



# Langney Primary Academy

## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

### 2024/2025

#### **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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### School Times

|   | Start   | End                        | If late picking up   |
|---|---|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Nursery</b>                              | 8:45-11:45, 12:30-3:30 (Redford Close)  |                            | Taken to main school                                       |
| <b>Yr R</b>                                 | 8:30 am<br>(Redford Close)  | 3.00 pm<br>(Redford Close) | Taken to the office where<br>parents/carers will be called |
| <b>Yr 1 - 6</b>                             | 8:40 am<br>(Chailey Close)  | 3:10 pm<br>(Chailey Close) |  |
| <b>Reporting<br/>your child<br/>absence</b> | Speak to Wendy Smith (Attendance Officer)<br>Phone: 01323 762177 extension 1<br>MCAS (My Child at School) App<br>Email: lpa-office@swale.at |                            |  |

## Vision & Aims of the policy

### Working Together for Success:

- **Schools:** set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence, have a strong grasp of absence data, regularly monitor and evaluate progress.
- **Teachers, parents/carers, and students:** We want to work together to create the best learning environment possible so every child can reach their full potential.
- **Parents/Carers:** There are clear steps you can follow to stay involved with your child's attendance. We'll provide these details.
- **Attendance Matters:** Being in school on time, every day, is crucial to learning everything your child needs. Missed time can put them behind.
- **School Attendance Rules:** Your child should be in school every day it's open, unless they absolutely can't be. Unexcused absences are not allowed.
- **Helping Children Who Don't Want to Attend:** Sometimes, children don't want to go to school. Let's work together (school, parents, and child) to solve any problems. Don't excuse absences without a good reason, as this shows your child that attendance isn't important.
- **Reporting Absences:** The school needs to know why your child is absent (written note, phone call or message on My Child At School app, on the first and each day of absence).
- **Authorised vs. Unauthorised Absences:**
  - **Authorised:** Missing school for an acceptable reason like illness.
  - **Unauthorised:** Missing school for reasons the school doesn't accept, like:
    - Parents keeping children home without a reason.
    - Skipping school during the day.
    - Unexplained absences.
    - Arriving late and missing attendance.

Parents must contact school early and work with the staff to solve any problems. Schools can ask parents to sign a contract to improve attendance before taking legal action. If these efforts fail, the local authority can prosecute parents or seek an Education Supervision Order (ESO) for the child. The maximum penalty is a £2500 fine and/or three months in prison.

If voluntary efforts or a parenting/attendance contract fail, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be used as a legal intervention. Before applying for an ESO, the school and local authority must ensure that voluntary support has been exhausted and that the ESO would benefit the child and parent. If there are safeguarding concerns, relevant authorities should discuss and agree that an ESO is more appropriate than a Children in Need or Child Protection plan. Local authorities must consider using an ESO before prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the local authority a role in ensuring the child receives a suitable education. While the ESO is in effect, the parent's duty to ensure the child's education is superseded by a duty to comply with the ESO directions. The ESO lasts for one year initially, but can be extended for up to 3 years. Parents who persistently fail to comply with the ESO may be prosecuted and fined up to £1,000.

## PROCEDURES

### Role of the Local Authority

Local authorities and other groups that help children play a critical role in assisting students to overcome challenges and ensuring all children can get the full-time education they deserve. Local authorities help families and schools get the extra support they need in the short term to overcome challenges. They also

work regionally to address challenges in the long term. Because local authorities differ so much in size, organisation, and demographics, the specifics of how attendance services are delivered should be determined locally to meet the needs of students, parents, and schools.

As a minimum, however, all local authorities are expected to:

Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.

Have a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):

- **Communication and advice:** regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
- **Targeting Support Meetings:** hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
- **Multi-disciplinary support for families:** provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
- **Legal intervention:** take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
- **Monitor and improve** the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

### Role of Parents and Carers

- Parents/ carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and 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 between 8:30am and 8:40am, or 8:40am and 8:50am and not before (depending on start time listed on page 2.)
- The school front gate opens at 8:40am however pupils remain the responsibility of parents or carers until handed over to staff;
- Ring the buzzer at the main school gate for children who are late (8:40am Reception or 8:50am Y1-Y6 onwards) to the main entrance to sign in;
- Collect children promptly at the end of the school day, which finishes at either 3:00pm for Reception and 3:10pm for Y1-Y6. After this time, children are the responsibility of their parents or carers;
- Collect children promptly from after school clubs;
- Ensure that the school has current parent/carers and emergency contact telephone numbers and addresses.

### Absences for Medical Reasons

It is the responsibility of parents or carers:

- to notify the school by telephone, or the My Child at School (MCAS) app, on the first and subsequent days of absence, as early as possible and not later than 9:00am.
- to agree a later registration time with the Headteacher or Head of School if the child needs regular medical attention before coming to school. The child must always sign in on arrival.

- to inform and provide the office with evidence of scheduled medical appointments if the child needs to attend a medical appointment during school time. Whenever possible, parents/carers should try to make all appointments out of school hours.
- To liaise with the school about specific family problems, which might cause absence.

### **Withdrawal from Learning Requests**

Responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parent and pupil. It is made clear to parents that any absence from school will disrupt their child's learning.

Absence during term time is not authorised, unless the Headteacher/Head of School deems it to be an exceptional circumstance.

Parents must seek permission from the Headteacher/Head of School by making an application in advance through completion of the 'Withdrawal from Learning Request Form.' Forms may be obtained from the school office.

If the absence requested is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, the absence (if taken) is recorded as unauthorised.

### **Penalty Notices**

In most cases, if the absence during term time is 5 days or more then East Sussex County Council is notified and a Penalty Notice issued. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 which increases to £160 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this will result in further legal intervention. See paragraphs 176 to 202 of the DfE guidance for further details.

Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country.

Our school follows the thresholds for absence as outlined in the [DfE guidance on page 56](#).

### **Role of The School**

1. to register the children promptly and accurately;
2. to record absence appropriately, including signing in and out during school hours;
3. to record as late, pupils who arrive after 8:40am or 8:50am (depending on start time) and before the close of registers at 9:30am;
4. to record as unauthorised absences, pupils who arrive after the registers close;
5. to record as late, pupils who arrive ten minutes after class afternoon registration time;
6. to check registers daily for first day absence;
7. to telephone those parents who have not contacted the school by the required time on the first day of absence, priority being given to:
  - children on the Protection Register or involved with Social Services such as LAC or those with Child Protection Plans;
  - children in families where there is a particular concern;
  - children, whose parents or carers are normally fastidious in making contact.
8. to send an email via MCAS (My Child at School) that day to parents who cannot be contacted, to ask why their child is absent.
9. to keep records of all telephone calls on BROMCOM and keep all contact concerning absence;
10. to monitor regularly absence and lateness, to look for patterns and take appropriate action;
11. to involve appropriate external agency if there are any concerns regarding absence or punctuality;
12. to obtain details of telephone contacts for all pupils and to ensure that records are updated regularly by writing to parents to remind them of their responsibilities, whilst requesting current contact information. An emergency telephone number must be recorded for every pupil;

13. to send reminders regarding absence and punctuality on the school's regular communication to parents/carers;
14. to raise concerns regarding absence at parent consultation meetings, or sooner if necessary;
15. to discourage the practice of taking children out of school for odd days and holidays;
16. to report all authorised and unauthorised absence on the child's annual report;
17. to publish attendance data to parents (and individual pupil attendance data on annual school reports);
18. to set attendance targets annually for the whole school as well as individual pupils, and monitor.

The school will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which cannot be arranged out of school time.

School strategy to reduce absence/persistent absence using data

- Pupil Passports for selected pupils
- Informal parent drop ins and meetings with Attendance Officer
- Parent contact

### **Wider support services:**

We seek to build strong relationships and work jointly with our families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them. Please refer to paragraphs 17 to 24 for guidance on what our support might look like.

For local authority support please see further information on their website here:

- [East Sussex Website Information for Parents](#)

### **Supporting pupils with physical or mental ill health:**

We are particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support. Parents/carers should ensure they contact the school to discuss the support that can be put in place to enable their children to return to school. See paragraphs 53 - 68 and 17 to 24 of DfE guidance for further details of working in partnership to identify supportive routes to improve attendance.

### **Lateness, Appendix 1:**

- Daily: If late (before the register closes at 9:30am), parents/carers where possible will be asked for the reason upon arrival.
- 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; pupil's Attendance Certificate is sent home 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; pupil's Attendance Certificate is sent home and concerns and 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; pupil's Attendance Certificate is sent home and concerns are recorded on the school's Lateness/Attendance Overview.

For pupils who have regular lates, incentives are provided e.g. Pupil Passports.

## Frequent Absence / Poor Attendance, Appendix 2

The School's Attendance Target is 97%.

In the academic year there are 190 school days.

To achieve 97% 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 can be dealt with promptly children's attendance is reviewed regularly on a cumulative basis using the following tables:

### 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. A parent contract may be set up.

| 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). Identify barriers for individual children and try to remove them. The parent contract will be reviewed or set up.

| Term | Cumulative days absence at 97% | Letter 2 trigger point days absence | Stage 2 threshold attendance % |
|------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|

|               |   |    |     |
|---------------|---|----|-----|
| <b>Term 1</b> | 1 | 7  | 79% |
| <b>Term 2</b> | 2 | 8  | 89% |
| <b>Term 3</b> | 3 | 9  | 91% |
| <b>Term 4</b> | 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 Clinic at the school or a Telephone Appointment to support the family. After the date of the Clinic, a “Follow Up” letter is sent out which either confirms their attendance at the Clinic, what discussion took place and any support offered or if they did not attend, what will happen if their child’s attendance drops to the third stage. At this stage, all future absences, without medical evidence, are marked as ‘unauthorised’. Parent Contracts are normally in place and being reviewed regularly.

### Stage 3 intervention

A child whose attendance is 90% for the academic year is absent for 19 days (almost four school weeks). Review the parent contract. Evaluate weekly/fortnightly with parents.

| <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 meeting with the Attendance Senior Lead at a given time to discuss their child’s attendance and to complete the Attendance Improvement Agreement (p20). The letter explains that if their child’s attendance remains irregular; a parent contact will be set up to support the parent and to avoid fines, the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action which could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution. The child’s Attendance Certificate is enclosed, along with a copy of ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ regarding Penalty Notices. 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. A ‘10 in 10’ commences from this point if appropriate (10



absences in 10 weeks in East Sussex) and if no further improvement is seen in these 10 weeks a Fixed Penalty Notice will be submitted.

#### Stage 4 intervention

A child whose attendance is 85% for the academic year is absent for 28 days (five & half school weeks). Introduce an Educational supervision order.

| 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 refer their concerns to the East Sussex County Council. Pupil’s Attendance Certificate is enclosed and details are recorded onto the school’s Attendance Overview. Here an Educational supervision order (ESO) could be adopted or this may become a case for children’s social care or the Magistrates courts.

A weekly meeting between the Senior Attendance Lead and Attendance Administrator 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.

#### Holiday Absence, Appendix 3

- Responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parent/carer and pupil. It is made clear to parents/carers that any absence from school will disrupt their child’s learning.
- Parents/carers must complete a ‘Withdrawal From Learning Request Form’ which they are given by the office, alongside information about Holidays During Term Time.
- This form must be authorised by the Headteacher.
- Once this is completed, the reply slip , along with an accompanying letter (and ESCC leaflet) is given back to the parents/carers. A copy of this is filed and the holiday is recorded.

- Once the holiday is taken, and if 5 sessions or more, the form is sent to East Sussex County Council for a holiday penalty fine in East Sussex. If the holiday is taken without Withdrawal From Learning Form completed, a letter is sent home to parents/carers explaining that the school is aware they went on holiday and asking them to complete the Withdrawal From Learning Form retrospectively. Leaflet from ESCC is enclosed and then form sent to East Sussex County Council for a holiday penalty fine.
- A penalty notice is requested for all parents who are liable; this includes a step-parent or other carer and can include an absent parent. If the parents live at separate addresses, a letter stating the absence is unauthorised must be sent to both of them regardless of which parent made the request.

### Rewarding Good Attendance

The majority of pupils at our school have a good attendance record. Pupils are given incentives to attend regularly and punctually.

Examples include:

- ✓ Reward 'Bugs' are given each term that a pupil reaches 100% attendance. There are six different ones to collect each year and a card to collect them on.
- ✓ Certificates / rewards given for pupils with outstanding termly attendance or improved attendance.
- ✓ Rewards for outstanding annual attendance include certificates and contact home.
- ✓ Improvement postcards sent home for effort in improved attendance and / or punctuality.

Those people responsible for attendance matters on a day to day basis in this school are: Wendy Smith (Attendance Officer) and Tess Compton (Assistant Headteacher).

### 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   |

### Record Keeping

Attendance documents issued to parents / carers are saved directly to the pupil record on the school's Management Information System (CPOMS) along with other relevant information to update the current attendance status of our children.

We follow our Trust safeguarding processes for recording information or incidents of a safeguarding nature. This can include information regarding poor attendance.

Expectations on schools:

- Keep registers electronically (paragraph 31 of DfE guidance)
- Preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years (previously it was 3 years) from the date the data was entered (paragraph 36 of DfE guidance)
- Use the revised attendance and absence codes (paragraphs 283 to 407 of DfE guidance)

- Share your school's daily attendance data directly with the DfE. (paragraph 51 of DfE guidance)

Maintained schools and non-maintained special schools **must** (and other schools are expected to):

- Only grant leaves of absence for specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the 2024 attendance regulations (paragraphs 37 to 40 of DfE guidance)
- All schools can also grant absence for education off site (paragraphs 41 and 42 of DfE guidance).
- Where applicable, schools also expected to report unexplained absences to the pupil's youth offending team worker (paragraph 52 of DfE guidance).

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Lateness

#### Letter 1

Dear Parent/Carer of \_\_\_\_\_

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 to inform you that XXXXs current number of late sessions is 3.

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 8.50am. At 8.50am 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 9:30am will be marked as a "U" which is an unauthorised absence.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss attendance with anyone please do not hesitate to contact the school attendance team on 01323 762177.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

**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. This is concerning.

We are closely monitoring your child’s attendance and lateness. Any child arriving after 8:50am 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. If a child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absences during the period of 10 school weeks due to lateness, we will be requesting that regular meetings or a parent contact be drawn up.

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 discuss your child’s lateness with anyone please do not hesitate to contact me on 01323 762177.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

### 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. This is very concerning.

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 ..... (Penalty Notice being issued.)

If a child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absences during the period of 10 school weeks due to lateness, we will be requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss your child's lateness with anyone please do not hesitate to contact me on 01323 762177.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

#### 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 penalty notice, or prosecuted.

It was explained in the previous letters sent that if a pupil arrives at school after the register has closed (8:50am), 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 further unauthorised absences as a result of being late. A Penalty Notice is therefore being issued.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

## Appendix 2 – Absence

### Stage 1 Letter

Dear X,

Re Absence: Pupil Name, Class

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly as it is important for your child's friendships and academic progress. In addition, it is proven that good attendance is linked with academic success.

The school target for attendance is 97%. As a result of the number of days your child has been absent, they are at risk of not achieving this.

We understand that your child's absence may be for a range of reasons including illness but as their target is below school target, we feel it is important to share it with you.

The school actively encourages regular attendance. Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantage.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children attend school. It is the schools responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance so it is also important that parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time. Please find enclosed your child's attendance certificate.

Please can you speak to your child about the importance of attendance. If you are having difficulty getting your child to school, please do not hesitate to contact the office and make an appointment to see me.

Your child' attendance will now be closely monitored and should further absences occur, then you will be invited in to discuss this further. We may need to consider putting into place a parent contract to support the attendance of your child/children.

In the meanwhile, I would like to remind you that you have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and that if you fail to do so you may commit an offence – S 444 Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer



## Stage 2 Letter - Invite

Dear X,

Re Absence: Name of Pupil, Class

As you are aware, all schools are having a real focus on attendance as this has such a huge impact on children's learning. As a school, we are following all the Kent and East Sussex guidelines but we are also trying to be proactive in supporting families with any attendance issues before an Attendance Officer becomes involved.

From the start of the Academic year X has missed X days. This means their attendance percentage is presently only X% which is below our school target of 97%.

Please find enclosed your child's Registration Certificate. If any absences are due to medical reasons, please ensure you bring relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

At X%, your child is now at risk of becoming considered a 'persistent absentee' by the Department for Education. We are seriously concerned.

Therefore, I would ask that you attend our weekly 'Attendance Clinic' which takes place on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. This is a supportive meeting which reviews our Attendance Policy and will enable you to honestly discuss any issues or barriers to your child attending school. We will review the parent contract and want to avoid any Education Supervision Order and any legal routes the LA can take.

Working in partnership with you, the school seeks to understand the difficulties that may be presented and the Attendance Clinic provides the opportunity to determine if the school can do anything further to support.

If you are unable to attend the Attendance Clinic but wish to discuss your concerns and how the school might be able to help, please call me on 01323 762177. I am sure you are aware that it is important that your child maintains regular attendance, as any absence may interrupt their academic progress and may have an effect on friendships. You should also be aware that regular attendance is a legal requirement.

We look forward to talking with you and working in partnership to see an improvement.

In the meanwhile, I would like to remind you that you have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and that if you fail to do so you may commit an offence – S 444 Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

## Letter 2 – Follow Up: Showed

Dear X,

As a result of your child missing X days, you were invited to attend an Attendance Clinic. Thank you for attending and / or telephoning me. This is really important as we value our home / school partnership and want to work with you to improve your child's attendance.

The importance of attendance was explained along with what the law says ('education is not an option – it's compulsory'). The need to avoid taking family holidays during term time was discussed and strategies for how parents can help raise their child's attendance were explored.

Thank you for bringing to my attention....

I have now spoken with the Senior Attendance Lead, X, and we have agreed the school will be able to support in the following ways...

I am sure that X's attendance will continue to improve and that it will not be long before her attendance figure meets our school target of 97%.

Please remember, that if you have any concerns with regards to X's attendance, you are more than welcome to come and discuss them with me.

It was good to speak with you today, thank you once again for attending / calling.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

## Letter 2 – Follow Up: Did not show

Dear X,

As a result of your child missing X days, you were invited to attend an Attendance Clinic. It was a shame you chose not to attend.

You were also given the option to telephone to see if there was anything the school could do to support, however to date we have not heard from you in this regard.

Please find enclosed a leaflet about the importance of attendance and what the law says.

It is important that you are aware of what could possibly happen in the future, should your child's attendance continue to fall:

- should your child's attendance slip further, intervention will be necessary by meeting with the school's Attendance Lead, Mrs. Compton. They will determine whether or not targets need to be set and if not met, a notice to prosecute will be issued. These will be set in your absence should you choose not to attend.
- if your child's attendance falls further, your child is considered a 'persistent absentee' by the Department for Education and this will remain on your child's school records. The Local Authority will intervene and if necessary, a court appearance and fine may follow.

I am sure that X's attendance will continue to improve and that it will not be long before their attendance figure meets our school target of 97%.

Please remember, that if you have any concerns with regards to X's attendance, you are more than welcome to come and discuss them with me. We are here to support.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

### Stage 3 Letter - Invite

Dear X,

Re Absence: Name of Pupil, Class

I am writing to inform you that X's attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting X's progress and I would like to meet with you.

Should X's attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under Section 444 Education Act 1996, and a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

We need to bring the following to your attention - Local authorities have the power to prosecute:

- Parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order issued by the local authority to require a parent to get their child registered at a named school (under section 443 of the Education Act 1996). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).
- Parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at a school, for which there are 2 separate offences: section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. The section 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence may result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- Parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision (under sections 444 and 444ZA). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000), or if the parent is found to have known the child was not attending regularly and failed to ensure that they did so, a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- Parents who persistently fail to comply with directions under an Education Supervision Order (under Schedule 3 to the Children Act 1989) or breach a Parenting Order or directions under the order (under section 375 of the Sentencing Act 2020). These may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).

It is requested with urgency, that you attend a meeting to discuss X's attendance.

I would like to meet with you (place) on: DATE/TIME/LOCATION

Please ring the school to confirm that you will be attending on 01323 762177.

During the meeting we will discuss any concerns you may have, so we can continue to support your child in making good progress. We may also set targets in order to avoid further prosecution. I trust that you will work with us to improve your child's attendance.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Name  
Attendance Officer

[Copy of Parent Contract](#)

**ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT AGREEMENT**

**Parent Contact**

Meeting held at: (School)

On: (Date)

Present at Meeting:

.....  
.....  
.....

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Pupil's Name:   |  |
| Date of Birth:<br>Year:   |  |
| Parent/Carers (1)<br>Name<br>Date of Birth<br>Address<br><br>Parent/Carers (2)<br>Name<br>Date of Birth<br>Address (if different) |  |
| Absent Parent/Carer<br>Name<br>Date of Birth  |  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Address  |  |
| Sibling Details:                                 |  |
| % Attendance and unauthorised sessions on invite |  |
| Other Agencies involved with family              |  |

Reasons and factors affecting attendance provided by parent/carer and pupil:

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**AGREEMENTS MADE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION:**

The SCHOOL will:

- (a) Not authorise illness without medical evidence.
- (b) Set an attendance % punctuality target of 100% to be reviewed on a weekly basis by the school.

The pupil's attendance will therefore initially be reviewed on:

Date.....

---

The PARENT/S will:

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)

The PUPIL will:

(a)

(b)

---

The LOCAL AUTHORITY will:

(a)

(b)

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**WARNING:**

I/We understand that should ( name ) accrue a further 10 unauthorised absences over the next 10 school week period then the Education Support Behaviour & Attendance Service will be requested to issue a Penalty Notice. A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent; this is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days, but will increase to £120 if paid after this period. If this is not paid within 28 days it will result in legal action.

Signed: ..... Parent/Carer

Signed: ..... Parent/Carer

Signed: ..... School (1)

Signed: ..... School (2)

Signed .....Local Authority representative

Dated:

**Stage 3 Letter – Follow Up: Showed**

Dear X,

Thank you for attending a meeting with me today with regards to X's attendance. As I explained at the meeting, your child has now missed X days of schooling and is only at X% which is why you were invited to meet with me today.

I was delighted to hear...

I appreciate you sharing with me...

The following actions were agreed:

XXXXXXXXXX

I am sure that X's attendance will continue to improve and that it will not be long before her attendance figure improves and even gets closer to 97%, in line with our school and the Government's targets.

Please remember, that if you have any concerns with regards to your child's attendance, you are more than welcome to come and discuss them with me.

It was good to meet with you today, thank you once again for attending,

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer



### Letter 3 – Follow Up: Did Not Show

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 the above number to rearrange at a mutually convenient date and time.

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

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.

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

Yours sincerely,

Name  
Attendance lead

#### Stage 4 Letter

Dear X,

Re Absence: Name of Pupil, Class

I note that there has been no significant improvement in your child's attendance since our last meeting.

X's attendance for this academic year has fallen to % which means they have missed X days of school. This is a significant concern despite intervention from a range of staff at X School.

Furthermore I have not received any satisfactory explanation for absences.

Children whose attendance is below 90% are noted by the Department for Education as being "persistent absentees," which means that they are recognised as missing school on a regular basis.

Please find your child's Registration Certificate enclosed.

The school has attempted to engage with you several times in order to support improvements in attendance. It has now become necessary to refer the concerns around your child's attendance to TASS at East Sussex County Council.

An Education Welfare Officer will contact you in due course. Should you have anything you wish to discuss concerning this matter, I will continue to be available.

Please contact me on the above number should you require an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Attendance Officer

### Appendix 3a – Holiday Absence

Dear X,

Withdrawal from Learning Application – Names of Pupils

Thank you for your recent request for an absence in term time for X days from X returning to school on X.

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 from September additional New Government guidance means that, as Headteacher, I am no longer able to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We will be notifying the Local Authority of the unauthorised absence and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Please note that Penalty notices are issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80.00 which increases to £160.00 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid, this will result in further legal intervention. Unauthorised absence may also result in prosecution under section 444 Education Act 1996. Please note that once a Penalty Notice has been issued there is no right of appeal.

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. Failure to produce this evidence will result in the School referring you to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice of £80 per child, per parent.

I hope you will understand and support our efforts in sustaining high attendance and attainment at X School.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

### **Appendix 3b – Holiday Request Not Submitted**

Re: Name of Pupil, Class

Holiday Absence

It has been brought to our attention that either you have not notified the school that you were going on holiday and / or the reason for your child's absence was not truthful.

I am therefore writing about your action in taking [your child/children or name/s] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].

Our school works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for each child and believes that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfillment. We expect you to consult the school before booking holidays that mean your child will be absent.

I am concerned, as I believe this absence could have a detrimental effect on [your child/children's or name/s] education. Children are required to attend school for 190 out of 365 days of the year.

I strongly urge you always to consult with the school before making plans that involve a pupil's absence from lessons or other commitments.

Please can you complete the 'Withdrawal From Learning' application retrospectively and return it to the school asap. Please note that if your holiday was 5 days or more, a penalty notice will be issued in line with the school's and county's procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher/Head of School

