

# Attendance policy

**Chadlington CE Primary School**



*Let your light shine – imagine, believe, achieve, thrive*

**Approved by:** Jane Turner

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### 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance in ensuring all individuals thrive. We aim to:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promote good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality to ensure readiness to learn.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)

- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

- The link governor for attendance will meet with the Headteacher on a termly basis to monitor attendance figures and report on them to the governing body and to ensure that the school's attendance registers are kept up to date. They also review the school's attendance and punctuality policy to ensure it is effective. The link governor promotes the importance of good attendance and supports the school's work to improve it, considering the education and wider needs of pupils.

### **3.2 The Headteacher is the Designated Attendance Lead**

The headteacher is the Senior Attendance Champion, responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the school's Attendance Officer to be able to do so
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

### **3.3 The Attendance Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing weekly attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Identify pupils for attendance awards, organise the rewards and pass on the information to the Headteacher.

The attendance officer is Mrs Clem Raisbeck who can be contacted via the school office

### **3.4 Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by 9:15 am (morning registration) and 1:15 pm (afternoon registration)

- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating and delivering intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils in their class and their parents/carers
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND

### **3.5 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Arrange an appointment for parents/carers to speak to the Class Teacher, or Headteacher where appropriate, to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.6 Parents**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:15 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and notify the school of any changes
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school office (Tel: 01608 676366, email: [office.3043@chadlington.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3043@chadlington.oxon.sch.uk))

### **3.7 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. If we are unable to access the electronic register, a paper register will be completed and the electronic register will then be updated as soon as possible.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and at the beginning of the afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:45 am and ends at 3:15 pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00 am and will be kept open until 9:15 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00 pm and will be kept open until 1:15 pm.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day and each subsequent day of an unplanned absence by 9:15 am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school Administrator, who can be contacted via the school office (Tel: 01608 676366, email: [office.3043@chadlington.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3043@chadlington.oxon.sch.uk)).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless we have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 school days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school office by email in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (up until 9:15 am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (later than 9:15 am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Lateness is regularly monitored. Where there are regular patterns of poor punctuality, parents/carers are invited into school to address this with the appropriate class teacher

### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police, if there is a reasonable concern about the safety of the child
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the Headteacher may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate (see section 5.2 below)

### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.6 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via Parent/Teacher consultations and the annual school report. Where a child's attendance is below 90%, the school will inform parents each half term or more frequently if it is deemed necessary.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' include:

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family members bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling
- Transport was not provided by the LA when it should have been
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment
- A wedding of an immediate family member where the invitation has been provided as evidence.
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions
- Operations which require recovery time
- Religious observance

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for



occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

### Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- The school's current attendance target is 97%
- Pupils with consistently good attendance or improving attendance (identified through achievement of individual improvement targets) will receive a small prize each term (e.g. a pencil or badge). Success will be celebrated in our '*Let your light shine*' assembly.
- An attendance contract will be issued to parents when support strategies have been agreed.

## 7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

### 7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where there are complex barriers to attendance, Early Help support will be offered and/or a plan will be put in place to meet identified needs.

### 7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a lengthy period of absence occurs (more than a fortnight) due to ill health, class teachers will consult with the family to consider additional support to overcome gaps in learning. If a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

## 8. Attendance monitoring

### 8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil and cohort level.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

### 8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- The school runs Bright Start Club to support persistent absentees and their families.

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and at least yearly. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## Appendix 2: Templates - Letters to parents about their child's absence, attendance and punctuality

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The letters cover the following scenarios:

Letter 1 – Concerns about a pupil's high level of absence

Letter 2 – Concerns about a pupil's unauthorised absence

Letter 3 – Inviting parents/carers in to discuss attendance

Letter 4 – Inviting parents/carers of a pupil with SEND in to discuss attendance

Letter 5 – Formal notice about unauthorised absence

Letter 6 – Accepting a request for a leave of absence

Letter 7 – Declining a request for a leave of absence

Letter 8 – After an unauthorised holiday

Letter 9 – Accepting a request for absence for religious observance

Letter 10 – Concern about punctuality

Letter 11 – Well done for improving



## Letter 1 – Concerns about a pupil's high level of absence

Use this letter in situations where a pupil's absence has been authorised, but absence levels are high.

For example:

A pupil is regularly ill, but doesn't have an identified medical need

Combined circumstances (such as a family bereavement and pupil illness) means the pupil has missed a lot of lesson time

### Absences from school

We've noticed that [pupil name] has missed a lot of school recently. We're concerned that they are missing out on key experiences because of this, and that they risk falling behind.

[Name] has missed [insert number of days missed and over what time period].

We know that every family's circumstances are different and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child. We are aware of [insert known reasons for absence]. Please let us know if there's anything else going on at home or at school which might be making it difficult for [name] to attend regularly.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss any reasons for these absences, and how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

## Letter 2 – Concerns about a pupil's unauthorised absence

Use this letter as the first step to address unauthorised absence.

### Unauthorised absence from school

We've noticed that [name] has recently taken an unauthorised [absence/absences] from school.

[Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] days on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

It's important that [name] attends regularly, so that they can get the best out of their education.

We know that every family's circumstances are different and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child. Please let us know if there is anything going on at home or at school which might be making it difficult for [name] to attend regularly.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss any reasons for these absences, and how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

## Letter 3 – Invite parents/carers in to discuss attendance

Use this letter to invite parents/carers in to have a discussion about attendance

### Invitation for a meeting to discuss attendance

We would like to invite you to come in to have a chat about [name]'s attendance at school. We would like to find out whether there is anything:

Happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to attend

Happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of

We can do to make it easier for [name] to attend school regularly

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss the above, and how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed school work.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

## Letter 4 – Invite parents/carers of a pupil with SEND in to discuss attendance

Use this letter to invite parents/carers in to have a discussion about attendance

### Invitation for a meeting to discuss attendance

We would like to invite you to come in to have a chat about [name]'s attendance at school. We would like to find out whether there is/are:

Anything happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to attend

Any issues around the level of support we are offering [name] to support their special educational needs

Anything happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of

Anything we can do to make it easier for [name] to attend school regularly

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss the above, and what support we can offer to make regular attendance easier.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

## Letter 5 – Formal notice about unauthorised absence

Use this letter if:

You have previously tried to address a pupil's unauthorised absence,

The pupil's unauthorised absence has reached the national threshold for the use of a penalty notice, and

You have decided it's appropriate to issue a penalty notice (see paragraph 181 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) for questions to consider when making this decision)

### Unauthorised absence

We got in touch with you on [date] to discuss [name] taking unauthorised absence. Since then, we haven't seen much improvement in [name]'s rate of attendance. They missed the following days of school:

[date]

[date]

[date]

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days).

In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will be issued with a penalty notice.

When you receive the notice, you must pay:

£80, if it's paid within 21 days

£160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

We would like to invite you to come for a discussion about [name]'s attendance at school. We would like to find out whether there is anything:

Happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to attend

Happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of

We can do to make it easier for [name] to attend school regularly

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss any reasons for these absences, and how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

## Letter 6 – Accepting a request for a leave of absence

### Your request for a leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application, I'm able to agree to your request.

I haven't come to this decision lightly. At [school name] we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We consider each request for a leave of absence on its merits and the family's specific circumstances.

Please be aware that that fact that I've agreed to this request doesn't mean I'll necessarily be able to agree to any similar request from you, or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

## Letter 7 – Declining a request for a leave of absence

### Your request for a leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].

In this case I'm afraid I cannot consent to your request.

At [school name] we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its specific circumstances, and I have taken many variables into consideration.

Because each request is different, this decision can't be compared with decisions made by the school in the past, and it won't affect future decisions.

I'm sorry to have to disappoint you on this occasion.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

## Letter 8 – After an unauthorised holiday

### Holiday absence

I'm writing about your action in taking [name] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].

We're treating this as an unauthorised absence because [explain the evidence you have].

At [school name] we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We have the power to grant leaves of absence under exceptional circumstances, and a holiday is not generally considered to come under those circumstances. We expect you to consult the school before making any plans that will involve your child's absence from lessons or other commitments. Absences like these could have a detrimental effect on their education.

Insert the following if the child's absence has reached the threshold for a penalty notice and you have decided it's appropriate to issue one (see paragraph 181 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) for questions to consider when making this decision):

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days).

In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will be issued with a penalty notice.

When you receive the notice, you must pay:

£80, if it's paid within 21 days

£160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

Insert the following if the threshold for a penalty notice has not been reached:

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

Continue with:

We would like to arrange a meeting so that we can discuss this absence further. Please contact the school office as soon as possible on [phone number].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]



## Letter 9 – Accepting a request for absence for religious observance

### Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion].

In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request and it will be considered an authorised absence.

Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity.

However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not necessarily mean I'll agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

## Letter 10 – Concern about punctuality

### Poor punctuality

I'm writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

They arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

They also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

The school day begins promptly at [time] and registration closes at [time]. Afternoon registration takes place between [time slot].

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child doesn't miss schoolwork, and prevents disruption to the teacher and other pupils. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

Persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice, if your child arrives late after the register closes in 10 sessions in a rolling period of 10 weeks.

We would like to invite you to come in for a chat about [name]'s punctuality. We would like to find out whether there is anything:

Happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to get to school on time

Happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of

We can do to make it easier for [name] to be on time for school

Please contact the school office on [number] to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

## Letter 11 – Congratulations for improving attendance rate

**Well done [name]!**

I'm writing to you to let you know that [name] has done a great job of improving their attendance rate.

Since [date], their attendance rate has improved from [percentage] to [percentage] - this is equal to [number] days of education no longer being missed.

Well done to [name] and to you at home for your support.

[If you have any schemes to reward pupils for improving their attendance, explain how the pupil will be rewarded here.]

Yours sincerely,

[Name]