

Attendance Policy

Introduction

“If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.”

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive an appropriate education. Parents who have chosen to send their children to Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School are asked to sign a Home School Agreement, indicating they will do their best to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.

The school evaluates attendance at least termly and compares attendance data with national figures. These figures are reported termly to the governors. Evaluation of attendance and the effectiveness of strategies to increase attendance forms part of an OFSTED Inspection. High levels of absence will limit the ability of pupils to make the progress they are capable of and this will lead to the schools effectiveness being down-graded. High attendance will lead to an increase in progress and will assist in the school reaching a better grading by OFSTED.

This policy has been written after researching advice from Gloucestershire County Council and reading the Attendance Policies of other schools.

i) Expectations

Children are expected to attend school each day unless they are unwell or in exceptional circumstances, authorised by the Head Teacher.

Parents are responsible for securing regular attendance as identified in the statutory guidance; ‘School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures’. More information available at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

School will encourage children to attend regularly, following up unexplained absences and requesting reasons from parents for these. Both admission and attendance registers are kept daily. In addition, returns are made to the Local Authority where every registered pupil of compulsory school age who; fails to attend school regularly or has been absent from school, where the absence has not been authorised, for a continuous period of not less than 10 days, specifying the cause of absence if known.

Awards are given for attendance. Class Attendance Awards are given weekly for the class with the best Attendance that week. The class then gets entered into a termly tombola to win a prize for each member of the class. Individual pupil Attendance Awards are given on a termly basis (3 times a year) for children whose attendance is 100%. Children with 100% attendance receive a Head teacher certificate & badge and have the opportunity to apply to become an ‘Attendance Ambassador’.

Local Authorities (and all schools) have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. In addition to using these powers, Local Authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance.

The Governors of Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School actively promote the aims of the school and recognise that children must attend school regularly if they are to make the best of the opportunities they have to learn and make progress.

ii) Regular Attendance

Attendance is measured by the number of sessions for which a child is present. There are two sessions in each school day. Registration is taken at the start of each session to determine a child’s presence for that half of the day.

Regular attendance within our school is defined as ‘no unauthorised absence within the last six months’.

The expected level of attendance is 100%, unless absence is due to a genuine illness or a mitigating circumstance authorised by the Head Teacher.

Parents are given feedback on the level of their child’s attendance on their annual report, or earlier should there be a concern.

iii) ‘Authorised’ and ‘Unauthorised’ Absence

Unauthorised absence is when a pupil is absent from school when they should have been in school, or school have not been given an acceptable reason for the absence. Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. To do this a reason for the absence is required, for example, illness or a family funeral. If parents feel there are other genuine reasons to request a child’s absence, this must be put in writing to the Head Teacher by completing Appendix E & F which will be available from the school office or on our school website. Once received, the Head Teacher will make a decision regarding the request dependent on circumstance, the child’s attendance and the child’s academic levels. This decision will be made following consultation with the school ‘attendance panel’, comprising at least two members of the governing body and members of the Senior Management Team.

Having time off for no real reason is an *unauthorised absence*. Examples of absences that are not legitimate include:

Absences for day trips;

No-one to provide a lift;

Staying home because a sibling is ill;

Cheaper holidays in UK or abroad;

Visiting family/friends who have different school term dates/holidays

Without an acceptable reason given, the Head Teacher cannot authorise absences. On such occasions, absences will be recorded as unauthorised. If we do not receive a phone call or a letter, we will follow this up on the day with a telephone call asking why your child is not in school. This is also to make sure that all children who attend Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School are safe and well. If we are unable to speak to a parent, a message will be left asking for contact to be made.

iv) Absence due to illness (I Code)

If your child is unwell we ask that you contact the school by telephone no later than 9.00am on the first day of illness. It is unnecessary to contact us daily if your child is going to be off due to the illness but we do ask that you keep in touch so that we remain aware of the situation and can offer help if appropriate. In certain circumstances, we reserve the right to ask for evidence of this illness; for example a doctor’s appointment card. If this evidence cannot be provided we may record the absence as ‘unauthorised’.

If your child is not 100%, but not necessarily ill, we would ask that you do send them into school, but making us aware so that we can keep an eye on them and contact you if necessary.

If children have vomiting and/or diarrhoea, they must stay home from school for 48 hours after the last episode. This is to ensure children are free from infection, and are well enough to attend school. This also helps to stop the spread of an infection and should make sure we avoid any ‘epidemics’.

v) Medical Appointments (M Code)

We ask that all dentist and doctor appointments are made outside of school hours unless it is absolutely necessary. We are aware that this is not always possible, but would ask that you let the school know beforehand if you do need to take your child out of school for an appointment and be aware that we may ask for proof of this.

vi) Lateness (U Code)

Lateness arriving: The school day begins at 8:50am. **Children who arrive after 8:50am are late**, and must come into school via the main entrance. They must be accompanied to the school office and parents must advise as to why they are late.

Children arriving after 9:15am are considered absent and this will be marked as an unauthorised lateness absence in the register and will affect your child's attendance level.

If a child is persistently late, this will lead to further action being taken to discuss the reasons and offer help and support to overcome this. If lateness continues after this point, where a pupil arrives at school after the registers have closed and where there have been ten sessions of unauthorised lateness, within the immediately preceding 10 week period;

- A letter will be posted to your home address to each parent (see Appendix I), via first class post, advising that you are at risk of a penalty notice from the Local Authority due to persistent lateness.
- If there are any further unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days after receipt of this letter, a penalty notice will be issued for each child.
- The letter will also draw your attention to the fact that you may receive a Penalty Notice if your child has any more unauthorised absence during the next twelve months.
- The penalty notice allows a parent 21 days to pay a fine. If the parent pays after the 21 day period but within 28 days, the fine increases. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority would initiate legal proceedings against the parent for their child's non-attendance.

Lateness collecting: The school has a duty under the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, to protect children and act in their best interests. The school takes persistent lateness in collecting a child very seriously, although we understand that occasionally, delays are unavoidable.

In the event of a child not being collected, the school will make every effort to contact the child's parents/carers, and if this proves to be impossible, will try to get in touch with an alternative emergency named contact, authorised by the child's parents to collect them on their behalf. If no contact can be reached, school staff will inform Social Services.

vii) Time off during term time (G Code)

"Amendments to the 2006 Education Regulations (Pupil Registration, England, 2013) removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted."

Therefore at Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School: The Head Teacher authorises absence, only under exceptional circumstances after taking into account the child's attendance and academic levels. This decision will be made following consultation with the school 'attendance panel', comprising at least two members of the governing body and members of the Senior Management Team.

We ask that parents bear in mind that the reason which may seem good to them, may not fall within the exceptional circumstances guidelines and that there is no automatic right to go on holiday each year during term time and that there is no entitlement for leave of absence for your child for a family holiday or break.

If you believe you do have a genuine reason which is an exceptional circumstance, then you need to put your request in writing to the Head Teacher, using Appendix E&F, giving as much notice as possible and stating all details as to why this is an exceptional reason. Once a decision has been made you will be contacted regarding the decision, usually in the form of Appendix G. This will all be done via the school administrator.

In reality, there are very few circumstances in which absence for a holiday or break will be authorised. The Head Teacher will respond to your letter within two weeks, confirming if the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Please remember it is only the Head Teacher who can do this.

However, if the holiday is booked or you decide to go away regardless, please be aware that;

- Where there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday absence within the immediately preceding 10 week period; on the 10th session (5th day) of absence a letter (see Appendix I) will be posted to both parents, to your home address, via first class post, advising you are at risk of a penalty notice from the local Authority due to unauthorised absence from school.

- If there are any further unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days after receipt of this letter a penalty notice will be issued for each child taken out of school.
- The letter will also draw your attention to the fact that you may receive a Penalty Notice if your child has anymore unauthorised absence during the next twelve months.
- The penalty notice allows a parent 21 days to pay a fine. If the parent pays after the 21 day period but within 28 days, the fine increases. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority would initiate legal proceedings against the parent for their child's non-attendance.

For more information regarding this please visit www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolattendance
Please be advised that the above applies to any time taken off school regardless of whether the school has been informed.

viii) Collection of Children

School Staff need to know who are collecting children at the end of the day. When a child starts school details of parents/carers are collected and kept on file in the school office.

Pupils who are in Foundation Stage and KS1 should not walk to or from school on their own or be left on their own on the school premises either before or after school. Children in KS2 may walk home alone given parents/carers have completed and signed the relevant consent form obtainable from the School Office/Website. Please see our policy on 'Safeguarding Pupils Walking to and from School Alone'.

Details of who is authorised to collect children will be kept on file. Parents/carers must inform staff of any changes in person or by letter.

Any after school clubs will make sure a record of children attending each time is kept and of who is collecting the child.

For off-site activities, parents/carers should complete details of collection arrangements on the permission slip.

ix) Dealing with Unauthorised Attendance or Poor Attendance

Our school takes a pragmatic approach to dealing with unauthorised or/and poor attendance.

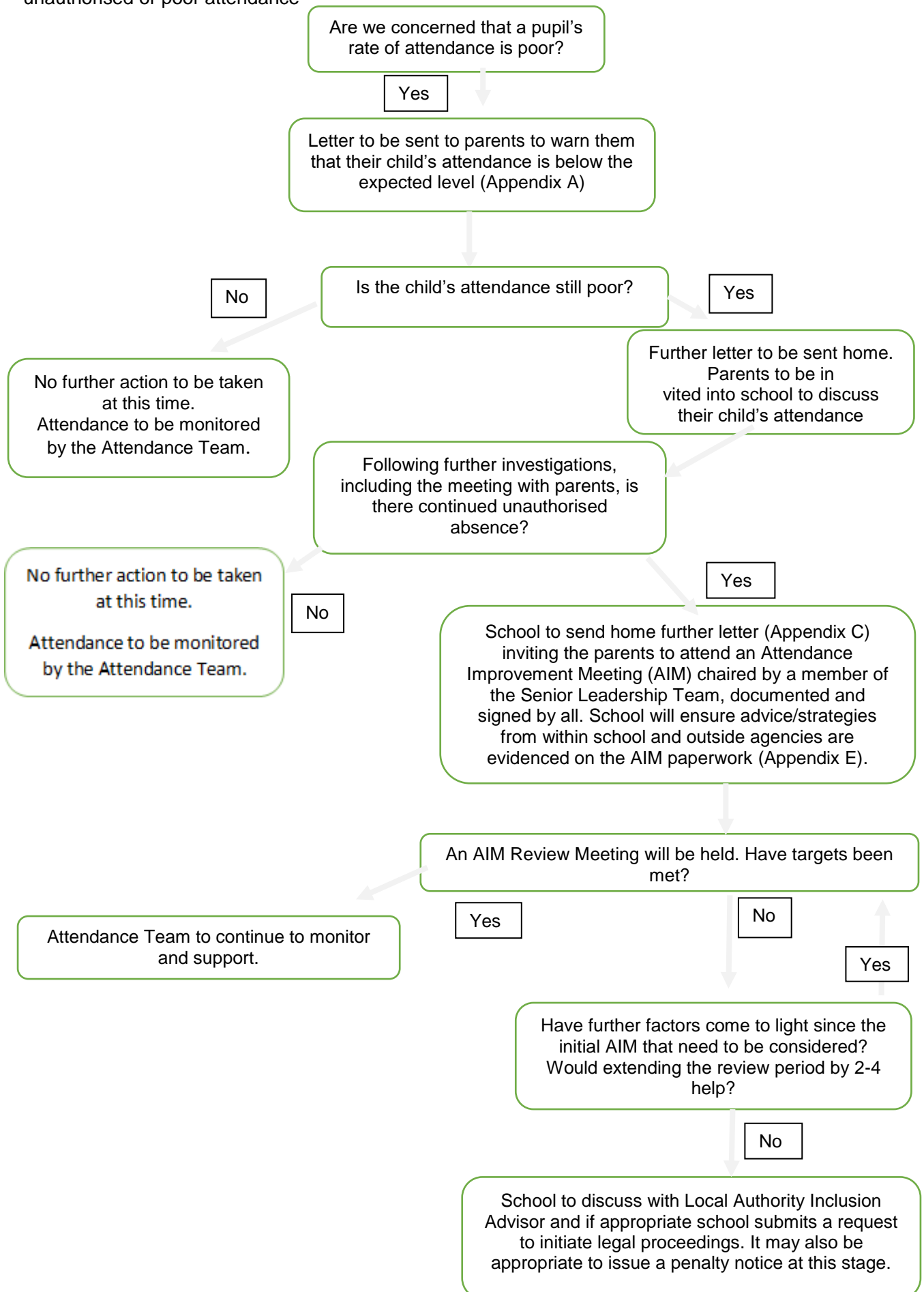
A genuine illness will be recorded as an authorised absence. However, we reserve the right to ask for evidence of this illness, for example a doctor's appointment card. If this evidence cannot be provided we may record the absence as 'unauthorised'. If we believe that the evidence is lacking or unsatisfactory, we will inform the parents that this absence will be deemed unauthorised.

We will work collaboratively with families to get the pupil back into the habit of regular attendance.

If reasonable efforts to resolve unauthorised absence do not result in an improvement, the case can then be referred to the Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings. Please see section vii- 'Time off during term time'. The Local Authority fully supports schools in their aim to achieve 100% attendance.

After 10 or more days of continued unauthorised absence, we will inform the Local Authority of the absence.

Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School take the following approach to dealing with unauthorised or poor attendance



x) Penalty Notices

The Local Authority has the right to issue penalty notices under **any** of the following circumstances;

- An excluded pupil is found in a public place, without justifiable reason for being there, during school hours, on a school day, during the first 5 days of a fixed exclusion period or a permanent exclusion.
- Unauthorised holidays- please see section vii for further information
- Persistent lateness of a pupil after the registers have closed - see section vi

Penalty Notices are not the only means of disposal for these offences. Depending on the circumstances of each case, the LA may alternatively decide to issue a caution, or to prosecute the offence in a magistrates' court, or to take no further action.

Useful Definitions

Parent: As per section 576 of the Education Act 1996, all natural parents whether they are married or not and includes any person who, although not a natural parent;

-Has a responsibility for a child or young person

-Has day to day care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child

School: Includes all educational providers – for this policy school will always refer to Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School.

Compulsory School Age: This is the start term following a child's fifth birthday.

'We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.'

The Attendance Team: Miss Tracey Freeman (Inclusion Lead, Member of Leadership Team), Mrs Jo Childs (Attendance Officer) and Mrs Karla Weale (Pastoral Support Worker).

The Attendance Panel: Miss Sarah Daly (Acting Headteacher), Miss K Long, (Assistant Headteacher), Mr A Lewis (Assistant Headteacher), Miss Tracey Freeman (Inclusion Lead) and Mr Neil Eley (Chair of Governors)

Acting Head Teacher: Miss Sarah Daly

Appendix A- Warning Letter 1

Dear

Attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school.

Parents who have chosen to send their children to Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School are asked to sign a Home School Agreement, indicating they will do their best to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.

At Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School, we evaluate attendance at least termly and compare attendance data with national figures. These figures are reported termly to the governors. Evaluation of attendance and the effectiveness of strategies to increase attendance forms part of an OFSTED Inspection. High levels of absence will limit the ability of pupils to make the progress they are capable of and this will lead to the schools effectiveness being down-graded. High attendance will lead to an increase in progress and will assist in the school reaching a better grading by OFSTED.

As you can see from the enclosed printout, **NAME** attendance is **86.25%**, which is below our expected attendance rate.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. However, pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment. We would therefore appreciate your support in ensuring your child attends school regularly.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Sarah Daly
Acting Headteacher

Appendix B- Warning Letter 2

Dear

Invitation to discuss your child's Attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school.

Parents who have chosen to send their children to Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School are asked to sign a Home School Agreement, indicating they will do their best to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.

At Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School, we evaluate attendance at least termly and compare attendance data with national figures. These figures are reported termly to the governors. Evaluation of attendance and the effectiveness of strategies to increase attendance forms part of an OFSTED Inspection. High levels of absence will limit the ability of pupils to make the progress they are capable of and this will lead to the schools effectiveness being down-graded. High attendance will lead to an increase in progress and will assist in the school reaching a better grading by OFSTED.

As you can see from the enclosed printout, **NAME** attendance is **86.25%**, which is below our expected attendance rate.

We would like to discuss how we can jointly support **NAME** to improve her lateness/attendance. A member of our School Attendance Team will therefore be contacting you over the next few days to arrange an appointment in order to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Sarah Daly
Acting Headteacher

Appendix C- Warning Letter 3

Dear

Invitation to AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting)

At Upton St Leonards C of E Primary School, we evaluate attendance at least termly and compare attendance data with national figures. These figures are reported termly to the governors. Evaluation of attendance and the effectiveness of strategies to increase attendance forms part of an OFSTED Inspection. High levels of absence will limit the ability of pupils to make the progress they are capable of and this will lead to the schools effectiveness being down-graded. High attendance will lead to an increase in progress and will assist in the school reaching a better grading by OFSTED.

As you can see from the enclosed printout, **NAME** attendance is **86.25%**, which is below our expected attendance rate.

We would therefore like you to attend a AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting) at school on **Wednesday 3rd February at 11am** to discuss how we can jointly support **NAME** to improve her attendance. **Miss Daly (Inclusion Lead) and Mrs Jo Childs (Attendance Officer) will attend this meeting.**

It is very important that you attend this meeting. Please can you sign and return the slip below to confirm that you will attend. I must inform you that if you decide not to attend, this meeting will proceed in your absence and we will then send you a letter to inform you of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Sarah Daly
Acting Headteacher

*I will/*will not be able to attend the AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting) on **Wednesday 3rd February at 11am**

Child's name

Signed

Date

*Please delete as necessary

Appendix D- Aim Review Meeting



Education Performance and Inclusion

Education Act 1996 and Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003

Attendance Improvement Meeting

Name of School: _____

To be completed as a contemporaneous record of the meeting and a copy given to all attendees at the close of the meeting. If parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend a copy of this record should be sent to them by post.

Name:	Year:	D.O.B.
Date Plan Drawn Up:	Where AIM is held :	
Present:		
Current Attendance	% sessions absence authorised	sessions absence unauthorised
Background information provided by school		
Reasons for absence given by parent/carers, student/ pupil		
Please tick and date any of the following that have been previously offered/completed		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pre arranged home visit to discuss how to improve attendance <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to other agencies (please state) <input type="checkbox"/> Communication with tutor, head of year, head of house , attendance officer, other, to discuss attendance concerns, e.g. telephone call, e-mails, letters, meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced timetable <p>Any other relevant intervention offered (please detail):</p>	<p>Date</p>
--	-------------

Plan to Improve Attendance
This should detail any new intervention that either school, parent or pupil feel would be beneficial.

<p>Student/Pupil agrees to:</p> <p>See guidance notes</p>	
<p>Parent(s)/Carers(s) agrees to:</p> <p>See guidance notes</p>	
<p>School agrees to:</p> <p>See guidance notes</p>	
<p>Please give details of any other agencies currently involved and the work they are undertaking</p>	

Agreed Attendance target for the next 4 school weeks % *

.....

Review Date

*NB This can be a target of no unauthorised absence during the review period.

As Parent /Carer of I understand that failure to meet these targets may result in legal proceedings taken against me.

Signed:

Parent **Parent**

Date:

Pupil **School** **Other**

Date:

For use if parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend

Date plan posted to parent(s)/carer(s):

(This should be within one day of plan being drawn up)

Signed: **Date:**

Appendix E- Request for a leave of absence during term time
Information for Parents

Parents should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in “exceptional circumstances”.

You may consider that a holiday will be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching and learning that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed and arrangements need to be made for individual children to catch up on missed work. Disruption to the continuity of teaching and learning is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

If requesting a leave of absence you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave**.

In the case of an unauthorised leave of absence the headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice without further warning to the parent. Please note that such a penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates’ Court.

All leave of absence requests should be completed on the attached form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides. This should be returned to the school at least seven days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

I hope you will support our efforts to maintain good levels of attendance and attainment.

Yours sincerely

Miss S Daly
Acting Headteacher

Appendix F- Request for a leave of absence during term time

Pupil NameClass/Tutor Group
Pupil's address

Date of first day of absenceDate of return to school

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school

If a pupil fails to return within ten school days following the anticipated date of return and no reason is provided, there may be grounds (under some circumstances) to delete your child's name from the Admissions Register and register them as a Child Missing Education.

Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence

.....

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.

Name(s) of Parent/Carer (s) making application:
Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename.....Surname.....

Address:

Signed Dated

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename.....Surname.....

Address:

Signed Dated

(Please ensure you are giving at least seven days' notice of the proposed absence, retrospective applications cannot be authorised)

For school to complete and copy retained: AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED (please circle)

Appendix G- Request for a leave of absence during term time – school response

This response must be sent to each parent and a copy retained by the school

Dear.....,

Child's Name..... Class/Tutor Group.....

Your request for absence on the following dates: ___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___ (totalling.....days, has been considered and is

AUTHORISED UNAUTHORISED

- a) Their attendance is currently:.....
- b) The request **does / does not** meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances'

Please note: An **unauthorised** absence may be notified to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning

Signed..... (Headteacher)

Date ___ / ___ /

—

Print name:

Appendix H- Leave of absence without request

Parent's address (send by post as this is formal)
date

Dear (parent's name)

Re: Leave of absence without request

Child(ren)'s Name(s): Date(s) of Birth:

I am aware that your child(ren) was/were absent from school from (date) to (date). I have tried to contact you with regard to these absences but have been unsuccessful and now understand that you were on a family holiday. I believe this to be the case because.....

As you will be aware, as of 1st September 2013 Headteachers are no longer able to grant any leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional/unavoidable circumstances. It is also stated in our school policy that all requests for leave of absence should be made in writing, in advance of the proposed absence.

As we are unaware of any exceptional circumstances that might apply, the absence has **not been authorised**. However, if you feel that the absence was due to an exceptional circumstance or illness, please provide supporting evidence to this effect no later than (Date – **allow two weeks**) and I may be able to reconsider my decision.

I must warn you that failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school is an offence under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996. The Supreme Court Judgement from 2017 (Isle of Wight Council v Platt [2017] UKSC 28) has determined that 'regular' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'.

If the reasons given for your child(ren)'s absence from school are not considered to be exceptional (and therefore the absence is unauthorised) then I may request, without further warning, that the Local Authority take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in a Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty of up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due may result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.

Please refer to the school's attendance policy (available on our website and in hard copy upon request) and Gloucestershire County Council's website for further information.

If you wish to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Miss S Daly

Appendix I- Penalty Notice Warning Letter

Dear (Name)

**Re: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
Warning of penalty notice for persistent lateness after the register has closed**

Under the Education Act 1996, parents have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within an agreed Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

(Name) has been marked absent from school for () sessions in the previous () weeks without prior authorisation or an acceptable reason being given to the headteacher. Please note there are normally two sessions in each school day. Arriving after the registers have closed for the morning or afternoon session will result in an unauthorised absence mark for the entire session.

This absence has therefore been recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

I need to inform you that the level of (Name's) unauthorised absence places you at risk of a penalty notice and/or court action by the Local Authority.

Providing there are no further unauthorised absences within the next fifteen school days, which will start two days after the date of this letter (to allow for postage) a penalty notice will not be issued on this occasion.

I must also draw your attention to the fact that should (Name) have more unauthorised absences related to lateness within the next twelve months following this warning letter, you may receive a penalty notice without further warning.

Yours sincerely
Miss S Daly
Acting Headteacher