



# Shinewater Primary School

## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

### 2025/2026

#### **Equalities Statement**

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as, socio- economic factors. For further information, please see our Equalities Policy.

**This policy is created with reference to the DfE guidance [‘Working Together to Improve Attendance’](#) which became statutory on 19th August 2024.**

#### **Document Management**

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Responsible for review: School Improvement Executives

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**The senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:**

Name: Jennifer Rigby, Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Lead

Email address: [Jennifer.Rigby@swale.at](mailto:Jennifer.Rigby@swale.at)

**The school staff members pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance is:**

Name: Jodie Burman, Attendance, Welfare and Safeguarding Officer

Email address: [Jodie.Burman@swale.at](mailto:Jodie.Burman@swale.at)

### School Times

School Times			
	Start	End	If late picking up
N	08:45	15:10	Children will remain in the nursery until 15:20 then children will be taken to the main office
Yr R	08:45	15:15	Children will remain with the class teacher until 15:25. Children will then be sent to after school club (there will be a charge for this service).
KS1			
KS2			
Reporting your child absence	Mrs Burman		01323 762129 <a href="mailto:swp-attendance@swale.at">swp-attendance@swale.at</a>

### Introduction and Background

Shinewater Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called “[Working together to improve school attendance](#)” and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children’s welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;

- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It seeks to ensure that all stakeholders involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

At Shinewater Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

**The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion (the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school) is:**

Name: Jennifer Rigby, Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Lead

Email address: [Jennifer.Rigby@swale.at](mailto:Jennifer.Rigby@swale.at)

The governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is Patricia Metham

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our **Reach More Parents** and social media communications
- Promote the benefits of high attendance;
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- **Reward good or improving attendance in collaboration with Attendance Superstars, this will include certificates, pin badges and other rewards.**
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress;
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

### **Role of Parents and Carers:**

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together

Ensure that the aim is for their children to achieve 100% school attendance

Ensure that pupils are on the premises for an 8:45am start

The school front gate opens at 8:40 am, however, pupils remain the responsibility of parents or carers until they are lined up and their teacher is present.

Children line up on the playground with their class teachers.

The class teachers take the children into school at 08:45

Children who arrive after the classes have left the playground (08:45 am onwards) will need to register at the main office.

Collect children promptly at the end of the school day, which finishes at 3:15pm. After this time, children are the responsibility of their parents or carers

Collect children promptly from after school clubs (the club leader will communicate finish times on the club letter).

Ensure that the school has current parent/carers and emergency contact telephone numbers and addresses

### **Understanding Types of Absence**

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

**Authorised absences** are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be

authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- day trips;
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)**

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and cooperation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

### **Absence Procedures**

The name and contact details of the school staff members parent/carers should contact about attendance on a day to day basis is:

**The school staff members pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance is:**

Name: Jodie Burman, Attendance, Welfare and Safeguarding Officer

Email address: [swp-attendance@swale.at](mailto:swp-attendance@swale.at)

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

**If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:**

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before **9.15am**, when our register closes;
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised;
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before **9.15am**;
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS and East Sussex County Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or email you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding;
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education."

**If absence continues we will:**

- Write to you if your child's attendance is causing concern, and/or where punctuality is a concern as outlined in the table below.
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with Jodie Burman, Attendance, Welfare and Safeguarding Officer.
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

**Frequent Absence**

The School's Attendance Target is 96%.

In the academic year there are 190 school days.

To achieve 96% in an academic year a child must attend 183 days in the year.

The school recognises that absence can occur for a range of reasons and can be spread across the academic year. To ensure attendance issues are identified promptly every child's attendance is reviewed weekly on a cumulative basis.

### Attendance Categories

Category/colour:	Excellent	Good	Poor	Cause for concern
%:	98% or above	96-97.9%	90.1%-95.9%	90% or less
Days absence per year:	0 - 3 days	4 - 8 days	9 - 18 days	19 days or more

### Stage 1 Intervention

A child whose attendance is 95% (181 days) for the academic year is absent for 9 days. The table below details the trigger point for stage 1 intervention.

At this stage **Letter 1** is sent home which highlights the importance of good attendance; the pupil's Attendance Certificate is also enclosed.

Term	Cumulative days absence at 97%	Letter 1 trigger point days absence	Stage 1 threshold attendance %
Term 1	1	4	88%
Term 2	2	5	93%
Term 3	3	6	94%
Term 4	4	7	95%
Term 5	5	8	95%
Term 6	6	9	95%

### Stage 2 Intervention

A child whose attendance is 93% for the academic year is absent for 13 days (two & half school weeks). The table below details the trigger point for Stage 2 Intervention.

Term	Cumulative days absence at 97%	Letter 2 trigger point days absence	Stage 2 threshold attendance %
Term 1	1	7	79%
Term 2	2	8	89%
Term 3	3	9	91%
Term 4	4	10	93%

<b>Term 5</b>	5	11	93%
<b>Term 6</b>	6	12	94%

At this stage, **Letter 2** is sent home which invites parents/carers to attend an attendance meeting at the school or a telephone appointment to complete an Attendance Support Plan. After the date of the meeting, a follow up letter is sent out which confirms attendance at the meeting and a copy of the Attendance Support Plan. The follow up letters advise that their child's attendance will continue to be reviewed on a weekly basis and next steps. When there is no improvement and attendance remains a concern Shinewater Primary School will consider next steps, including the use of the penalty notice pathway if there are ten periods of absence in ten school weeks. At this stage, all future absences, without medical evidence, are marked as 'unauthorised'.

### Stage 3 intervention

A child whose attendance is 90% for the academic year is absent for 19 days (four school weeks). The table below details the trigger point for Stage 3 Intervention.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Cumulative days absence at 97%</b>	<b>Letter 3 trigger point days absence</b>	<b>Stage 3 threshold attendance %</b>
<b>Term 1</b>	1	15	55%
<b>Term 2</b>	2	16	77%
<b>Term 3</b>	3	17	83%
<b>Term 4</b>	4	18	86%
<b>Term 5</b>	5	19	88%
<b>Term 6</b>	6	20	90%

At this stage, **Letter 3** is sent home which encourages parents/carers to attend a further meeting with a member of the Attendance Team to discuss and review their child's attendance, implement supportive interventions and review strategies in existing plans. The child's Attendance Certificate is enclosed. Follow up letters are sent after the date of the meeting; confirming whether the parents/carers attended or not and detailing the outcome of the meeting; including any support agreed and clear steps in the parent contract. Where all supportive measures have been exhausted, a formal attendance contract may be considered at this stage. Where there is no improvement and attendance remains a concern Shinewater Primary School will consider a Local Authority Multi-Agency response, the use of the penalty notice pathway and if necessary, referrals to additional services which may include statutory interventions.

### Stage 4 intervention

A child whose attendance is 85% for the academic year is absent for 28 days (five & half school weeks). The table below details the trigger point for Stage 4 Intervention.

Term	Cumulative days absence at 97%	Letter 4 trigger point days absence	Stage 4 threshold attendance %
Term 1	1	23	31%
Term 2	2	24	65%
Term 3	3	25	75%
Term 4	4	26	80%
Term 5	5	27	83%
Term 6	6	28	86%

At this stage, **Letter 4** is sent home which explains that despite the school's intervention and support and attempting to engage with parents/carers several times in order to support with improvements in attendance, that there still does not seem to be any significant improvement with their child's attendance. The letter explains that it has now become necessary for the school to consider referring their concerns to The Attendance Support Team for a level 2 Early Help Keywork or the penalty notice pathway. Pupil's Attendance Certificate is enclosed and details are recorded onto Attendance Tracker.

A weekly meeting between the Senior Attendance Lead and Attendance Officer takes place to review attendance of all pupils who have reached each of the threshold intervention levels. The personal circumstances of each child is discussed, along with improvements made, to determine whether the intervention is needed.

The Senior Attendance Lead is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), which ensures triangulation of safeguarding / pastoral information. All attendance concerns are recorded onto the school's electronic safeguarding system (Bromcom/(CPOMs) to ensure DSL analysis and actions are recorded.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Shinewater Primary School are:

Gates open: 8.40am

Registration starts: 8.45am

Registration closes: 08.50am

End of the school day: 15.15pm

**How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 8.45am when children can begin to come into school; Registers are taken at 08:50am; Children arriving after 08:50am are required to come into school via the school office. If accompanied by a parent/carer they must sign them into our iPad and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded

At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence; The school will contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with Jodie Burman from the Attendance Team, but you can approach the school at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality. For pupils who have regular lates, incentives are provided and an Attendance and Punctuality Passport is introduced.

### **Lateness Procedures**

- 3 lates in one big term (Autumn, Spring or Summer): Letter 1 sent home, which reminds parents/carers about the importance of being in school on time and concerns are recorded on the school's Lateness/Attendance Overview.
- 6 lates within one big term (Autumn, Spring or Summer): Letter 2 sent home which explains that all future lates will be marked as unauthorised and that 10 further lates will result in a Penalty Notice and concerns are recorded on the school's Lateness/Attendance Overview.
- 9 lates within one big term (Autumn Spring or Summer): Letter 3 sent home which explains that a Penalty Notice will be issued and concerns are recorded on the school's Lateness/Attendance Overview. A referral for local authority intervention is sought.

### **Understanding Barriers to Attendance**

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, Early Help Key Worker team, a Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a meeting to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

See Annex A for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

### **Local Authority Attendance Support Team**

Local Authority Attendance Support Team (AST) work strategically by offering support, advice and guidance to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice

(see Annex B for the East Sussex Code of Conduct) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

### **School Attendance and the Law**

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

### **Holiday Absence**

**There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours.** In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances"; and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall

attendance. Only the Headteacher or her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on a Withdrawal from Learning Application form. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and East Sussex Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

At Shinewater Primary School 'exceptional circumstances'; will be interpreted as:

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the Headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The Headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

### **National Framework for Penalty Notices**

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

**See Annex B for the East Sussex Code of Conduct.**

### **Deletion from Roll**

For any pupil leaving Shinewater Primary School, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those

who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

### **Absence data**

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

### **Annex A: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19 th August 2024**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)

## All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

## Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

## Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

## Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

## Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

## Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

## Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners, understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area; developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance.</li> <li>Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker.</li> <li>Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.</li> </ul>

## Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school- whenever they live or are educated.</li> <li>Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance.</li> <li>Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance.</li> <li>Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.</li> </ul>

## Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p> <p>(If parents feel the school and/or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)</p>	<p>The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.</p> <p>The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.</p> <p>Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making.</p> <p>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.</p> <p>Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>

### Annex B - East Sussex County Council

#### Code of Conduct – Penalty Notice for Unauthorised Absences and procedures for Schools and Academies

[East Sussex Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for unauthorised absence](#)

[Penalty Notice Procedures for Schools and Academies](#)

### Annex C – Illness Absence Guidance

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Lateness

#### Letter 1

Dear X

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our students, we monitor their attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any students whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions. We are therefore writing to you due to inform you that XXXXs current number of late sessions is 3.

As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring your child receives an education. The law says that if you do not make sure your children go to school you are guilty of an offence. You can be fined by being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice, a Notice to Improve or prosecuted.

Being late to school and registration can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:

**5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year**  
**10 Minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year**  
**15 Minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year**  
**20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year**  
**30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year**

Students are expected to arrive at school by 8:40am each day to ensure they are in class for morning registration. At 08:50am the registers close and your child will receive a late mark 'L'. We understand that the school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. Pupils arriving after 9:15am will be marked as a "U" which is an unauthorised absence.

If you have any queries or would like to engage with an Attendance Support Meeting please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Attendance Team on 01323 762129 or [swp-attendance@swale.at](mailto:swp-attendance@swale.at). Alternatively, we offer an informal 'Attendance Drop In' on a Monday and Thursday morning from 8:30am - 9:00am.

Yours sincerely,

Jodie Burman  
Attendance Team

## Letter 2

Dear X

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our students, we monitor their attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any students, whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions.

Further to my previous letter dated \_\_\_\_\_, we are writing to you as your child has now been late 6 times.

As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring your child receives an education. The law says that if you do not make sure your children go to school you are guilty of an offence. You can be fined by being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice, a Notice to Improve or prosecuted.

We are closely monitoring your child's attendance and lateness. Any child arriving after 09:00am is given a late mark (L) in the register. Due to .....consistently arriving late, any arrival after 9:00am will now be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U), from the date of this letter.

***This letter is a warning that should [ student's name ] accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the next 10 school week period we will be requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.***

Being late to school and registration can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:

**5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year**  
**10 Minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year**  
**15 Minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year**  
**20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year**  
**30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year**

If you have any queries or would like to engage with an Attendance Support Meeting please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Attendance Team on 01323 762129 or [swp-attendance@swale.at](mailto:swp-attendance@swale.at). Alternatively, we offer an informal 'Attendance Drop In' on a Monday and Thursday morning from 8:30am - 9:00am.

Yours sincerely,

Jodie Burman

Attendance Team

### Letter 3

Dear X

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our students, we monitor their attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any students, whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions.

Further to my previous letters dated..... & ....., we are writing to you as your child has continued to arrive late.

As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring your child receives an education. The law says that if you do not make sure your children go to school you are guilty of an offence. You can be fined by being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice, a Notice to Improve or prosecuted.

As you know, we are now recording any arrival after 9:00am as an unauthorised absence. Your child .....has accrued ..... unauthorised absences in the last ..... weeks. A further ..... Unauthorised Absences will result in a ..... A request to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

If you have any queries or would like to engage with an Attendance Support Meeting please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Attendance Team on 01323 762129 or [swp-attendance@swale.at](mailto:swp-attendance@swale.at) Alternatively, we offer an informal 'Attendance Drop In' on a Monday and Thursday morning from 8:30am - 9:00am.

Yours sincerely,

Jodie Burman  
Attendance Team

## Letter 4

Dear X

Further to my previous letters, we are writing to you again about your child's persistent lateness. This is concerning.

As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring your child receives an education. The law says that if you do not make sure your children go to school you are guilty of an offence. You can be fined by being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice, a Notice to Improve or prosecuted.

It was explained in the previous letters sent that if a pupil arrives at school after the register has closed (09:00am), it is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Ten unauthorised lates will result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

I regret to inform you that since the last letter sent (dated X), your child has accrued ten unauthorised absences as a result of being late. A Penalty Notice is therefore being requested.

If you have any queries or would like to engage with an Attendance Support Meeting please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Attendance Team on 01323 762129 or [swp-attendance@swale.at](mailto:swp-attendance@swale.at). Alternatively, we offer an informal 'Attendance Drop In' on a Monday and Thursday morning from 8:30am - 9:00am.

Yours sincerely,

Jodie Burman  
Attendance Team

## Appendix 2 – Absence

### Stage 1 Letter

[Your School Letterhead/Logo]

[Date]

[Parent/Guardian Name] [Parent/Guardian Address]

#### Stage One attendance concern

Dear [Parent/Guardian Name],

I am writing to you today because our records show that [Child's Full Name], currently has an attendance rate of [Child's Attendance Percentage]%. This is below our school's expected attendance target of 96%.

We understand that children can occasionally be unwell, and we appreciate you informing us of any absences. However, consistent school attendance is incredibly important for your child's education and overall development. Every day at school provides valuable learning opportunities that contribute significantly to their academic progress and social well-being. Missing even a small amount of school can have a noticeable impact on a child's ability to keep up with their classmates and reach their full potential.

We want to ensure [Child's Full Name] receives the best possible education, and we are committed to supporting you and your child in achieving this. We understand that there may be underlying reasons for absences, and we would like to offer our support.

Please find enclosed your child's attendance certificate. Your child's attendance will continue to be monitored and if further absences occur you will be invited to an attendance meeting.

If you would like to discuss this letter further or you are experiencing difficulties in getting your child to attend school please contact the attendance team on 01323 762129 or [swp-attendance@swale.at](mailto:swp-attendance@swale.at). We would be grateful for the opportunity to talk about any challenges you might be facing and explore how the school might be able to offer assistance.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Jodie Burman  
Attendance Team

## Stage 2 Letter - Invite

[Your School Letterhead/Logo]

[Date]

[Parent/Guardian Name] [Parent/Guardian Address]

### Stage Two attendance concern

Dear [Parent/Guardian Name],

I'm writing to you again regarding [Child's Full Name]'s attendance at school. As you know from our previous letter dated [Date of Stage One Letter], we raised concerns when [Child's Full Name]'s attendance dropped below 96%. Regrettably, since that time, we've seen that [Child's Full Name]'s attendance has not improved and is currently at [Child's Current Attendance Percentage]%.

We understand that there can be various reasons for absences, and we truly want to work with you to ensure [Child's Full Name] receives the best possible education. Every day in school is a vital part of their learning journey, and consistent attendance directly impacts their academic progress, social development, and overall well-being. When a child misses a significant amount of school, it can be challenging for them to keep up with their classmates and reach their full potential.

It's important to highlight the legal responsibilities of parents regarding school attendance. Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. We are committed to supporting you in fulfilling this responsibility.

To discuss the ongoing concerns and explore how we can best support [Child's Full Name] and your family, we would like to invite you to a meeting at school. This will give us an opportunity to talk in more detail about any challenges you might be facing and to collaboratively develop strategies to improve [Child's Full Name]'s attendance.

We are inviting you to attend a meeting on [Proposed Date] at [Proposed Time]. If this time isn't suitable, please contact the school attendance team on 01232 762129 or [swp-attendance@swale.at](mailto:swp-attendance@swale.at) as soon as possible to arrange an alternative.

Thank you for your continued support in this important matter. We look forward to working with you to improve [Child's Full Name]'s attendance and ensure their success at school.

Yours sincerely,

Jodie Burman

## Letter 2 – Follow Up: Showed

Dear X,

### **ATTENDANCE**

Thank you for attending the meeting on [date ]. Please find enclosed a copy of the support plan/meeting notes that was signed by you at the meeting reflecting the agreements made by all parties.

I confirm that I shall monitor [child's Name ] attendance and review this periodically.

**This letter is a warning that should [ child's name ] accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the next 10 school week period we will be requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.**

If you have any queries, please contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Jodie Burman  
Attendance Team

## Letter 2 – Follow Up: Failed to Attend Meeting Letter

Dear X

### **WARNING OF POSSIBLE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICE**

You were invited by letter dated [ date ] to attend a meeting on [ date ]. This was to give you an opportunity to discuss any difficulties you may be experiencing in fulfilling your legal responsibility with regard to school attendance and to discuss how we could support you in this. You did not attend the meeting and no response was received to our invitation.

If you wish for a meeting to be re-scheduled then please contact me on 01323 762129 to rearrange at a mutually convenient date and time.

I confirm that I shall monitor [ child's Name ] attendance and review this periodically.

**This letter is a warning that should [ child's name ] accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the next 10 school week period we will be requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.**

If you have any queries, please contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Jodie Burman  
Attendance Team

### Stage 3 Letter - Invite

Dear X,

Re Absence: Name of Pupil, Class

#### Attendance Meeting Invite

On                      at

There are on-going concerns regarding your child's level of attendance at school. Despite this having previously been brought to your attention, there has been no improvement and, to date, we do not appear to have been provided with a valid reason for these absences.

Under the Education Act 1996, parents have a duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and failure to do so is therefore an offence.

You are therefore invited to attend the above meeting where we can review their child's attendance, implement supportive interventions and evidence strategies in existing plans. A Formal Attendance Contract may be considered in an attempt to support you in fulfilling your legal responsibility to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

If you are unable to attend this meeting you should contact me 01323 672129 and arrangements can be made to agree a more suitable date and time for you if this assists. Failure to attend this meeting, without a valid reason, may be used as evidence if legal intervention were to be considered should [child's name] attendance not improve.

I look forward to seeing you at                      on.

Yours sincerely

Jodie Burman  
Attendance Team

### Letter 3 – Follow Up: Showed

Dear X,

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Thank you for attending the meeting on [date ]. Please find enclosed a copy of the support plan/meeting notes/Formal Attendance Contract that was signed by you at the meeting reflecting the agreements made by all parties.

I confirm that I shall monitor [child's Name ] attendance and review this periodically.

**This letter is a warning that should [ child's name ] accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the next 10 school week period we will be requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.**

If you have any queries, please contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Jodie Burman  
Attendance Team

## Formal Attendance Contract

As parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice Fine being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	
<b>Time</b>	

<b>Year Group</b>		<b>DOB</b>	
<b>Attendance %</b>		<b>Pupil present at meeting</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Learning days lost</b>		<b>Punctuality concerns</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Any Special Needs</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Level of Need</b>	
<b>Any Social Care / Early Help involvement</b>		<b>Any other agencies involved (if not present)</b>	

<b>Pupils Full Legal Name</b>	
<b>Pupil Address</b>	
<b>Postcode</b>	

Member of Staff Present (Full Name)	Job Title / Position

Other Professionals Present (Full Name)	Job Title / Position

Parent / Carers / Other family representative (full names)	Relationship to Child	DOB	Present at Meeting Y/N

**This section must include all those with parental responsibility and / or those with day-to-day care**

Title, Full First Name and Full Surname	
Relationship to Child	
Do they reside with the child?	
If not, do they have regular involvement / input?	

Title and Full First Name and Full Surname	
Relationship to Child	
Do they reside with the child?	
If not, do they have regular involvement / input?	

<b>Other significant people in the child's life</b>	
---	--

<b>Attendance registration certificate provided</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Absences explained and discussed</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Are parents / carers aware of the absences</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Are parents / carers aware of school attendance procedures</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>List dates and types of contact/meetings held/offered prior to today's meeting</b>			

<b>School concerns for absence</b>
Severely Absent (below 50% attendance) Persistently Absent (below 90% attendance)

<b>Pupils' explanation for absences</b>
---

<b>Parents/carers explanation for absences</b>

#### Other Support

<b>Is a referral to external support agencies appropriate, and if yes which ones?</b>	
<b>If so, are parents / carers in agreement?</b>	

Key county-wide support to consider		
East Sussex County Council - <a href="#">Information for families</a>   <a href="#">East Sussex County Council</a>		
<a href="#">IROCK</a>	<a href="#">Mind</a>	<a href="#">CAMHS</a>
<a href="#">My Time   FSN Charity</a>	<a href="#">Meditation and Sleep - Headspace</a>	<a href="#">Young Carers</a>

Agreed Action Plan for:	
-------------------------	--

Parents / Carers Action Plan	
Will ensure:	
In addition, they will:	

## Student Action Plan

The Pupil named above:

In addition, they will:

### School Actions

School will:

In addition, they will:

### All attendees to sign below:

Please ensure that the below is completed fully, clearly, and accurately to confirm any actions agreed and information provided detailed.

1 <sup>st</sup> - Parent / Carer – Print (Full name)
Signature
Date

2 <sup>nd</sup> - Parent / Carer – Print (Full name)
Signature
Date

Pupil (if applicable) – Print (Full name)
Signature
Date

School Representative – Print (Full name)
Job Title / Position
Signature
Date

Other Service Representative – Print (Full name)
Job Title / Position
Signature
Date

**Review**

**Date of review:**

Have all agreements been adhered to?

What has gone well?

If attendance has improved, do new agreements need to be made? (if yes consider if appropriate to start new support plan and close the formal parenting contract).

If attendance has failed to improve: Consider and agree next steps.

**Warning letter issued: Yes/No**

**All attendees to sign below following the review:**

Please ensure that the below is completed fully, clearly, and accurately to confirm any actions agreed and information provided detailed.

1 <sup>st</sup> - Parent / Carer – Print (Full name)
Signature
Date

2 <sup>nd</sup> - Parent / Carer – Print (Full name)
Signature
Date

Pupil (if applicable) – Print (Full name)
Signature
Date

School Representative – Print (Full name)
Job Title / Position
Signature
Date

Other Service Representative – Print (Full name)
--

Job Title / Position
Signature
Date

### Letter 3 – Follow Up: Failed to Attend Meeting Letter

Dear X

#### **WARNING OF POSSIBLE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICE**

You were invited by letter dated [ date ] to attend a meeting on [ date ]. This was to give you an opportunity to discuss any difficulties you may be experiencing in fulfilling your legal responsibility with regard to school attendance and to discuss how we could support you in this. You did not attend the meeting and no response was received to our invitation.

If you wish for a meeting to be re-scheduled then please contact me on 01323 762129 to rearrange at a mutually convenient date and time.

I confirm that I shall monitor [ child's Name ] attendance and review this periodically.

**This letter is a warning that should [ child's name ] accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the next 10 school week period we will be requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.**

If you have any queries, please contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Jodie Burman  
Attendance Team

## Stage 4 Letter

**Private & Confidential – Addressee Only**

Our ref:

Date:

### FORMAL WARNING LETTER FOR FAILURE TO SECURE IMPROVEMENTS IN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Dear

**Pupil's name:**

**D.O.B:**

It is noted that you are the parent of or have day to day care of , a child who is a registered pupil at this school and is not in regular attendance as required by the Education Act 1996, Section 7.

has been recorded as having school sessions (equivalent to school days) lost due to unauthorised absences between the dates of and .

It is recommended that you take immediate steps to ensure that your child named above attends school regularly. If this is not achieved and there are further unauthorised absences, a referral may be made to the Local Authority, and you will be issued with a Notice of Intention to Prosecute from the Local Authority. Failure to secure an improvement in attendance and failing to engage with the support on offer from the school, may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

When deciding upon the most appropriate action, the Local Authority has a duty to consider if the making of an Education Supervision Order would be appropriate. If an assessment of the situation indicates that this may be appropriate, and no improvement in attendance is achieved, you may be invited to an Education Supervision Order planning meeting that will be held by the Attendance Support Team on behalf of the Local Authority.

Another parent/carer or someone with day-to-day responsibility regarding the above-named child may have also receive this letter. Each adult holds separate responsibility and will also be required to take appropriate action to support an improvement in attendance and ensure there are no further unauthorised absences.

If there are any circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is preventing your child from attending school regularly, I would urge you to make contact as soon as possible so we can discuss and resolve any difficulties.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Rigby  
School Attendance Lead

## Appendix 4 - Withdrawal from Learning

### Withdrawal from learning not exceptional circumstance letter

Dear X,

Withdrawal from Learning Application – Names of Pupils

Thank you for your recent request for an absence in term time. I am not able to authorise this absence – the absence is not deemed as an exceptional circumstance. I realise that you will be disappointed by my decision, but Government guidance means that, as a head teacher, I am no longer able to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The consequence for your child taking an absence during this period is that it will be recorded as unauthorised and that we may request a Penalty Notice. Please note that if a Penalty Notice is issued it will be to each parent for each child taken out of school. The following also applies:-

- **A limit of no more than 2 penalty notices will be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within a 3-year rolling period will apply from 19 August 2024.**
- **The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.**
- **Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.**
- **A third penalty notice will not be issued within a 3-year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued, and alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.**
- **If the penalty notice remains unpaid, this will result in legal action.**

Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for a holiday of less than 5 days, and your child is sick immediately before/after the holiday or has extra days off immediately before/after it, we will ask for a copy of your holiday booking or a doctor's certificate to confirm the dates of your holiday or the dates of any sickness.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Evason/ Mrs Rigby

Headteacher/ Deputy Head

## Holiday Request Not Submitted

Re: Name of Pupil, Class

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing in regard to [pupil]'s absence between [dates].

This letter is to advise you that I am unable to authorise this as time off in term time is for exceptional and unavoidable circumstances.

Government guidance means that, as a Head Teacher, I am no longer able to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances. **Family holidays or extended absences for family time do not fall into this category.**

Should you wish to present evidence of exceptional circumstances for the absence, please contact me by [date] so that the information can be considered. If I do not hear from you by this date we will request a Penalty Notice be issued by the local authority.

**Please note that if a Penalty Notice is issued it will be to each parent for each child taken out of school. The following also applies:-**

- **A limit of no more than 2 penalty notices will be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within a 3-year rolling period will apply from 19 August 2024.**
- **The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.**
- **Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.**
- **A third penalty notice will not be issued within a 3-year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued, and alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.**

If the penalty notice remains unpaid, this will result in legal action. Once a Penalty Notice has been issued there is no right of appeal.

Yours sincerely

Helen Evason  
Headteacher

## **School Attendance Legal information for Parents and Carers**

### **The Education Act 1996**

**By law** – all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude or any special educational needs they may have. The school starting date is the beginning of the term after which the child reaches their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The school leaving date is the last Friday in June of the academic year in which the child reaches their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Parents / Carers** – are responsible for

- registering their child at a school or making other arrangements which provide

an efficient education

- ensuring their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered
- applying for a planned absence of leave from school
- notifying the school when their child is absent unexpectedly

**Schools** – must either

- give permission for your child to be absent from school and mark the absence as authorised

or

- mark the absence as unauthorised

**The Law** –says that parents/carers whose children are absent from school without

good reason are committing an offence.

### **Next steps**

If your child accrues further unauthorised absences, a referral may be made to the Local Authority. Depending upon the circumstances, one, or a combination, of the following may be initiated:

#### **Invited to respond to a Parental Response Questionnaire**

You may be sent a questionnaire which requires a response from you. This questionnaire gives you the opportunity to provide the Local Authority of any details regarding your child's unauthorised absence from school and to provide supporting evidence in your defence.

#### **Issued with a Penalty Notice**

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child for the sum of £80 to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within this time it will increase to £160 which must be paid within the following 7 days (a total of 28 days from issue). If the higher payment is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings. There is no right of appeal and payment will

not be accepted after the 28<sup>th</sup> day. For the first Penalty Notice, there is no right to reduction for the second and will be charged at £160 per parent per child.

### **Prosecution**

Depending upon the circumstances, a prosecution may be initiated without a Penalty Notice being issued first, or if you have failed to pay a Penalty Notice. Prosecutions take place in the magistrate's court under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This offence carries a fine of up to £1000 for each parent.

### **Or**

In the magistrates court under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. This offence carries a fine up to £2,500 and/or a 3 months custodial sentence for each parent if it is found that you knew about your child's absences and failed, without reasonable justification, to ensure attendance.

If you fail to attend court for the hearing the matter may either be dealt with in your absence or, occasionally, a warrant issued for your arrest. If found guilty, the magistrates will sentence you in accordance with their sentencing powers.

The magistrates may also consider imposing a Parenting Order which consists of two elements: a core element requiring the parent to attend guidance sessions to help them in dealing with their children and a control element requiring a parent to exercise control over ensuring attendance and communicate with the relevant authorities.

### **Education Supervision Order (ESO)**

If the Local Authority assess that an Education Supervision Order is the most appropriate course of action, an application will be made through the family court under the Children Act 1989 section 36. Such an order placed upon your child allows a supervising officer, appointed by the court, to provide advice, guidance and give directions to you and/or your child aimed at ensuring regular school attendance. If you do not comply with a reasonable direction you may be prosecuted for breaching the Order and you may also be prosecuted for failing to ensure regular school attendance

### **Defences to non-school attendance**

The legal reasons (defences) for non-school attendance are –

- the child is prevented from attending school due to sickness or other unplanned or unavoidable causes.
- the child is absent due to a day of religious observance in the parent's/carer's religion.
- the school has granted and authorised the leave.
- the child lives more than 2 miles if under 8 years or 3 miles if over 8 years from the school and the local authority has failed to provide transport.

It is not a defence where parents have chosen to register a child at a school outside the catchment area and no transport has been provided.