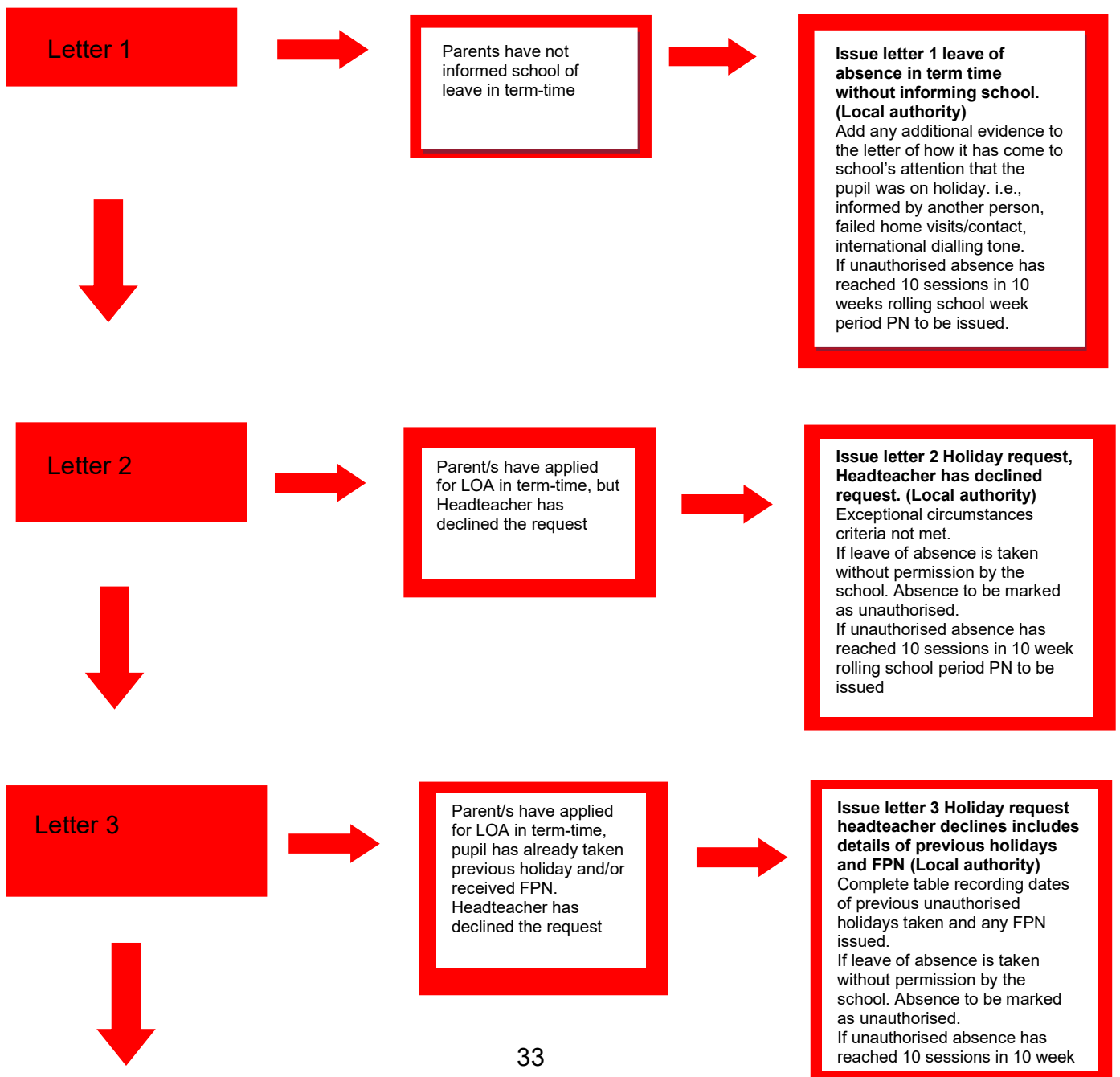
Points to remember when submitting a penalty notice request.

- Every letter should be addressed individually for each parent
- Every letter should be dated and with a full address
- FPN request should be treated as a separate request for each parent and each child
- Each request should include:
 - FPN request
 - Headteachers certificate
 - Registration certificate

Leave of absence holiday in term time procedure

All leave in term-time requests should be submitted to the school at least 4 weeks prior to the date of the requested leave.

Holiday requests submitted by parent/s should only be approved if they meet the exceptional



Letter 4



Declined LOA, but parent/s continue to take pupil on holiday.
There are no exceptional circumstances.



Issue letter 4 Headteacher declined LOA request, but parent/s continue to take pupil on holiday.
If leave of absence is taken without permission by the school. Absence to be marked as unauthorised.
If unauthorised absence has reached 10 sessions in 10 week rolling school period PN

Links with other policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy

Related Documents:

St Helens Council Peoples Service Penalty Notice Code of Conduct
(Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Relevant legislation

The Education Act 1996 The Children Act 1989

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Sentencing Act 2020 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Relevant Government Guidance

Working together to improve school attendance.

Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour.

Children missing education.

Keeping children safe in education.

Working together to safeguard children.

Elective home education.

Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities.

Exclusion from maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England.

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.

Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying.