



# Primary Academy Attendance Policy 2019

## Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance on a daily basis and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated safeguarding arrangements.

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## **1. Introduction/Aim**

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. [Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances.
- 1.2 We believe that regular school attendance enables children both to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become responsible, organised and motivated adults. We value all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

## **2. Legal Framework**

- 2.1 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 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 2.2 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, use legal enforcement.
- 2.3 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require 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.

## **3. Definitions**

- 3.1 For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Regular attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

### An “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

### An “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

### “Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

### “Parent” as

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

## 4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

4.1 The table below shows the national codes which enable all schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, and comply with the regulations.

<b>Absence and Attendance Codes</b>	
<b>Present at School</b>	
/ \	<i>Registration code / \ : present in school / = am \ =pm</i>
L	<i>Late arrival before the register has closed. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.</i>
<b>Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity</b>	
B	<i>Off-site educational activity. This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.</i>
D	<i>Dual Registered – at another educational establishment. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at</i>

	<i>another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.</i>
J	<i>At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment. This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.</i>
P	<i>Participating in a supervised sporting activity. This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.</i>
V	<i>Educational visit or trip. This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.</i>
W	<i>Work experience. Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.</i>
<b>Absence codes when pupils are not present in school</b>	
C	<i>Leave of absence authorised by the school. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.</i>
E	<i>Excluded but no alternative provision made. If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.</i>
H	<i>Holiday authorised by the school. Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.</i>
I	<i>Illness (not medical or dental appointments). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.</i>
M	<i>Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.</i>
R	<i>Religious observance. Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.</i>
S	<i>Study leave. Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.</i>
T	<i>Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.</i>

	<p><i>This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.</i></p> <p><i>To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.</i></p>
<b>Unauthorised Absence from School</b>	
<b>G</b>	<p><i>Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.</i></p>
<b>N</b>	<p><i>Reason for absence not yet provided. Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).</i></p>
<b>O</b>	<p><i>Absent from school without authorisation. If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.</i></p>
<b>U</b>	<p><i>Arrived in school after registration closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.</i></p>
<b>Administrative Codes</b>	
<b>X</b>	<p><i>Not required to be in school. This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.</i></p>
<b>Y</b>	<p><i>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or</i></li> <li><i>• The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or</i></li> <li><i>• A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).</i></li> </ul> <p><i>This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.</i></p>
<b>Z</b>	<p><i>Pupil not on admission register. This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.</i></p>
<b>#</b>	<p><i>Planned whole or partial school closure. This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.</i></p>



## 4.2 Leave of Absence

4.2.1 Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance means that Head teachers can no longer authorise leave of absence for the sole purpose of a holiday (unless in exceptional circumstances). All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

4.2.2 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for child due to 'exceptional circumstances.' At our academy, leave of absence shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. This may only be granted at the discretion of the Head teacher. Our academy will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

4.2.3 **Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Head teacher at least a month before the planned leave using the 'Leave of Absence' form (Appendix E).** If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Head teacher and it will be marked as unauthorised. Our academy will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

4.2.4 A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Head teacher but is still taken.
- A longer period of time is taken in excess of the agreed number of days.

4.2.5 When absence is granted by the Head teacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

## 4.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Our schools acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

## 4.4 Traveller Absence

1. 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.
2. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, s. 86 of The Education Act 1944 states that a Traveller parent shall be entitled to be acquitted if his or her child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) during the period of

twelve months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted, if the family are of no fixed abode.

3. However, it should be noted that this provision applies 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 of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.
4. When trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.
5. Our Academy School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended our school 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 our Academy School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.
6. Our Academy School 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 must:
  - Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
  - Inform the school regarding proposed return dates
7. 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
8. Where Traveller children are registered pupils 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 pupil.

#### **4.5 Unauthorised Absence**

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. That decision is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is actually considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

#### **4.6 Persistent Absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.



If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or full prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

#### 4.7 Late Arrival at School

At our academy all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year.

The school day begins at 8:45am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The gates open at 8:30am and children are allowed to go straight into class. The school register will be taken at **8:45am and school gates shut at 8:50am**. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before **9:00am** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at **9:00am**. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register at **1:00pm** for the PM session.

### 5. Deletions from the Register

5.1 In accordance with the Regulations, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

A	<i>Where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.</i>
B	<b>Change of school</b> <i>Except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school.</i>
C	<i>Where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.</i>
D	<b>Home education</b> <i>In a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.</i>
E	<b>Moved away</b>

	<i>Except in the case of a boarder that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.</i>
F	<i>In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is</i>
G	<i>That he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.</i>
H	<i>That he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2); (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) The proprietor of the school and the Local Authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</i>
I	<i>That he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.</i>
J	<i>That the pupil has died.</i>
K	<i>That the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and— (i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or (ii) The pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form</i>
L	<i>In the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.</i>
M	<b>Permanent exclusion.</b> <i>That he has been permanently excluded from the school.</i>
N	<i>Where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, which he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.</i>
O	<i>Where— (i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and (iii) Those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate</i>

Our academy will follow Norfolk County Council's Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown and the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

**Lead for Attendance:** Headteacher

**Designated Attendance Leader on the admin team** (best practice would be for the person to have DSL training)

At our academy, we believe that improved school attendance is a responsibility shared by governors, school staff, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

#### The Governors will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governors' meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

#### The Senior Management Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance

All staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Regulations and other relevant legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents, and the school timetable
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or parents to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant staff members
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance
- Managing individual pupil casework files
- Coordinating Individual Action Plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of a Family Support Plan (FSP) and/ or the implementation of a parenting contract
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to, if a child is absent from school without contact from parents
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes

- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies

Our Academy requests that parents will:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their school work or home and family life
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues

## 7. Attendance Protocols

Teaching staff should complete registers by 9:00am.

If a child is absent and where no reason for absence is known, the following will be initiated by the school:

- At **9:30am** the attendance officer will try to make contact with parent/carer trying all numbers given.
- If no answer, leave voicemail and send text message to ask them to phone school.
- If no response by 10:00am, make an evaluation of needs of child – is the child vulnerable or are school aware of risks around the family. Call sibling settings to establish if sibling is in school.
- If vulnerable home visit that day by two members of staff
- If no answer post 'no contact' letter through the door and knock at neighbours to see if they have seen the family.
- If safeguarding concerns phone police and social care
- If not vulnerable follow above but on day two or three dependent on the context of the school
- If child returns to school with no contact form parents and no parental reason for absence, then a 'no contact' letter is sent to establish the reason for absence. If no reason is given, the child is marked as unauthorised.

In the event that a parent is unaware of their child's absence and believes their child should be in school, the attendance administrator will double check to make sure the child is absent and a mistake has not been made in the register. If after this, the child proves to be definitely missing, the school will then contact the police to report the child as missing.

## 7.1 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to:

- Contact school by telephone call on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return
- If no contact is received, the Attendance protocols will be instigated

## 7.2 Support Systems

School recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school 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 pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Parent Support advisor
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- 1 to 1 mentoring
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Engaging the support of other agencies

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the Head teacher will consider the use of legal sanctions following consultation with the Local Authority.

## 7.3 Attendance Procedure and Reward System

Absence is tracked on pupil asset daily and summarized every two weeks, discussed at staff meetings and reported to governors which will include a breakdown of groups (*Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance*).

A letter advising parents and carers of their legal responsibilities and of fixed penalty notice is sent out yearly and published on the school website 'Attendance at School and Legal Intervention' (Appendix A).

**The attendance target is 97%**

### **The school promotes good attendance through:**

- Giving certificates to children who have good attendance (97% +) and excellent attendance (100%) every half-term
- Publishing attendance of all classes on newsletters and school website
- Informing parents about attendance at parent consultations throughout the year and as part of the annual report to parents
- Celebrating weekly attendance in the Celebration Assembly every week

### **Where attendance is between 96% and 90%**

- Letters of concern are sent out to each parent – Letter 1A ‘Concern about Attendance’ notifying parents that their children’s attendance has dropped below the acceptable level (Appendix B)
- If valid reason for the absence is already known no further action is taken
- If no valid reason or low attendance is ongoing – we follow a staged approach
- These pupils will be monitored for three weeks, if no improvement then a letter will be sent out to invite families to an attendance meeting (Letter 1B) ‘Review of Initial Letter’ (Appendix C)

### **Pupil’s attendance will be monitored once a week to identify:**

- Pupils whose attendance is less than 97% for a 3-week period.
- Lateness contributes towards absence (see section on lateness).
- If valid reasons for the absence are already known no further action is taken.
- If no valid reason or low attendance is ongoing – we follow a staged approach.
- 1A Letter (Appendix B) – Notifying parents that child’s attendance has dropped below the acceptable level.

These pupils will be monitored for 3 weeks – if no improvement is seen to be made at any stage during the 3 week we will move to step 1B (Appendix C).

NB: If a child has received a 1A letter at any stage in the school year then the process will continue from this point if their attendance deteriorates later in the school year. 1B Letter (Appendix C) – Parents are invited to a meeting with the attendance officer/lead, setting out a home/school attendance contract. This will look into the reasons for non-attendance and any support that can be given by school. An EHA will be offered if deemed appropriate.

Absences will be unauthorised without a medical note/evidence from this point on. A target will be set and other actions clearly set out. This will be monitored 3-weekly, and if attendance continues to remain low or deteriorates further a referral to Local Authority Education and Inclusion (EIP) will be made. If parents fail to attend this meeting without notifying school, a target will be set in their absence. They will then receive a further letter giving them this information, asking them for their views and informing them of the review date.

### **When attendance falls under 90%**

- All absences below 90% are considered ‘Persistent Absences’ and will be reviewed regularly. If there are a high level of unauthorised absences, these will be referred to the attendance office with the possibility of legal proceedings. Pre-legal letter ‘Unauthorised Absence’ – (Appendix D)



## 8. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- admissions
- anti-bullying
- exclusion
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards

## 9. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [School attendance](#), DfE (2016)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures: statutory guidance](#), DfE (revised March 2017)
- [Norfolk County Council Children Missing Education Practice & Procedures](#)
- ['Keeping Children Safe in Education'](#), DfE (2016)

## 10. Appendices

10.1 The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

## Appendix A: Letter – Attendance at school and legal intervention



Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

### Attendance at school and legal intervention

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At [insert school name] our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers that the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

1. 10 consecutive sessions<sup>1</sup> of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (for absences from 1 September 2017); or
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any pupil at Gaywood Primary School who meets either of the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the school day consists of 2 sessions.

## Leave of absence during Term Time

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is however, a discretionary power to allow leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term time. This is not an entitlement and purely at the discretion of the school's head teacher. Schools should not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a student's education or if the absences are during school exam periods and SAT's.

Before completing this application, we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child's education. National statistics show 10 days absence in any academic year does have a negative effect on attainment. Schools are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence; however, some schools may choose to do this.

The government advises that any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student's records. As you may be aware unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

**Discuss with the school any request for leave of absence prior to making a booking. Your child's school may have a designated person for this. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure you receive confirmation from the school before the leave is taken. Do not assume permission is granted if you have not received written confirmation.**

### Fixed Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence, which is acceptable to the school.

**The school will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents/carers are failing in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.**

**The penalty is in the form of a £60 fine per parent/carer per child payable within 21 days, this increases to £120 payable per parent/carer per child within 28 days. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.**

\*(Academic year =school year from September to July)

**Appendix B: Letter 1A – Concern about attendance**



Date:

Dear [Insert Parent/Carer's name]

**RE. Concern about the attendance of [Insert child's name]**

Attendance at school by children and young people is essential in order that they receive the education to which they are entitled. The Academy recognises the need for all children and young people to engage fully in the education process and has developed a strategy for promoting attendance through a positive and supportive approach.

I am concerned because ..... attendance has fallen below 97% in the previous monitoring period and in accordance with school policy I am bringing this to your attention to ensure the appropriate action is taken.

The national average for children's annual attendance is 97% and anything below this is cause for concern. We are now setting a target of at least 97% for ..... and we will be monitoring «his\_her» attendance over the next three weeks. The next review date will be .....

I am aware that the reason for this current drop in attendance is ....., If there are ongoing health concerns, the school can help you to gain advice and support to ensure your child does not fall behind. If you are having difficulties with regards your child attending school our Family Support Worker, ..... will be happy to meet with you to discuss this further and look at how we may assist you.

Any further absences will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided until .....I..... attendance improves. I hope that we will be able to work together to improve ..... attendance, enabling «him\_her» to benefit fully from «his\_her» educational experience and avoiding the need for further action.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert Name]  
HEAD TEACHER

[Insert Name]  
ATTENDANCE OFFICER

**Appendix C: Letter 1B – Review of initial letter – No improvement**



Date:

Dear [Insert Parent/Carer's name]

**RE. Further concern about the attendance of [Insert child's name]**

I refer to my letter dated ..... in which I expressed my concerns about ..... level of attendance. Unfortunately, there has been no improvement in this 6 week period and ..... attendance is still below 95%.

Your child's attendance was ..... and is now.....

I would suggest a meeting so that we can discuss this and agree an action plan informally to see if there is anything I can do to support you getting your child to school.

I wish to work together with as it is in both of our interests to ensure that your child achieves their potential in school.

Please contact the office to suggest a suitable time so we can work on this together before a formal solution has to be considered.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert Name]  
HEAD TEACHER

[Insert Name]  
ATTENDANCE OFFICER

**Appendix D: Letter 1C – Review of initial letter – Improvement**



Date:

Dear [Insert Parent/Carer's name]

**RE. Attendance review of [Insert child's name]**

I refer to my letter dated ..... in which I expressed my concerns about ..... level of attendance. I have monitored this attendance since then and am encouraged to have seen an improvement from..... to .....

We would like this improvement to continue so will carry on monitoring the attendance of «forename» for a further period of time.

If the attendance falls again, significantly below 97% (or fails to improve from this new figure) we will consider a formal meeting.

However, I am positive that this will not be needed as improvements have been made.

Thank you for your support in raise your child's attendance levels, this will help enormously in ensuring they can achieve their potential

Yours sincerely,

[Insert Name]  
HEAD TEACHER

[Insert Name]  
ATTENDANCE OFFICER

## Appendix E: Letter 2 – Unauthorised Absence



Date:

Dear [Insert Parent/Carer's name]

### RE. Unauthorised Absence of [Insert child's name]

We are writing to you about ..... attendance. We have major concerns about ..... attendance rate which is now «percentage\_attendance»%, and «he\_she» has been absent for «total\_unexplained\_sessions» sessions. We have written to you about our concerns but there appears to be no improvement.

We have set a target of at least 97% for your child's attendance. «His\_\_Her» attendance will now be closely monitored and reviewed regularly. The next review date will be .....

**Any further absences will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided, such as a Doctor's letter or prescription.**

You should be aware that, should «chosen\_forename»'s attendance remain irregular, the Local Education Authority may take more formal action. This could result in a PACE Interview being held under caution in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. You should also be aware that if convicted of an offence of failing to ensure regular attendance of our child at school under Section 444,1 / 1A Education Act 1996, you could be fined up to £1000/£2500 and or receive a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.

I hope that you will work with us to improve ..... attendance, enabling «him\_her» to benefit fully from «his\_her» educational experience and avoiding the need for further action.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient appointment.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert Name]  
HEAD TEACHER

[Insert Name]  
ATTENDANCE OFFICER



**Appendix F: Leave of absence form**

**This form MUST be submitted at least 4 weeks before the date of absence.**

<b>Name of Pupil:</b> <b>Class:</b> <b>Siblings in this or other schools if applicable –</b> <b>Name:</b> <b>School:</b>		<b>Name of Parents/Carers:</b> <b>Telephone No:</b> <b>Email:</b>	
<b>Dates of request: From:</b>		<b>To:</b>	
<b>Why are you requesting leave of absence during term time?</b>  <b>What steps have you taken to minimise the impact of the leave on your child’s learning?</b>  <b>If applying for more than 2 days leave, please state where you will be staying during the leave period:</b>  <b>Please provide the full address;</b>  <b>Emergency contact details (UK and Abroad) – name, telephone number and relationship</b> <b>UK:</b>  <b>Abroad:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can confirm that the information on this form is true.</li> <li>• I agree to keep the school informed of any changes to my travel arrangements or if my child is unable to return to school on the due date.</li> <li>• I am aware that if my child does not return to school by the date provided that he/she may lose their place at this school.</li> <li>• I am aware that I may be fined and/or prosecuted for any time which my child is absent from school that has not been authorised by the Head Teacher.</li> <li>• The data you supply on this form is used by the Head Teacher to assess the request against the criteria outlined in our Attendance Policy. The Head Teacher may share this information, where relevant, with the respective Head teachers at other schools for the purpose of trying to co-ordinate absence requests for family groups. However, there is no guarantee that absence will be granted by either school.</li> <li>• If you do not wish the information on this form to be shared in this way, please indicate below:</li> </ul>			
<b>Signed by parent/carer:</b>		<b>Print name &amp; relationship to child:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<i>For school use only:</i>		<i>Date request received:</i>	
<i>Has the request been considered by the Head Teacher? Yes / No</i>  <i>Has the request been discussed with the parent/carer? Yes / No – Date: ..... / ..... / .....</i>  <i>No. of days requested: .....</i>  <i>No. of days authorised: .....</i>  <i>No. of days unauthorised: .....</i>			
<i>I unauthorised leave is taken and this case complies with Penalty Notice criteria please forward to the Local Authority along with Pupil attendance registration certificate.</i>			
<b>Name of Academy:</b>		<b>Head Teacher’s signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>



Parent/Carer's Name:		Date of Birth:	
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?		Yes	No
Sibling(s) Name:		School(s):	
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
<b>Contact will be made with any siblings' education provision to check their attendance.</b>			
Multi – Agency Involvement			
Are there any other agencies involved currently with the family?		Yes	No
If Yes please give details:			
Agreed Review Venue and Date:			
This will be reviewed after ..... Weeks on (date) ..... at ..... at .....			
If the targets of the Parenting Contract are met, the case will be closed. If the attendance target is not achieved and there is no significant improvement in attendance then the contract can be extended for another ..... school weeks. If the targets are not met then a referral to the Education Inclusion and Partnership will occur to investigate if an offence has been committed.			
If I am concerned about any aspect of the delivery of the plan I will contact ..... without delay.			
Signed:			
Parent(s):		Date:	
Teacher:		Date:	
Attendance Lead:		Date:	

## **ATTENDANCE - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

### **1. What happens if my child is late?**

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office. A series of unauthorised late marks may lead to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice and referral to the Local Authority.

### **2. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence, then each day if the absence continues. We will telephone you if your child has not arrived in school by 9:30 a.m. On return to school, a letter explaining the absence is expected. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward. An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to the Local Authority.

### **3. What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment. (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance (for a limited period)
- Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

### **4. What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

### **5. Can we take family holidays during term-time?**

No. Family holidays should be taken during school holidays.

### **6. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?**

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family, particularly for minority ethnic families. Contact your child's class teacher or form tutor as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit. The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Head teacher then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away. As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

### **7. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

### **8. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.