



CRAMLINGTON LEARNING VILLAGE

Name of Policy: **Attendance Policy**

Overview: Cramlington Learning Village believes that achieving a high level of attendance is directly linked to achievement, life chances and employment prospects of our young people. Parents, staff and students all have a responsibility to ensure students maintain excellent attendance standards and therefore succeed in achieving their goals

Policy Presented to: Standards & Outcomes Committee

Date: 16/10/2017

Policy Presented to: Full Governing Body

Date: 12/03/2018

Author: Jon Bird, Deputy Headteacher



Introduction

Excellent attendance promotes excellent learning. Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

We believe that regular school attendance is crucial to allowing children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

We value all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance early and try to resolve any difficulties.

We believe attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community and local community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a thread that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Key levels of attendance are defined as:

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
100 - 98%	Excellent	0 to 4	Less than 1
95 - 97%	Good	5 to 9	1 to 2
93 – 94%	Satisfactory	10 to 13	2 to 3
92 – 91%	Unsatisfactory	14 to 28	3 to 6
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 29	More than 6

Principles

We believe the following important principles underpin our approach to managing attendance:

- Students, parents/carers, school staff and governors understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality.
- There are clear procedures in place for enabling students to come to school.
- Parents/carers and students have the opportunity to raise any concerns around attendance and feel comfortable to discuss these with school.
- Resources e.g. time, people, space are allocated to support the attendance policy.
- A whole school approach reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and achieve. A positive learning climate is



essential for promoting good attendance and attendance issues are addressed in the curriculum as part of our wellbeing programme.

- The school identifies patterns of absence early and intervenes early. Research shows patterns of attendance are established early in a school career. Children who miss significant amounts of their education in primary schools are more likely to truant later on. We will work with our primary schools to identify vulnerable students and families so we can give them early support. We involve Education Welfare and take a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families.
- The school rewards students who have good attendance and those who strive to improve their attendance.
- Sanctions for failing to ensure regular attendance are fully understood by the whole school community and parents/carers.

Rights/Roles/ Responsibilities

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of students who miss more than 50% of school only 3% achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including Maths and English.

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, students and the wider school community.

Jon Bird, Deputy Headteacher, is the attendance lead who works closely with Janet Leese our Attendance Manager.

Cramlington Learning Village will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers.
- Ensure a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; all staff understand the Attendance Policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Follow the attendance protocols to promote good attendance and reduce absence (see appendix 1).
- Have well managed systems in place to report, record and monitor attendance of all students including those who are educated off site or on partial timetables.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and DfE as required.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.



- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed on a biennial basis. Termly reports on attendance to the Governing Body will be provided in the Headteacher's report.

Cramlington Learning Village expects Parents/Carers to:

- Talk to their son/daughter about their experiences in school and to take a positive interest in their son/daughter's learning and educational progress.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school on the first day of absence to let them know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. Though verbal explanations may be acceptable it should be followed up with a note where possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make medical appointments outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, appropriate bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Support our school's policy on holidays by avoiding taking leave of absence during term time as per the signed home school agreement (see appendix 2).

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and, where necessary, to use legal enforcement. This responsibility is undertaken by Education Welfare.

The Education Regulations, England, 2006, expect schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.



The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Categorising absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation and/or evidence for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Where there are repeated absences due to reported illness parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card or prescription.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents /carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's Learning Manager/Pastoral Co-ordinator will make arrangements for work to be set for the duration of the exclusion.

Leave of absence during term time

'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances .Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted'

Leave of absence during term time is entirely at the discretion of the Head Teacher and is not a parental right.



All decisions in relation to whether leave of absence is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) should be applied consistently and equitably.

We will follow this application process:

- A parent/carer requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance (see appendix 3).
- School may invite the parent/carer into school to discuss the reasons for the application and the impact the absence may have on the child's education.
- The school will reply to all applications in writing stating their decision, signed by the head teacher's designated officer – Mrs Janet Leese, Attendance Manager.
- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the date the child is expected to return to school (see appendix 4)
- If a parent/carer removes their son/daughter from school without requesting leave of absence or without authorisation from the Head Teacher the parent/carer will be informed in writing that a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Officer who may take further action (see appendix 5)
- If a pupil fails to return to school on the expected date and, after following protocols to contact parent/carer, we cannot ascertain a reason why, we may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education Regulations, England, 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

Religious Observance

We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to request their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's/carer's religious body.

Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their son/daughter to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200



attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Northumberland, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

We are regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil's school place at CLV will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

We can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents/carers must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

We will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student.

Late Arrival

Registration begins at 8.50am, but school expects students to be on site from 8.45am. Students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 9.30am. Students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late after registration (U). This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the school office (JLV) or student services (SLV) to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

Absence will only be **authorised** if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, evidence of attendance at a medical appointment or school has agreed with parent/carer.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late.



Arriving late for school can severely affect achievement. Five minutes late each day = three days lost over the year. We regularly monitor punctuality and write to parents/carers informing them of a clear punctuality monitoring period for their son/daughter and that, if timekeeping does not improve, sanctions may be put in place, with continued concerns resulting in informing our Education Welfare Officer.

Un-authorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms/shoes
- Having hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Leave of Absence taken without the authorisation of school

We will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence to ascertain a reason for their son/daughter's absence. If a student's absence falls below 90% they are classed as a student with persistent absence and as such discussed with the Education Welfare Officer. This may result in a letter from school informing parents/carers all further absences will not be authorised without medical confirmation – the school is responsible for authorising absence not the parent/carers.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education Regulations, England, 2006 students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority

We follow Northumberland County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.



Using Attendance Data

Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

Learning Managers and Pastoral Co-ordinators have weekly meetings with the Attendance Manager to monitor students attendance using the data collected to see if attendance has stayed the same, improved or deteriorated. This student data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the attendance protocols (see appendix 1).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school/partnership strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

We will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Support Systems

School recognise that poor attendance is often a sign that there are more serious issues going on in a child's life. This may be linked to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children.

The school will implement strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parent/carers and students
- Weekly attendance meetings with pastoral staff
- Attendance reports
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Student Voice
- Friendship groups
- Nurture groups
- Well – being programme
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support – Inspire 11
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion facilities such as The Base
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and students.

Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, we will refer to Education Welfare and the use of legal sanctions will be considered



Parenting Contracts - Used in conjunction with Fast Track to Attendance (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003).

A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school, the parent/carer and the Local Authority (EWO). It can also be extended to include the child depending on age.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Northumberland County Council's Protocol

Legal Sanctions - Prosecution

Where intervention by school and the Education Welfare Officer fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide Education Welfare / Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Penalty Notices

(Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

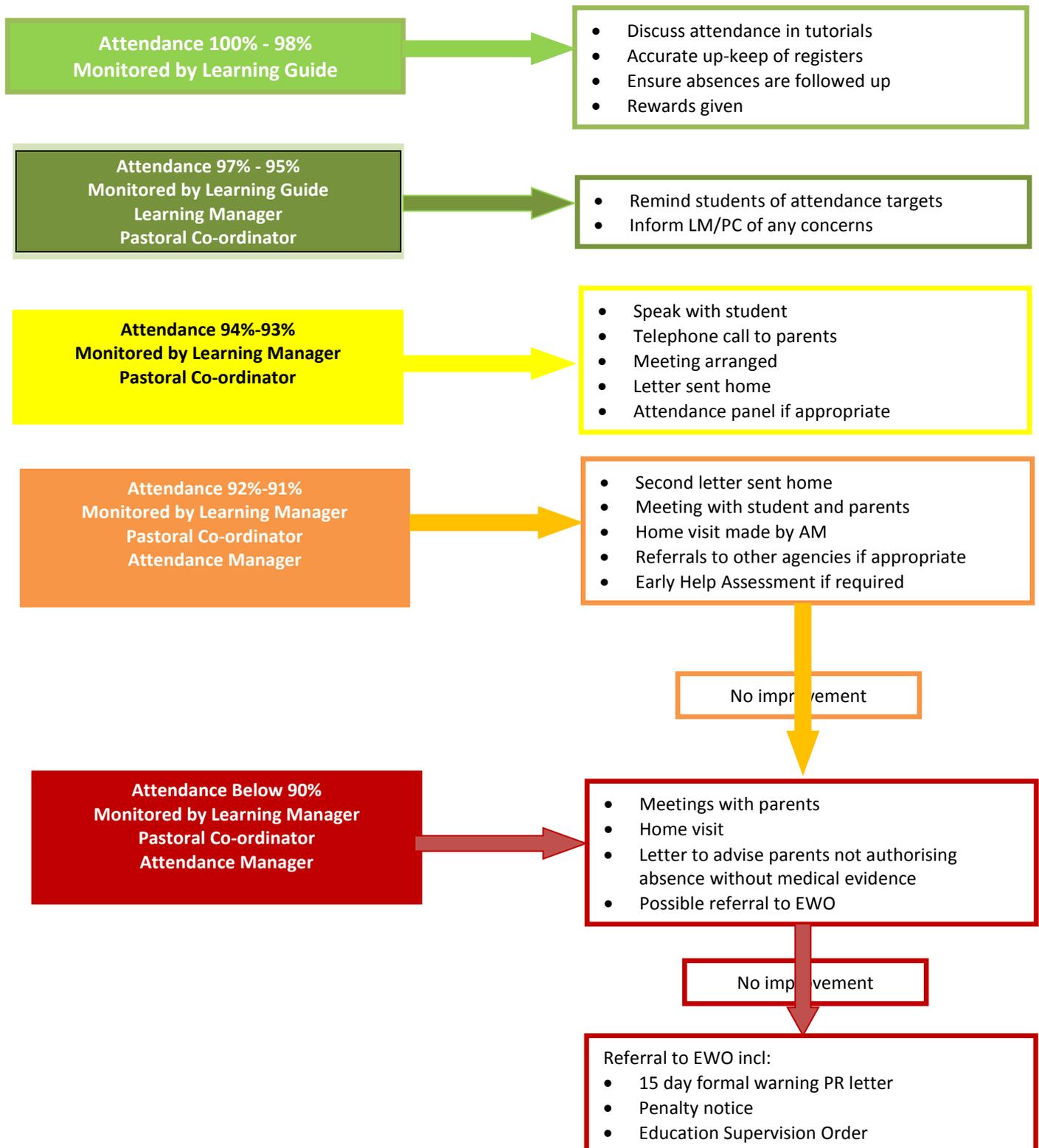
Penalty Notices will be considered in accordance with Northumberland County Council's Protocols

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Appendix 1



Escalation of Attendance Interventions to Promote Good Attendance and Reduce Absence





CRAMLINGTON LEARNING VILLAGE
REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE - DURING TERM TIME
Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations explain clearly that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Name of pupil	
Date of birth	
Address	
Tutor/Year group	
Contact Numbers	
Name and Primary School of siblings	

I request permission for my child to be granted leave of absence from school between:-

First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Total School Days	

Please fully explain the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the leave of absence you would like the Head Teacher to consider. *(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary).*

Declaration

I have read and understood the information regarding leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and Penalty Notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should I take my child on leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Head Teacher.

Signature.....
 Parent/Carer(s)

Date.....



Important Information for Parents/Carers from the Local Authority

The Education Act (1996) requires parents to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time. The Law does however allow Head Teachers to consider individual requests to authorise a Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstance(s).

The Head Teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to justify an authorised absence. It is the parent's responsibility when submitting the request to provide all the information and evidence to prove exceptional circumstances.

The request for authorised Leave of Absence must be made at least two weeks in advance and the Head Teacher may invite the parent/carer(s) into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

If the Head Teacher authorises the Leave of Absence it is expected that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior and after the date covered by the request.

If the Head Teacher refuses Leave of Absence and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Head Teacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.

Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.

Research suggests that children who are absent from School may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.



Direct contact number: 07799 067 174

Appendix 4

2017

Dear

Re: Request for leave of absence from school

Please find attached your form requesting leave of absence for your son/daughter. Due to Government legislation, we are no longer permitted to authorise leave of absence for any students unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

On behalf of the Head Teacher, I have considered your application and I have decided to authorise your request to take NAME out of school for NUMBER of days as I understand the exceptional circumstances for this request. We will expect NAME to return to school on DATE.

Should you wish to discuss this, please do not hesitate to ring me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Janet Leese
Attendance Manager

Enc.



Direct contact number: 07799 067 174

2017

Dear

Re: Request for leave of absence from school

I write on behalf of the Head Teacher and attach your form requesting leave of absence for your son/daughter. We have had to refuse this request as due to Government legislation, we are no longer permitted to authorise leave of absence for any students unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Please note, should you go ahead with the leave of absence you have requested, this will show as unauthorised holidays on his/her school record and may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Should you wish to discuss this, please do not hesitate to ring me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Janet Leese
Attendance Manager

Enc.