

# The Weald Federation

Of Five Ashes, Frant, Mark Cross and Mayfield Church of England Primary Schools



## With God's love we grow and learn together

To be an inspirational place of learning. Together, with our community, we strive for excellence enabling every child to flourish.

Through our Christian ethos, we aim to empower our pupils to become independent, reflective learners able to contribute to our ever-changing and diverse world.

## Attendance Policy

Led by:	Joanna Challis and Jo Warren (EHTs)
Date implemented:	September 2024
Date for next review:	September 2025
Approved by:	FGB 26.09.24
ESCC policy / School	ESCC

# The Weald Federation Attendance Policy

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## **The Weald Federation Attendance Aims:**

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. We have a strong culture of working together to improve attendance and are committed to removing barriers to attendance, at home and in school, and work collaboratively in partnership with families.

Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by The Weald Federation, it is vital that children are at school, on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, well developed social, emotional and mental health and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Our Christian ethos underpins a unique curriculum found in each of our four schools and we are committed to establishing purposeful learning environments where all pupils feel inspired, safe, valued and a sense of belonging. This policy underpins The Weald Federation ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that all pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that all pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school

### **Good attendance is important because:**

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- pupils with good attendance make better social and academic progress which has a positive impact on their emotional wellbeing, attitudes to learning and aspirations
- regular attendance supports children to successfully manage school routines, learning opportunities and relationships with others
- pupils with good attendance are more successful in transferring between key stages, to secondary school and future employment

**Our Weald Federation Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of the guidance below:**

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- [Education penalty notices | East Sussex County Council](#)

## The Weald Federation will Promote Good Attendance by:

- Having an ‘Attendance Leader’ in each school (Head of School)
- promoting a strong attendance ethos
- having in place a clear Attendance Policy that is communicated effectively to all stakeholders
- recording and sharing attendance and absence accurately in line with Local Authority and DfE guidance
- ensuring regular and robust monitoring of attendance, absence and punctuality
- safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in line with ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’
  - providing clear information about attendance in our Policy, newsletters and on our websites
- reporting to parents on how their child is performing in school and their rate of attendance and punctuality
- celebrating good and improved attendance
- acting early to address patterns of absence and lateness
- supporting pupils and their families when there is a risk of low or persistent absence (below 96%)
- liaising with relevant agencies/professionals when required

The Weald Federation Attendance Leaders	
Five Ashes	Darren Gurr
Frant	Lauren Beach
Mark Cross	Alma Scales
Mayfield	Emily Ramsay
Governor	Michael Asquith

School	Whole School Attendance 2023 - 2024	Whole School Attendance Target 2024-2025
Five Ashes	<b>94%</b>	<b>96%</b>
Frant	<b>96%</b>	<b>96%</b>
Mark Cross	<b>96%</b>	<b>96%</b>
Mayfield	<b>95%</b>	<b>96%</b>

## **Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Leader (Champion):**

- to set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through assemblies, newsletters and The Weald Federation website
- to help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development.
- Be 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.
- to regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place
- to make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents
- to ensure that The Weald Federation's Attendance Policy is consistently applied
- to provide office staff with a priority list of vulnerable pupils
- to ensure that attendance is accurately recorded by office staff
- to ensure that attendance, absence and punctuality is regularly and robustly monitored
- to act early to address poor attendance and punctuality
- support pupils and their families to improve attendance when required
- to complete a Child Missing in Education (CME) referral, alongside office staff, if there is an unknown absence and no communication with the parent/carer for more than 10 consecutive days
- to seek guidance from ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM when required
- to work alongside office staff to manage Withdrawal from Learning and Fixed Penalty Notice requests
- to share safeguarding concerns promptly with relevant staff and agencies in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- to ensure adherence to ESCC off-rolling procedures (moving schools, CME and Elective Home Education (EHE))

## **Responsibilities of Office Staff:**

- to accurately maintain the whole school admissions and attendance registers, using the correct codes, in line with ESCC Guidance on School Attendance
- to contact parents to establish reasons for pupil absence with reference to the school's priority list of vulnerable pupils
- to complete a Child Missing in Education (CME) referral, alongside the Attendance Leader, if there is an unknown absence and no communication with the parent/carer for more than 10 consecutive days
- if a child is on the priority list for vulnerable pupils is absent, ESCC Guidance should be followed (See Appendix 1)
- to provide attendance data for the Attendance Leader when requested
- to organise written communication to parents/carers as required by the Attendance Leader
- to seek guidance from ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM when required

- to work alongside the Attendance Leader to manage Withdrawal from Learning and Fixed Penalty Notice requests
- to alert safeguarding concerns promptly to the Headteacher and DSL
- to adhere to ESCC off-rolling procedures (moving schools, CME and Elective Home Education (EHE))

### **Responsibilities of the Class Teacher:**

- to ensure that all pupils are registered accurately, twice each day on Arbor
- to liaise with office staff and the Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality
- to communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- to follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- to build strong relationships with pupils and families, listen to and understand the barriers and support in removing them
- to support pupils' emotional wellbeing, engagement and learning on their return to school
- to work collaboratively with outside agencies if required

### **Responsibilities of Parents/Carers:**

It is a legal responsibility for parents of children aged 5-16 years to ensure that they receive a suitable full time education. When registered at a school, pupils are legally required to attend regularly and to be punctual for lessons. Parents/carers should:

- support the school, with their child, in aiming for 100% attendance each academic year
- inform the school office by 9am on the first day and subsequent days of your child's absence (by telephone or email)
- provide the school with a reason for absence so that the correct code can be recorded in the attendance register
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, using the school's Withdrawal from Learning form (available from the school office or the school's website). Withdrawal from Learning forms should be completed at least 14 days in advance of the requested absence
- register the reason for their child's lateness and sign their child out, at the office, if taken out during the school day
- discuss with the class teacher any concerns that may have an impact on their child's attendance or punctuality
- attend meetings with school staff, to support improved attendance, when required
- inform the school, in writing, of their intention to leave the school or home educate

### **Responsibilities of Pupils:**

- to attend school every day unless they are ill or have an agreed authorised absence

- to arrive at school in time for registration and be ready to start their learning
- to support their parents/carers in getting them to school on time
- to speak to a trusted adult if anything is worrying them that may affect their attendance
- if not with a parent when arriving late to school (Year 5 and 6 only), take responsibility for registering at the office

## Responsibilities of Governors:

- to recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- to ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- To regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.

## Types of Absence:

National codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way that complies with government regulations. There are two main categories of absence: authorised and unauthorised absence.

- **Authorised Attendance:** when the school has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory reason for absence or given approval in advance for the leave. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- **Unauthorised Attendance:** when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a pupil's absence from school following a parent/carer's request. This includes reasons such as tiredness, birthday celebrations, holidays or visiting family. It also includes occasions where no reason has been given and when a pupil arrives after the close of the register without an approved reason.

The school can change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice-versa if new information is presented.

## Punctuality:

All pupils are expected to arrive on time for the start of the school day as we start learning promptly. If pupils are late it causes disruption to the learning of both the individual and others in the class. It can also have an impact on the pupil's wellbeing.

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils, we monitor pupil lateness on a regular basis. The first part of the morning in school is a valuable time for children to consolidate previous learning and enables them to feel settled and ready for the school day. Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. Arrival after morning registration (8.45am) a child will be marked as Late (Code L and arrival time). Arrival after the close of registration (9.15am) will be marked as Unauthorised (Code U) in line with the ESCC attendance guidance.

School	Gates open	Morning Registration	Close of Register
Five Ashes	8.35 - 8.45am	8.45am	9.15am
Frant	8.35 - 8.45am	8.45am	9.15am
Mark Cross	8.35 - 8.45am	8.45am	9.15am
Mayfield	8.35 - 8.45am	8.45am	9.15am

## Requests to Withdraw Pupils from Learning:

The DfE and Local Authority only allows Headteachers the discretion to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Across the year there are just 190 school days. With 175 days already marked out as 'non-school-days', you should have an exceptional reason to withdraw your child from school. The following are **not** considered to be exceptional circumstances and are likely to be rejected and unauthorised:

- Holidays
- Trips to visit family/friends
- Your child's birthday
- Tickets to sports/culture events

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence are required to complete a Withdrawal from Learning Form (Appendix 1) at least 14 days in advance of the requested absence. This can be found on the school's website or can be collected from the school office.

The Executive Headteacher will then make the decision whether the absence is considered to be an exceptional circumstance and inform parents/carers of the decision. If it is not considered an exceptional circumstance, the pupil's absence will be unauthorised and the Executive Headteacher may request the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if the absence is for 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) or more (see Appendix 6).

A limit of no more than 2 penalty notices will be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within a 3-year rolling period will apply from 19 August 2024. **The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.**

**Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.**

A third penalty notice will not be issued within a 3-year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued, and alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.



## **Emotionally Based School Avoidance:**

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) or Emotionally Based Non-Attendance (EBNA) refers to young people who have trouble attending school because of emotional difficulties. Early signs can include avoiding certain classes, people, places, or being late often.

Our approach to EBSA within is aligned with Therapeutic Thinking. This focuses on how all children are supported. It focuses particularly on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Therapeutic Thinking helps to develop an understanding of how to respond to those who may be communicating through concerning behaviours, such as EBSA.

When supporting a child experiencing EBSA, we see it as important to consider not only the within child factors, but also systemic and environmental factors that may be influencing their behaviours.

East Sussex Education Services have developed an EBSA toolkit and associated training to support schools and parent carers.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

The Weald Federation work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

## **Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality:**

Once attendance has been identified as a concern, the parent(s)/carer(s) will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss any barriers there may be which is impacting on their child's attendance. The attendance meeting is an opportunity to discuss and agree support and expectations regarding school attendance moving forward. The agreements made will be recorded on an Attendance Support Plan and shared with the parent(s)/carer(s).

Following the attendance meeting, the school will monitor the attendance for 10 school weeks. During this period schools are expected to continue to engage and attempt to address barriers to regular attendance.

## **Legal Intervention:**

If, during the monitoring period, the national threshold has been met and the pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions within 10 school weeks, a request for a Notice to Improve/Penalty Notice can be submitted to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will consider the request for a Notice to Improve/Penalty Notice on a case-by-case basis at a weekly triage meeting and determine the appropriate next step. Discussions will be held with the school if there are any queries. During this period all supportive measures by the school will continue and approaches adapted where necessary.

## **Attendance Procedures:**

The school monitors pupil attendance thoroughly and follows a 'support first approach'. Our attendance target for all pupils is **96%**.

### **Stage 1:**

The Attendance Leader will monitor attendance weekly and implement early intervention in liaison with the school secretary. When a pattern is spotted, the Attendance Leader will discuss with pupils and parents and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

### **Stage 2:**

At the end of each term, the Attendance Leader will write to parents/carers of pupils whose attendance **is below 96%** for that term. There will be an opportunity for parents/carers to discuss with the school, ways in which we can work in partnership to improve their pupil's attendance. We aim to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school.

### **Stage 3:**

When attendance **is 90% or below**, it is categorised as 'persistence absence'. A letter will be sent to parents/carers inviting them to attend a meeting to complete an Attendance Support Plan outlining what the parents/carers and the school will do to support the improvement of the pupil's attendance. A signed copy of the Attendance Improvement Plan should be shared with the parent/carer by email. Where complex or additional needs are identified, schools are to embed attendance as a key priority in an Additional needs Plan (ANP).

### **Stage 4:**

Where absence persists and the Attendance Support Plan is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract. Where attendance falls **below 50%** over two consecutive short terms, the Attendance leader will make a referral to Level 2 Early Help Keywork.

### **Stage 5:**

Where support is not working/being engaged with, the Attendance Leader is responsible for enforcing attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **Leavers:**

If your child is leaving the school (other than transferring to secondary school) parents/carers are required to write to the school to inform them of their plans, so that arrangements can be made to take the pupil(s) off roll and transfer relevant documents to the new school. The letter, addressed to the Head of School, should include:

- Reason for moving schools
- Last day of attendance at our school
- New address and telephone number (If moving outside of East Sussex)
- New school's name and address

- New school's start date (when known)

If the school does not have the above information your child may be considered a 'child missing in education' and it may trigger a safeguarding investigation.

### **Home Schooling:**

On receipt of signed, written notification of the parent/carer's intention to home educate, the school must inform the local authority, providing the letter received from the parent/carer, so that the pupil can be deleted from the school's admission register and Teaching and Learning Provision are informed. If there are any safeguarding concerns, the school will contact the Children's Services Single Point of Advice (SPOA).

### **Religious Observance:**

Absence for religious observance should be authorised (Code R). The day should be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong.

### **Mobile children:**

Code T is 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 other types of absence by these groups.

Children from these groups who do not travel are required to attend full time when registered with the school.

### **Reduced Timetables:**

Very occasionally, it may be in the best interests of a pupil to agree a part-time timetable. Outside agencies such as ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM are usually involved when this is required. A reduced timetable should be for a fixed period of up to 6 weeks and can only be implemented with the parent/carer's consent. Timetables are implemented on a temporary basis, stating when they're expected to return to school full time.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Absence Flowchart for Vulnerable Pupils

**Appendix 2:** Whole School Termly Attendance Letter

**Appendix 3:** Letter for Parents/Carers (attendance below 96%)

**Appendix 4:** Letter for Parents/Carers (Persistent Absence <91%)

**Appendix 5:** Letter of Confirmation of Meeting (Support Plan Sent with Letter)

**Appendix 6:** Letter of thanks and congratulations

**Appendix 7:** Attendance Support Plan

**Appendix 8:** Attendance Contract Form

**Appendix 9:** Letter for Parents/Carers whose request for absence has been unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be requested

**Appendix 10:** School Request to ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM to Issue a Penalty Notice

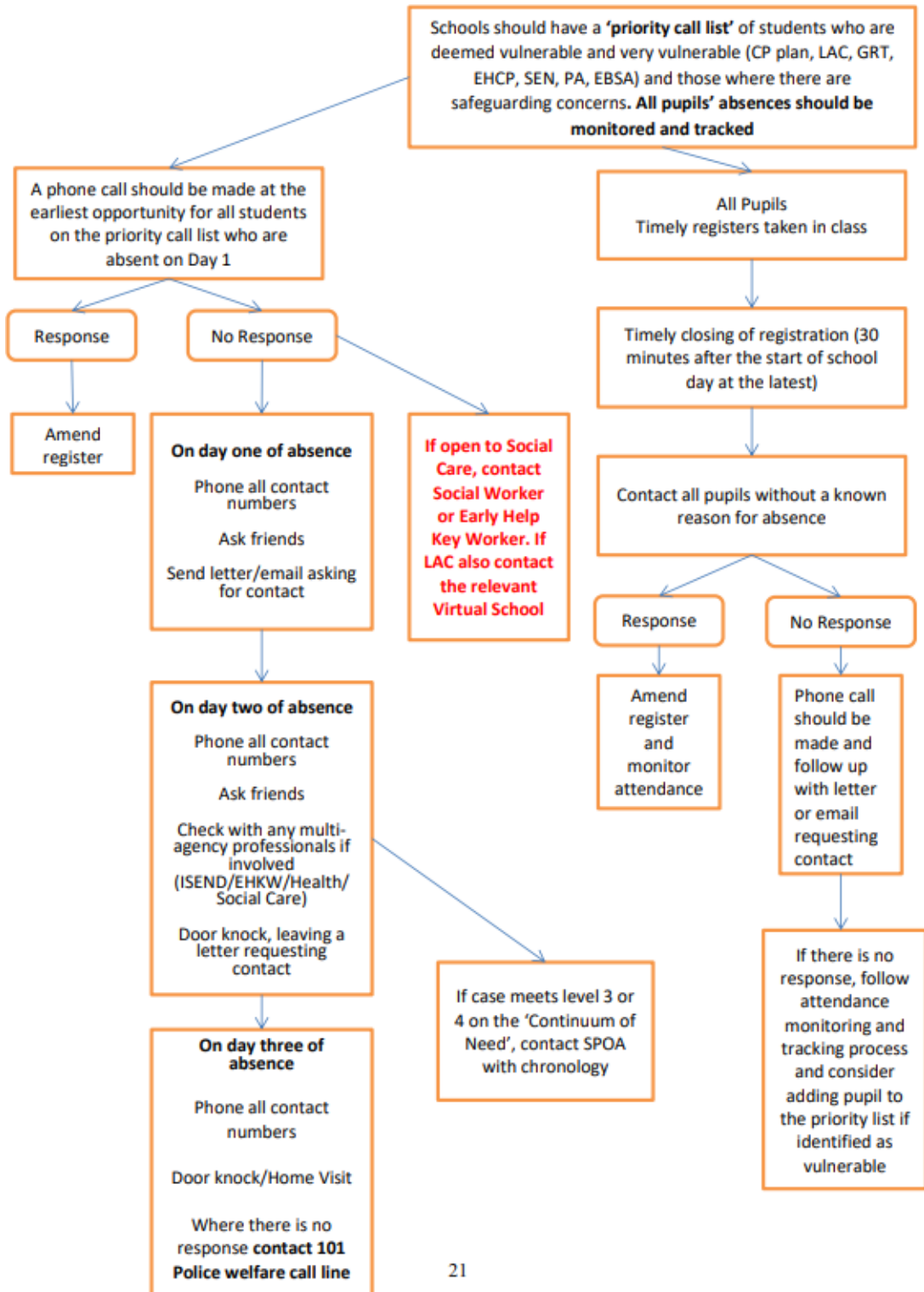
**Appendix 11:** Withdrawal from Learning Application: For Exceptional Circumstances

**Appendix 12:** Letter return to parents with the counter-signed request form when an absence has been declined

**Appendix 13:** Request to issue a penalty notice following a planned absence (i.e. holiday)

**Appendix 14:** Request to issue a notice to improve/Penalty notice for persistent unauthorized absence

# Appendix 1: Absence Flowchart for Vulnerable Pupils



## **Appendix 2: Whole School Termly Attendance Letter**

Dear Parents/carers of [name's]

### **Termly attendance information for Parents**

As you may be aware, schools have a duty of care with regard to pupils' attendance at school. We want all children in our school to create good habits, maintain secure relationships with friends and staff, build self-esteem and ensure they are fulfilling their potential. This duty of care means that we are required to monitor and track pupils' attendance regularly, as well as support attendance where there are concerns. Low attendance impacts hugely on attainment. When children miss days of school, they miss steps in sequences of carefully planned lessons. Children often find it difficult to catch up with missed learning, resulting in gaps in their knowledge.

[name's] current attendance is [percentage].

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child. We also recognise that there are usually cases of genuine illness which prevents children from being at school. Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance, please contact the school office to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

## **Appendix 3: Letter for Parents whose child's attendance is below 96%**

Dear Parents/carers of [name's]

### **Attendance below 96%**

As you will be aware, good school attendance is vital in helping children to create good habits, maintain secure relationships with friends and staff, build self-esteem and ensure they are fulfilling their potential. Our duty of care to all children means that we are required to monitor and track pupils' attendance regularly, as well as support attendance where there are concerns.

We are writing to inform you that your child's attendance is [percentage].

Low attendance impacts hugely on attainment. When children miss days of school, they miss steps in sequences of carefully planned lessons. Children often find it difficult to catch up with missed learning, resulting in gaps in their knowledge.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child. We also recognise that there are usually cases of genuine illness which prevents children from being at school.

We hope that your child's attendance improves this term. If there are further absences, we may invite you into school for a meeting to discuss this and to support you with improving your child's attendance. In the meantime, if you would like to discuss your child's attendance, please contact the school office to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

## **Appendix 4: Letter for Parents/Carers whose child's attendance is below 91% (Persistent Absence)**

Dear Parents/carers of [name's]

### **ATTENDANCE MEETING INVITE**

Following our previous letter dated ( ) regarding (child's name) attendance, there continues to be a cause for concern. Our records show that (child's name) attendance is currently at (%).

Regular school attendance is an important issue and something we take very seriously. I would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss your child's attendance. During the meeting, we will discuss the barriers to your child's attendance and how we can provide support to address these. We will work together to set up an attendance plan which will be reviewed in the following term.

I have arranged for this meeting to take place in school on ( ) at ( ). Please could you confirm that you are able to attend this meeting. If you are unable to attend, please contact the school office to make an alternative arrangement.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School



## **Appendix 5: Letter of confirmation of meeting- support plan to be sent with letter**

Dear Parents/carers of [name's]

### **Attendance Meeting – [Pupil Name & DOB]**

Thank you for attending the meeting on [date]. Please find enclosed a copy of the Attendance Support Plan signed by you at the meeting reflecting the agreements made by all parties.

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

**Should [student's name] accrue 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the next 10 school week period, you may be at risk to receive a penalty notice or a Notice to Improve and therefore urge you to work with us to help resolve any barriers to attendance.**

If you have any queries, please contact me via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

## **Appendix 6: Letter of thanks and congratulations**

Dear Parents/carers of [name's]

Having reviewed [Student's Name] attendance, I am writing to inform you that during the last period, your child's attendance improved. We would like to thank you for your support in ensuring that attendance continues to be a priority to allow your child to get the most out of their education and fulfil their potential.

We must inform you that your child's attendance percentage overall will have been affected by previous absences. I would advise that the current level of attendance needs to be maintained, and your child's attendance will continue to be monitored by the school.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

## Appendix 7: Attendance Support Plan

### Attendance Improvement Meeting

Name:		Year:	D.O.B.
Date Plan Drawn Up:			
Present:			
Current Attendance		% sessions absence authorised .....	sessions absence unauthorised .....
Background information provided by school			
Reasons for absence given by parent(s)/carer(s), pupil			
What steps has the school taken to improve attendance?			
What prevents _____ from coming to school?			
How does _____ feel about missing school?			

What impact is missing school having on _____? _____?	
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**Plan to improve attendance**  
 This should detail any new intervention that either school, parent or pupil feel would be beneficial.

Pupil agrees to:	
------------------	--

Parent(s)/carers(s) agree to:	
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School agrees to:	
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Please give details of any other agencies currently involved and the work they are undertaking	
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<p><b>Agreed Attendance target for the next 4 school weeks e.g. no unauthorised absences</b>          .....</p> <p><b>Review Date</b> .....</p>
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<p><b>Signed:</b>          Parent .....      Parent .....</p> <p><b>Date:</b> .....</p>
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## Appendix 8: Attendance Contract Form

Child's Name:	
Year Group:	
Parent/Carer(s) Name:	
Staff responsible for writing the Attendance Improvement Agreement:	
Pupil's Current Attendance:	
Pupil Voice:	
Parent Voice:	
Agreed pupil actions to support improved attendance:	
Agreed parent actions to support improved attendance:	
Agreed school actions to support improved attendance	
Date of next review: (approximately 2 weeks)	

I understand that if there is no improvement in my child's attendance and absence continues to fall or remain below 91%, the school may refer the matter to ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM or request a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority if 10 unauthorised sessions occur within 10 school weeks of the completion of an Attendance Improvement Agreement.

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 9 : Letter for Parents/Carers whose request for absence has been unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be requested**

Dear Parent/Carer

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

It is our understanding that **[pupil]** was on holiday during these dates. This letter is to advise you that I am unable to authorise this as time off in term time is for exceptional and unavoidable circumstances.

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

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

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

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

Once a Penalty Notice has been issued there is no right of appeal.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

## Appendix 10: School Request to ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM to Issue a Penalty Notice

(see Appendix 3 of East Sussex County Council: Penalty Notices Guidance for Schools and Academies (December 2020))

*parent includes a step-parent or other carer and can include an absent parent	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>
<b>Parent/Carer Full Name:</b>		
<b>Address:</b>		

### Pupil Details

<b>Pupil Name:</b>	<b>Year:</b>
<b>School:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	

### Absence Details

Please complete one of the following sections:-

<u>Holiday in Term Time</u>	<u>Unauthorised Absence and/or Lates</u>
Date of Decision Letter:	Date of Warning Letter:

Number of unauthorised sessions:	Number of unauthorised sessions:
Period (dates) from:            to	Period (dates) from:            to
<b>MINIMUM 10 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS (5 DAYS)</b>	<b>MINIMUM 10 SESSIONS OVER A 10 SCHOOL WEEK PERIOD FOLLOWING ISSUE OF WARNING LETTER</b>

**Evidence Attached**

<b><u>Holiday in Term Time</u></b>	<b><u>Unauthorised Absence and/or Lates</u></b>
Withdrawal from Learning Form: <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised decision letter sent to parent: <input type="checkbox"/> Registration Certificate: <input type="checkbox"/> Any additional evidence: <input type="checkbox"/> Please specify:	Warning Letter(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Registration Certificate: <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of support offered/provided: <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:

**Name:**

**Date:**

Please email this form and all relevant paperwork to [legal.interventions@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:legal.interventions@eastsussex.gov.uk)



## Appendix 11: Withdrawal from Learning Application: For Exceptional Circumstances

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Did you know that across the year there are just 190 school days? That means there are already 175 days set aside for weekends, holidays, family visits and rewarding days out. We believe every school day counts to give your child the greatest opportunity of attaining a good education and to support a happy and healthy future.

With 175 days already marked out as ‘non-school-days’, you should have an exceptional reason to withdraw your child from school. The following are not considered to be exceptional circumstances and are likely to be rejected and unauthorised:

- Trips to visit family/friends
- Your child’s birthday
- Cheaper family holidays
- Tickets to sports/culture events

100% is recognised as an expected level of school attendance. Five days of school equates to 25 hours of learning, catching up with extra work out of school is unrealistic.

The vast majority of headteachers do not authorise any absence in term time, in fact, many schools refused 100% of requests last year. We strongly recommend you discuss your absence request with the school in the first instance.

Think twice about whether you want to proceed. Your child has the right to a full-time education and the opportunities that this can bring. We hope that you will work in partnership with us to make sure that your child attends school every day, allowing them access to the education they deserve.

**To be completed by parent/carer:**

Child’s Name: ..... Tutor Group/Class .....

Date of withdrawal from learning: .....

Date of return to learning: .....

Total number of learning days missed: .....

Reason for absence:.....

.....

.....

**Declaration:-**

By completing and submitting this form I understand that if the request is unauthorised the Legal Interventions Team at East Sussex County Council will be notified of the absence taken and a legal intervention may be instigated in the form of a Penalty Notice. I also understand that if a Penalty Notice is issued it will be to each parent for each child taken out of school. I also acknowledge the following:-

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

Name of Parent/Carer:.....

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Home Address: .....

.....

.....

**Head teacher decision:**

Name of child: ..... Class/Year Group.....

Date decision form sent home: .....

**Authorised:** Your request has been authorised for the following dates: ...../...../..... to ...../...../.....

**Unauthorised:** Your request has been unauthorised for the following dates: ...../...../..... to ...../...../.....

**A Penalty Notice WILL / WILL NOT be requested** (delete as appropriate)

Head teacher signature .....

Date: ... .....

## Appendix 12: Letter return to parents with the counter-signed request form when an absence has been declined

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for your recent request for an absence in term time. I will not be authorising your request as I do not consider the reason provided for the requested absence to be exceptional circumstances.

I realise that you will be disappointed by my decision, but Government guidance means that, as a head teacher, I am no longer able to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances. [ **OPTIONAL IF A HOLIDAY** “and family holidays do not fall into this category” ]

The consequence for your child taking an absence during this period is that it will be recorded as unauthorised and that we may request a Penalty Notice to be issued by the local authority to each parent / carer for each child should the child be absent during the requested period.

Should you wish to present further evidence of exceptional circumstances, please contact me **before** the absence is taken.

Please note that once a Penalty Notice has been issued there is no right of appeal.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

## Appendix 13: REQUEST TO ISSUE A PENALTY NOTICE FOLLOWING A PLANNED ABSENCE (i.e. holiday)

### Parent Information (who the PN will be issued to)

Parent includes a step-parent or other carer and can include an absent parent

Parent 1	Parent 2
<b>Name:</b> Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>Name:</b> Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Address:</b> Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>Address:</b> Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text.

### Pupil Information

**Name:** Click or tap here to enter text.  
**School:** Click or tap here to enter text.  
**Date of Birth:** Click or tap here to enter text.  
**Year Group:** Click or tap here to enter text.

### Absence Details

**NOTE:** The pupil must have been absent for a minimum of 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) for a penalty notice to be issued.

**Date of Decision Letter:** Click or tap to enter a date.

**Number of unauthorised sessions:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Period of absence:** **From:** Click or tap to enter a date. **to** Click or tap to enter a date.

### Evidence to be provided

Document	Attached
Withdrawal from Learning Form (or letter to parent(s) if form not completed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unauthorised decision letter sent to parent(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any additional evidence (please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Details of the person completing the form

**Date of submission:** Click or tap to enter a date.

**Name:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**School name:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Email address:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Job title:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Phone number:** Click or tap here to enter

text.

Please email this form and all relevant paperwork to [legal.interventions@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:legal.interventions@eastsussex.gov.uk)

## Appendix 14: REQUEST TO ISSUE A NOTICE TO IMPROVE / PENALTY NOTICE FOR PERSISTENT UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

### Parent Information (who the PN will be issued to)

Parent includes a step-parent or other carer and can include an absent parent

Parent 1	Parent 2
<b>Name:</b> Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>Name:</b> Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Address:</b> Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>Address:</b> Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text.

### Pupil Information

**Name:** Click or tap here to enter text.  
**School:** Click or tap here to enter text.  
**Date of Birth:** Click or tap here to enter text.    **Year Group:** Choose an item.

### Mandatory evidence to be provided:

Document	Attached
Evidence of written communication (attendance alert letters, meeting invites and minutes).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Record of face to face/virtual meetings with clear SMART targets that outline support strategies. A minimum of 1 review of the support to be undertaken during the monitoring period. To include any discussions with other professionals, i.e. Social Workers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of student voice which has attempted to identify and address barriers to regular attendance or reason provided as to why it has not been possible to obtain it. Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If attendance is below 50%, has a referral to Level 2 Early Help Key Work (EHKW) been considered? If not, provide reasons. Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration certificate with comments section included	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any additional evidence (please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **Details of the person completing the form**

**Date of submission:** Click or tap to enter a date.

**Name:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Job title:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**School name:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Email address:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Phone number:** Click or tap here to enter text.

Please email this form and all relevant paperwork to [legal.interventions@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:legal.interventions@eastsussex.gov.uk)

**Your submission will be discussed at the next weekly panel meeting and you will be informed of the outcome.**