

## Attendance Policy

# EPWORTH PRIMARY ACADEMY



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## 1 Aims and Principles of Good Attendance

- The academy is committed to maximising the achievement of all pupils.
- There is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement.
- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the academy.
- Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the academy and encouraging pupils to reach good attendance levels.
- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at the academy.
- The academy will take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance.

### **What the Academy Expects of its pupils:**

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day.
- To hand any letters regarding absence from parents to class teacher.

### **What the Academy expects of parents/carers**

- To fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend the academy regularly and on time.
- To ensure that they contact the academy on the first day their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the academy day with equipment, completed homework etc.
- To contact the Class Teacher, Principal or Progress and achievement leader in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from the academy.
- To inform the Class Teacher and seek authorisation for any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, arrange appointments outside of the academy day.
- To ensure the continuity of their child's education by taking holidays during the academy holiday period except in exceptional circumstances.

### **What parents and pupils can expect of the academy**

- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at the academy.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance by all staff.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend the academy without providing good reason by the Progress and achievement leader.
- Prompt action on any problems notified by either the Progress and achievement leader or Principal.
- Close liaison with the Educational Welfare Service to assist and support parents and pupils where needed.
- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through a termly report to parents

## 2 Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. The Local Authority will use the 1996 Education Act and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (penalty notices) in order to fulfil its duties in ensuring regular school attendance. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Authority to issue penalty notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance. These powers came into force on the 27 February 2004. **Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.**

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised. A parent/carer may be required to provide evidence to support absences due to illness or other reason.

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## 3 Registration

Registers will be called promptly at 8.55 a.m. and at 1.05 p.m. and will be marked in accordance with the list of symbols required by the DCSF.

Registers will CLOSE at 9.20 a.m. and at 1.20 p.m.

The following procedures apply: -

- If a pupil arrives late and the register is still open, they should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session
- If a pupil arrives after the register has closed and provides a satisfactory explanation, they will be marked as 'late after register closed' for that session.
- If a pupil arrives after the register has closed and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation (dependent on circumstance and explanation), they will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

Pupils who arrive after the academy day start times, should report first (access is by main door after 8.55am) to the Receptionist, then to the class teacher. The register entry will be then amended, if appropriate, as outlined above. If a pupil is consistently late, progress and achievement lead will contact the parents.

Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in the academy after the registers have closed and an unacceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the pupil must be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

All class teachers will take registers in each of their classes.

## 4 Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. Epworth Primary Academy records absences in accordance with the latest guidance from the DCSF. These codes are recorded by the Progress and achievement leader and not the class teacher.

The Attendance Codes are listed in Appendix A

Absence can be authorised if:

- The pupil was absent with leave
- The pupil was ill 'or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'
- 'the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs'
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (6) are met.
- There is a family bereavement
- The pupil is attending interview with parents for a place at another school
- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling)

Note: The absence of pupils taking part in supervised educational activities outside the academy is recorded as 'approved educational activity'. This is equivalent to 'present' for performance table purposes. To avoid confusion in an emergency, schools should not record pupils who are off-site as present. The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used:

- field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas;
- participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities;

Absence should be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the academy is dissatisfied with the explanation
- no medical evidence has been received if requested in case of poor attendance.
- the pupil shopping during academy hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- the pupil is away from the academy on a family holiday.

Coding of absences will be in line with current guidelines in relation to Covid Isolations. Following the directive from the DFE that Children should be in school.

## 5 Early Years

- We hope that pupils within our Early Years Foundation Stage will develop positive routines towards maintaining good levels of attendance and punctuality that will stay with them throughout their school life and on into adulthood.
- Despite being under compulsory school age, we ask that parents still follow the routines and procedures regarding attendance as laid out in this policy.
- Parents/Carers receiving funded Nursery places should be aware that persistent absence may

result in reduced sessions or a place being withdrawn. In these circumstances the academy will work with families to try and overcome any problems or issues.

## 6 Exceptional Circumstances

There was a change in the law relating to holidays in term time as a result of the implementation of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 1 September 2006. **Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.**

The position is now that there is **NO ENTITLEMENT** to remove children from school during term time to take holiday.

However, the Appropriate Person within a school, usually the Principal, has the authority, in appropriate circumstances to authorise absence from school for a child for up to 10 days in any one academic year for exceptional circumstances which will be determined by the Principal only upon presentation of evidence. (Regulation 7(4))

For any absence from school to be authorised by the Appropriate Person, the parent or person with whom the child normally resides must make an application to remove that child from school (Regulation 7(3)). In determining that application the Appropriate Person within the school must be satisfied that there is a SPECIAL REASON as to why the application should be granted (Regulation 7(3)(b)) and if there is a SPECIAL REASON, is it appropriate for the absence to be authorised. If there is no SPECIAL REASON, the application should be refused, and no further consideration should be given to it.

A SPECIAL REASON is not defined within the Regulations however there is guidance as to what amounts to a SPECIAL REASON which cites the following:

- Service Personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside of term time, if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis/serious illness.

The Appropriate Person within the school should seek written evidence supporting the claim that there is a SPECIAL REASON to satisfy themselves that one exists, such as a letter from an employer or a letter from a medical practitioner. It should be remembered that in the case of being unable to take holidays outside of term time as a result of work commitments, this extends to all school holidays.

If the Appropriate Person within the school is satisfied that there is a SPECIAL REASON, then, and only then, should they proceed to consider whether the absence should be authorised, given proper consideration to matters such as SATS, external and internal assessments and attendance record of the pupil concerned. It is only at this stage that an application for holidays in term time should be authorised and subject to the maximum of 10 days in any one academic year.

The Appropriate Person within the school can authorise more than 10 days absence during term time in EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES although no guidance has been issued as to precisely what

properly amounts to EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (Regulation 7(4)) and a letter will be sent home.

In the event that a child has unauthorised absence from school for a period of at least 5 consecutive days, North Lincolnshire Council may issue the parents or other person(s) with day to day responsibility for the child with a Penalty Notice. In the event that a Penalty Notice is not paid, the parent(s) and/or other person(s) with day to day responsibility for the child will be prosecuted. In appropriate cases, no Penalty Notice will be issued where there are unauthorised absences from school for a period of at least 5 consecutive days and the matter will proceed straight to prosecution.

Parent/carers will have 21 days to pay £60 per parent/carer per child. If this is not paid within 21 days, the fine increases to £120 per parent/carer per child. Failure to pay after 28 days will result in legal proceedings in the magistrate's court.

It should be noted that if an application to remove a child from school to attend a holiday is refused by the Appropriate Person at the school, that decision can only be properly challenged and overturned by an Order for Judicial Review in the High Court and such proceedings have to be brought within three months of the date of the decision itself. If no application is made to The High Court for such an Order, the Magistrates Court is unable to question the decision not to authorise the absence from school to attend a holiday.

Parents should be advised to contact the school prior to booking any holidays in term time in order to discuss why they believe it should be special circumstance.

Schools will use the North Lincolnshire Council Leave of Absence form in order to ensure consistency throughout the Authority and parents must request formally leave in term time at least **10 school days** prior to the leave taking place.

## 7 Procedures for Following up Absence.

Absences must be explained by parents on the first day of absence. We prefer parents to contact us by telephone by 10:00am on the first day of absence. We operate a 'first contact' system and ring parents if children are not in the academy by 10:30am and we have not been informed of absence. This is for the safety of the children.

Notes, letters and telephone message slips should be retained by class teachers for recording purposes and then passed on to the Receptionist for filing.

On the sixth day of any unexplained absence a computer-generated letter to parents will be forwarded to the Principal for signing and then returned to the office for posting. Failure to respond to this by parents will result in the involvement of the Education Inclusion Officer.

When pupils return to the academy after a period of absence, they should bring a note detailing both the reason and duration of absence.

Notes from parents/ voicemails/phone calls are read, listed too and logged on Arbor.

If a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the academy's efforts to effect an improvement have

been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Inclusion Officer during their consultation visit and appropriate action will be taken, this may involve the issue of a penalty notice and/or prosecution.

Penalty Notices came into force through *The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003*. Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Education Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

During the current COVID-19 issues a child that is absent or sent home with Symptoms will be expected to get a test and self-isolate until the results are returned. The school will follow the Government guidance for this process. Where a child is absent due to symptoms they will be marked by the Appropriate code.

## 8 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Epworth Primary Academy will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The academy's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken. Early intervention often prevents more frequent absences.

Progress and achievement leader is responsible for monitoring attendance and working with our families.

A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.

Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.

Good attendance will be praised appropriately.

Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc.) of the importance of good attendance.

Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be reintegrated back into school upon their return.

The Principal will report to the AOC on attendance matters through the termly Principal's report.

The Principal will have regular meetings with the school's Education Inclusion Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

An increased use of the MIS (computer) package to analyse data and statistics.

Good attendance will be promoted with children through attendance awards made termly and annually to pupils with 100% attendance in Assembly and a weekly class competition.

Rewards:



- Weekly stickers
  - Weekly competition
  - Monthly Prizes
  - Termly prizes for 100% attendance
  - Yearly prizes for 100% attendance
  - Certificates for improved attendance
  - PA children will be tracked closely with parents contacted as and when required
  - Children will be monitored on a weekly basis at relating to rise or fall in attendance
  - Class teachers will praise and monitor children in their own class
  - Teachers will be given weekly monitoring charts for their classes.
  - The academy will work with 5 colours to identify different children in different target groups.
- These will be adapted due to current Covid situations and used where appropriate.

## 9 Attendance Statistics

All schools are required by the Local Authority to submit attendance figures to the Education Inclusion Service and Local Authority on a regular basis. These are also currently submitted to the DfE following guidance during Covid.

## 10 Children Missing in Education

We believe all children, regardless of their circumstances or background are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs or disability.

We operate a stringent attendance tracking system that is overseen by a member of the leadership team. The tracking and use of effective attendance management strategies enables us to ensure every child is accounted for.

We undertake to support and challenge both persistent absence and provide early intervention for emerging needs with the use of the early help assessment framework and report on such children on a timely basis to the Virtual School, including those children and young people who are not receiving a full time education within the school.

The Academy will only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. It is for Principal to determine the length of time that the child can be away from the Academy as authorised leave. We recognise that some children seeking leave of absence, are vulnerable to risk of abuse, neglect or travelling to conflict zones, or at risk of FGM or forced marriage. The DSL will, as soon as a concern is established, alert the Local Authority through an immediate referral to the Duty team of Children's Social Care.

All staff are alert to these triggers and the Academy works in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure localised risks are particularly taken note of and shared with all staff. Staff who have pastoral responsibility undergo training on attendance and safeguarding issues on a regular basis. Pupil absence will be followed up on a daily basis as a matter of priority and all registers kept up to date daily with the appropriate DfE recognised attendance/absence marks. All absences are followed up with parents with a clear escalation process where concerns emerge or remain. To facilitate contact from the academy parents should ensure we have at least two contact numbers for their child.

Through the Children Missing in Education procedures, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to identify children who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving a suitable education other than at a school. The overall aim is for all children and young people in North Lincolnshire to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential through access to education. The purpose of the section 436A of the Education Act 1996 is to ensure that local authorities' arrangements enable them to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school, and are not receiving suitable education other than at a school (e.g. privately or in alternative provision). Those children identified as not receiving suitable education should be returned to full time education either at a school or in alternative provision. This duty only relates to children of compulsory school age. It is expected therefore that through these procedures, schools/academies will work in conjunction with the local authority by ensuring:

- That all pupils who go missing from schools in the North Lincolnshire area and move to other areas are speedily located and children are adequately safeguarded in the process.
- All departments, services and agencies will work together and share information regarding children who may be missing education – this includes all schools/academies
- Support is given to other local authorities to locate their own missing pupils
- The local authority encourages all independent and non-maintained schools to notify them when children of compulsory school age leave their roll, and of their destination wherever possible.

The admissions register at Epworth Primary Academy is kept up to date and the Local Authority is informed of all children who are removed from the Academy roll when they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

The local authority will be informed as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the roll.

No child will be removed from our Academy roll until all safeguarding checks have been completed or the whereabouts of a pupil have been established.

Links with Virtual School Head and the Academy designated teacher for pupils who are LAC (Please see appendix 11)

Checks are made when a child transfers to another school to ensure they start at another school. If school is unsure where the child is going to DSL and office staff fill in a Children Missing in Education form to notify the Local Authority.

**No leave of absence will be approved for assessment weeks throughout the School**

**Please note that any leave of absence, for the purpose of a holiday, which equals 4.5 days or more within a 6-week period will result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice**

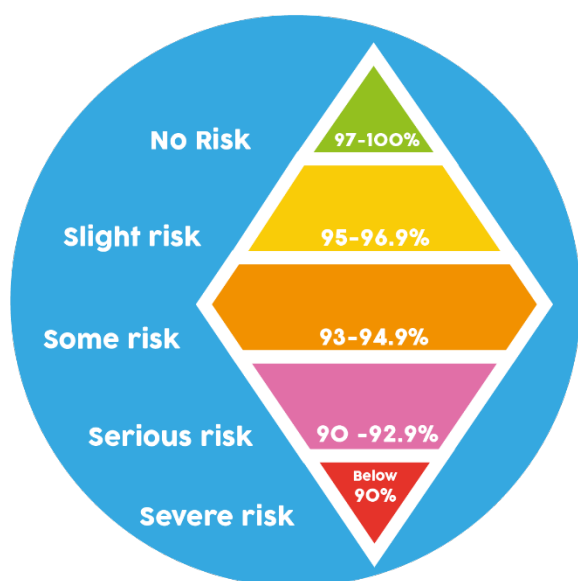
**If the absence is not authorised by the Head Teacher, it will be recorded as an unauthorised and noted on the child's record. In all cases this will be referred to the attendance team / Education Welfare Officer (EWO). This could result in a fixed penalty of up to £120 per parent per child under section 44b of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure regular attendance at school.**

## 11 Attendance Monitoring and Intervention

As a School, we aim for excellent attendance for all pupils in the school. If a child's attendance drops below 97% the situation will be monitored and communicated to parents.

If attendance dips (90%), the child is considered to be a persistent absentee and action by the School will commence in line with the Governments guidelines. We have an escalating approach to reinforce high levels of attendance and intervening approach when attendance is a concern:

- The attendance statistics will be monitored for every child on a regular basis by the attendance team.
- Green attendance – children in this category will receive regular praise from their class teacher
- Yellow attendance – These children will be supported and challenged by the class teacher to raise their attendance back to 97%
- Orange – class teachers will work with these children to understand their reasons for absence and take appropriate steps to support the child or family. Meetings will be organised by the class teacher with parents / carers to discuss the reasons and impact of low attendance on their child and the class to improve attendance rapidly and effectively. The Progress and achievement Leader will support the class teacher
- Pink - Progress and achievement lead will be in contact with class teacher and parents to discuss ways of improving the attendance.
- Teachers will be made aware of all children falling into the persistent absence group (10% of learning time) and will be required to support their missed learning
- Red – The attendance team and any other relevant members of staff (Education Welfare Officer, Progress and achievement lead, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Principal) will meet with parents / carers to improve the attendance of any children in the Red groups. This includes taking legal action where required.



To support this process the attendance team will hold regular attendance meetings in which all children will be monitored and banded in relation to their attendance percentage. In these meeting any children in the red or Pink groups or whose attendance is declining will be reviewed. A series of actions will be agreed, delegated and recorded. On a monthly basis these meetings will be attended by the Principal and a Governor to ensure that all stakeholders are held accountable for their actions.

### Honesty

Please be aware that any children who are absent because they are ill but inform friends or staff that they were on holiday, the School do have the authority to challenge this with the parents and ascertain the reason for the absence. Accordingly, the absence will then be treated as unauthorised and you may be fined. It is also important to consider the message this is sending to your children; hearing responsible adults 'bending' the truth does not provide an appropriate role model

### 12 Penalty Notices

If attendance is raised as a concern, appropriate actions are taken which include letters, offered meetings, School Attendance Panels, home visits, Early Help Assessments (EHA's) and phone calls. If attendance does not improve further actions may include legal proceedings. In some cases, this will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). This could result in a fixed penalty of up to £120 per parent per child under section 44B of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure regular attendance at school.

Be aware that any adult who has responsibility of the child on a daily basis may be also be found guilty of not ensuring the child's regular attendance at school.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

**Exclusions** Section 103 to 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to pupils subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place, during school hours (0900 – 15:30 Monday – Friday), without reasonable

justification during the period of this exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during this period, the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the Local Authority before a magistrate's court. Alternatively, the matter can be dealt with by the school through issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

### 13 Safeguarding

Academy Attendance is a Safeguarding issue. See Academy Safeguarding Policy for more details.

## 14 Appendix 1 – Attendance Registers

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Abs
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work Experience
#	School closed to pupils & staff
Y	Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll

I01 Covid Isolation

I02 Covid Isolation

## 15 Appendix 2 – Application Form for a Holiday During Term Time



### APPLICATION FORM

#### Leave of Absence during Term Time



In September 2013 there was an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which prohibited the Headteacher of a school granting leave of absence for a pupil except where an *application is made in advance* and the Headteacher considers there are *exceptional circumstances* relating to the request. If a Headteacher authorises a leave of absence request, it will be his/her decision to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.

Should you wish to make a request, which must be made prior to the proposed leave; please complete the application below providing any additional evidence in support of the exceptional circumstances, together with details of why the leave cannot be taken during any school holiday period. Each request will be considered based on the information provided. Leave of absence is not an entitlement and will not be granted for the sole purpose of a family holiday

1. To be completed by the parent or carer with whom the child normally resides			
School Name			
Name of Pupil		Class	
Address			
Dates Requested	From: (1 <sup>st</sup> date of proposed absence)	To: (last date of absence)	Total School Days
Supporting Information and the reason for the leave of absence request			

Please do not make any arrangements until you have confirmed with the school that the leave of absence is granted

2. Please provide details of any other siblings. A separate application form will be required for each child			
Child Name		School	
Child Name		School	

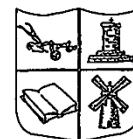
3. I confirm that I am the parent or carer with whom the child listed in section 1 resides			
Signed:		Please Print Name:	
Date:		Relationship to child	

For School Use Only:	Date Application Received:
----------------------	----------------------------

April 2016



**School Response to Application  
for  
Leave of Absence during Term Time**



Details of Application (To be completed by the School)		
Name of Pupil		
Address		
Name of person requesting the leave of absence and their relationship to the child		
Dates Requested	From: (1 <sup>st</sup> date of proposed absence) To: (last date of absence)	Total School Days

Decision following consideration of Application	
I have considered your application for leave of absence based on the information provided and my decision is confirmed below:	
<p>Authorised Absence <input type="checkbox"/> Please tick as appropriate</p> <p>On this occasion I am <u>able</u> to authorise the leave of absence as I feel that the reasons provided are exceptional. The absence will be recorded on the school register as authorised.</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Printed:</p> <p>Position:</p>	<p>Unauthorised Absence <input type="checkbox"/> Please tick as appropriate</p> <p>On this occasion I am <u>unable</u> to authorise the leave of absence as I do not consider the reason provided to be exceptional. Should you go ahead with the proposed leave, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised on the school register.</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Printed:</p> <p>Position:</p>

If the leave of absence has not been authorised by the Headteacher the information will be submitted to the Education Inclusion Service who may issue a Penalty Notice or take other legal intervention if there are 10 or more consecutive or non-consecutive unauthorised absence sessions (5 days). Penalty Notices were introduced as an alternative to prosecution but if they fail to act as a future deterrent, prosecution may be considered, rather than a further Penalty.

- If paid within 21 days the Penalty Notice is £60 per parent or carer, per child
- If paid after 21 days but within 28 days the Penalty Notice increases to £120 per parent or carer, per child
- If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days this will result in prosecution

For School Use Only: <b>A copy MUST be retained by the school</b>	Date Returned to Applicant:
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April 2016





Every  
**minute**  
counts



# School Attendance and leave of absence

Every day of school helps your child enjoy  
and achieve.

Good attendance provides better chances  
and more choices.

**People Directorate - Education**



## Why is school attendance important for my child?

- Most parents want their children to be happy and achieve.
- It is more important than ever for children to have a good education, to have choices and opportunities in adult life.
- Children only get one chance at school, and your child's chances of a successful future may be affected if they are not attending school regularly.
- Research shows that some young people who regularly miss school can be drawn into anti-social behaviour or crime.

A 90% attendance means your child is absent from school for the equivalent of half a day per week, missing up to 3 hours of lessons a week, which equates to approximately 100 hours of learning per year.

## The law

- All children who are aged between 5 and 16 years are entitled to an appropriate, full time education (from the term after their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June of the year in which they become 16 years old).





- Parents or carers are responsible for making sure that their children regularly attend the school or provision at which they are registered. The Local Authority has to make sure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibilities.

### **Why is it my responsibility to ensure my child attends school?**

- As a parent or carer you are committing an offence if you fail to ensure your child attends school regularly.
- Failure to secure your child's regular school attendance can result in your prosecution.
- Prosecution can be through the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1/1A) of the Education Act 1996 or by the issue of a Penalty Notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice and penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer of each child and any person identified as having responsibility for ensuring the child attends regularly.

**Please note: If a penalty notice does not act as a deterrent further occurrences may result in direct prosecution.**

### **Authorised and unauthorised absences**

- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent or carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter or message will the absence be authorised.
- Where a number of absences have developed into a pattern of concern, a parent or carer may be required to provide evidence to support such absences.
- There may be times when your child has to miss school because they are ill, in which case you should contact the school on the first day of absence before 9am to inform the school of the reason for your child's absence and give an expected return to school date.
- Children may have to attend medical or dental appointments in school time, (always ask if appointments can be made after school) but routine appointments should always be made out of school hours. Most medical or dental appointments do not require a full day of absence from school.



## What difference does it make if my child arrives late to school?

Lateness = lost learning – minutes amount to days!

It is a legal requirement that your child is registered at both registrations – morning and afternoon.

If your child misses a registration the absence will remain unauthorised.

Taking your child to school and escorting them onto school premises is the easiest way to guarantee your child is arriving on time.

Minutes lost each day	Days per school year
5 mins	3 days
10 mins	6.5 days
15 mins	10 days
20 mins	13 days
30 mins	19 days

## If I send my child to school, isn't it the school's responsibility to make sure they stay in school?

Actually, it is still your responsibility! Schools are places of learning. Schools have a duty of care but have no authority to restrain your child to prevent them from walking off school premises.

## Who can I talk to for help in making changes and improving my child's school attendance?

- All schools have a variety of different people who can help you and your child sort out issues that are affecting school attendance.
- Contact the school and ask to speak to someone as soon as you suspect your child may be unhappy or missing school. He/she may be struggling with personal and/or school issues. Lots of different people are employed directly by schools, such as Learning Mentors, Inclusion Officers or Attendance Officers to help you and your child.
- You can ask your school to undertake an assessment so that they understand any needs you may have and can gain an understanding of what type of support you may require to assist in addressing your child's irregular school attendance.



## What if my child doesn't attend school regularly?

- Your child's school is responsible for reporting irregular school attendance to the Local Authority.
- Both the school and the Local Authority can give you advice to address your child's school attendance issues and help you to meet your legal responsibilities as a parent or carer.
- Responsibility for ensuring the regular school attendance of a child remains with the parents or carers.
- Where support and guidance has been offered to a family and school attendance does not improve, legal proceedings may be initiated against the parents or carers.
- The Local Authority will enforce regular school attendance if there is no improvement. Repeated failure to attend meetings will not prevent legal intervention. Fines can be imposed up to £2,500, may include a parenting order, with a compulsory parenting course, other community order and/or imprisonment.

**Don't let this happen – we are here to help!**

## 17 Appendix 4 – Nursery Letter of Concern

Dear Parent/Carer

### ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

We have been monitoring your child's attendance and it has been noted that has missed a significant number of sessions. Due to the fact that these are funded sessions we must write to inform you that your child's place will be withdrawn unless their attendance improves.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact the academy office.

Yours sincerely

Principal

## 18 Document Control

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