



# **Pupil Attendance Policy**

**(including Term Time Leave Statement)**

**November 2022**

For Next Review and Approval by the Board of Connect Academy Trust,  
November 2025

## Amendments

Version	Date	Detail
1	Feb 2016	Newly adopted policy
2	Feb 2019	No Change
3	March 2022	No Change
4	November 2022	Updated with Torbay Schools and 2022 DfE guidance

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# Pupil Attendance Policy (including Term Time Leave Statement)

## 1. Aims

This policy aims to set out the principles and broad practices to promote good attendance, in particularly the procedures for managing absence and improving attendance for those whom attendance is of concern. It is noted that not every situation is the same, and the Trust will exercise discretion in applying the policy, within the principles and guidelines. It is acknowledged that most parents value education highly and ensure that their child has good attendance and punctuality. Further details of practice for promoting good attendance are to be found in each individual school. In this case 'Trust' refers to schools or settings, and 'Parent' refers to anyone who fulfils parental duties including grandparents and carers.

The Trust aims are:

- to maintain at least good (above 96%) attendance,
- to raise within the community the importance of good attendance,
- to support the development of a consistent approach to managing attendance,
- to exceed our attendance targets.

## 2. Principles

- It is every child's right to an education
- Good attendance is related to academic achievement and well being
- Good attendance forms patterns for later life, so enabling pupils to become responsible citizens, and to achieve economic stability
- Parents have direct legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance and punctuality
- Pupils who are late miss vital learning, and often this affects the whole day
- Decision making about the implementation of the policy is within the Headteacher's sole jurisdiction

## 3. Attendance Expectations



**FACT:** The more time your child spends in school, the better your child's attainment.

#### 4. **Parental Responsibilities**

Ensure that your child is at school every day unless:

- they are too ill to attend (not minor illness)
- hospital appointment (non-routine)
- Doctor or Dental appointment (urgent and cannot be arranged outside school hours)
- agreed activity e.g. dance exam, national sports trials
- authorised leave (see Appendix G – Term Time Leave Statement)

Ensure that your child always arrives on time and ready to learn.

#### **In the event of absence due to illness**

- contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- contact the school for each subsequent day of illness

#### **Unacceptable reasons for absence**

- unauthorised holiday, including surprises
- Birthdays
- shopping
- routine medical and dental appointments which should be scheduled for holiday time
- excessive medical absence which may need investigation
- leaving early for a weekend away

#### **Unacceptable reasons for lateness**

- overslept
- running late
- regular excuses relating to transport
- dropping off younger siblings
- disruption at home

Whilst it is acknowledged that there might be the odd unforeseen difficulty as above, this is not expected to be a regular occurrence.

#### 5. **School Responsibilities**

- Endeavour to provide an appropriate curriculum to meet needs of the individual
- provide a welcoming, inclusive ethos in our schools
- Endeavour to work in partnership with parents to support and encourage their child's success at school, including drawing on other agencies where appropriate
- Make every effort to meet our statutory responsibilities to ensure good attendance and therefore meet our targets for attendance
- Submit attendance figures to the Government
- Inform parents of expectations e.g. our annual letter, newsletters etc
- Take a register morning and afternoon
- Notify parents if we are concerned about a pupil's absence (at CEO/Headteacher's discretion)
- Monitor more rigorously pupils who have attendance or punctuality issues (at Yellow and Red)
- Alert the appropriate Attendance Officer if there are more serious concerns (Orange/Red)
- Provide attendance figures to each family in the annual report
- Set attendance targets with the appropriate Attendance Officer

- Provide a stepped approach to families where attendance, including punctuality is a concern. NB. Where the Headteacher has discretion about the relevance of which stage, at which time.
- Where the stepped letters have not had an impact, invite parents of poor attenders to an attendance meeting involving the appropriate officer/service (which may include a Governor present).
- In serious cases, or for poor attendance or punctuality, in partnership with the Local Authority, penalty fines will be considered which could lead to prosecution of the parent
- Understand the link between attendance and pupil welfare, and consider where, in occasional cases to make a referral to Children's Social Care.

## **6. Process for reporting and following up absence/lateness**

Alongside accurate recording of attendance and absence, effective schools have robust day to day processes to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality which are rigorously applied across the school.

All schools are expected to develop processes that meet the needs of their pupils and contexts. As a minimum this should include arrangements to:

- Proactively manage lateness and set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session, and depending on the structure of the school day, not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place.
- Expect parents to contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason and put in place processes to contact parents on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.
- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents (and where appropriate foster carers and/or social workers) to understand why and when the pupil will return. Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Where reasonably possible, schools should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. This is good practice to give the school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Schools should avoid headline percentages and instead make this understandable for parents (e.g. the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.

- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

## 7. **Process for Monitoring and Responding to Concerns**

Attendance is informally monitored weekly and concerns raised informally. If there are queries over unexplained absence, a phone call will be made home or letter sent. If attendance does not improve, additional monitoring or advice will be sought from the appropriate officer/service

### **Stage 1**

If a pupil's attendance/punctuality is causing concern, a general letter is sent informing the parent that their child's attendance is of concern, and will be monitored for the next 6 weeks, during which time an improvement in attendance will be expected. An attendance print-out will be enclosed, along with a letter requesting reasons for unexplained absence.

### **Stage 2**

If attendance does not improve after 4 school weeks, a letter is sent giving specific details of absence, together with an attendance print out. This letter also requests that any further absence be verified with medical evidence. Copies of this letter may be shared with the appropriate Attendance Officer for information.

### **Stage 3**

If attendance deteriorates, does not improve, or is, without good reason, below 90%, or because of repeated lates, a stage 3 letter will be sent, inviting the parent to an attendance meeting at the school. This will be attended by a senior member of staff, the appropriate officer and sometimes a Governor. An action plan will be drawn up at this meeting to agree targets and strategies for improving attendance. The consequences of continued poor attendance will be discussed e.g. Verbal Warning/Penalty Fine.

### **Stage 4**

If there is no improvement, further action will proceed, which may include a Penalty Fine being issued.

NB. The timescale for the stages is a guide. Non-compliance or the occurrence of serious concerns may result in the timescale being fast tracked.

## 8 .**Persistent and Severe Absence**

All schools should work with the local communities (including voluntary and community groups) to help remove the barriers to attendance that families experience. In some cases, families will experience the same or similar barriers to attendance for multiple children who attend different schools in the area. As such, it is of mutual benefit for such schools to work together where possible. This will be particularly beneficial in supporting transition between feeder schools.

Schools of all types, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms). Local authorities and schools (of all types) are expected to have a regular Targeting Support Meetings at least termly. Further, to facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, all schools are also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority.

**As a minimum this includes:**

- Every time a pupil's name is to be added to, or deleted from, the school admission register outside of standard transition times (including the statutory reason for deletion). For deletions this must take place before the deletion, and for additions it must be no later than 5 working days after the addition.
- The name and address of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has missed school for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised. Local authorities should agree the frequency this must be shared with all schools in their area. This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month.

Local authorities may seek, and schools are expected to provide, more frequent or comprehensive sharing of data than the statutory minimum where it is essential to fulfilling their obligations under the Education Acts and the expectations set out in Section 4 of this guidance. To avoid any unnecessary burdens for schools this should always be automatic from school registers and not require additional manual data collection/ returns (e.g. through a data aggregator directly from management information systems). This collaboration allows local authorities to facilitate quicker, more efficient joint working and better target their area wide attendance strategy.

Similarly, whilst the law provides access to registers of maintained schools for local authority officers who need access to fulfil their obligations under the Education Acts, all schools, regardless of whether or not they are covered by that legislation, are still expected to provide the local authority with access to support joint working between schools, trusts and local authorities.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of regular data sharing and therefore DfE has been working to establish a better, more timely flow of pupil level attendance data across schools, trusts, local authorities, and DfE, without placing any additional administrative burdens on schools. Most schools have already signed up, but once fully established, this will allow data to be collected directly from all schools' electronic registers. Collection happens via a secure data aggregator at no cost to schools and without requiring any manual inputting of information. Following a voluntary trial earlier this year, all schools are now strongly advised to sign up to this service which the Secretary of State intends to make a statutory requirement when parliamentary time allows.

Longer term DfE's intention is for this new method of data sharing to replace existing statutory data returns to local authorities and DfE, including the school census. This will reduce the burden on schools and improve our collective understanding of attendance patterns at local, regional, and national levels to identify issues and challenges more quickly.

## Appendix A - Stage 1 Attendance Letter

Date

Re

Dear

During routine monitoring of attendance, your child has been identified as having low attendance.

Your child's attendance is currently .....

This is much lower than the Government expectation of 96%.

I am aware that there may be good reasons for your child's absence, however, as you are aware, low attendance significantly impacts upon learning, and we are expected to monitor and improve attendance.

We will next monitor attendance at the end of term, and I am sure there will be an improvement during this time. If your child's attendance does not improve during this time, I will write to you further, a copy of which has to be forwarded to the appropriate officer for further investigation.

Please find enclosed your child's attendance record. If you have any reasons for unexplained absence, please complete the attached form. At this stage, I will be unable to authorise any holiday leave.

If you wish to discuss your child's attendance, or you would like us to support you in improving your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Copy - Pupil File



## Appendix B - Stage 2 Attendance Letter

Dear

Date

Further to my letter dated ..... in which I informed you of the level of attendance of ..... I am now writing to express my concern about your child's attendance record.

Your child's attendance is currently:        %

The absence is made up of (number of half day sessions missed):

Authorised holiday                                (        )

Unauthorised holiday                             (        )

Illness (Blocks)                                    (        )

Illness (Odd days, more than usual)        (        )

Although we accept that children may have occasional days off sick, the number your child is much higher than usual, which is why we need additional medical advice.

Lates    (        )

Other unauthorised                                 (        )

As you can see this time mounts up, and your child is missing out on learning time.

Please note that due to the above:

1. We will be unable to authorise any more absence
2. We require a Doctor's letter or certificate to explain any more absence due to illness
3. You may be asked to meet with the School Nurse
4. A copy of this letter is being sent to the appropriate officer
5. After 6 weeks, if there is too little improvement of the attendance issues raised above, we will make a referral to the appropriate officer/service, and you will be invited to a meeting to explain why your child's attendance is so poor.

NB: 90% attendance is the equivalent of missing half day per week on average

80% attendance is the equivalent of missing 1 day per week on average The

minimum requirement for Primary School attendance is 96%

Please complete the Reasons for Unexplained Absence Form and return to School.

Yours sincerely

*Name of Senior Staff*

Copy - Pupil File, appropriate Attendance Officer

## Appendix C - Stage 3 Attendance Letter

Dear

Date

Further to my previous letters, I am writing to express our continuing concern about.....'s attendance record and to invite you to a meeting to discuss this matter.

Your child's attendance is currently:                      %

An appointment has been made as follows:

Date:

Time:

Venue:

The meeting will be chaired by a Governor or senior member of staff and will also be attended by the Educational Welfare Officer.

An action plan will be drawn up to address your child's poor attendance. Please be aware that if this situation does not improve, you may be at risk of receiving a Penalty Fine. (See attached leaflet)

Please phone the School to confirm your attendance at the meeting.

NB. 90% attendance is the equivalent of missing half day per week on average  
80% attendance is the equivalent of missing 1 day per week on average  
The minimum requirement for Primary School attendance is 95%

Yours sincerely

*Name of Senior Staff*

Enc

Copy - Pupil File & appropriate Attendance Officer

## Appendix D – Unexplained Absence Letter

Date

Re

Dear Parent/ Carer

Our records show unexplained absences on the following dates:

Date (s)	Reason

We are required by law to record all reasons for absence.

It is the School's right whether or not to accept reasons for absence.

Please complete the form above and return to School within the next five working days.

It is in your own best interest to respond promptly, as unexplained absence is regarded as truancy and has to be reported to the Local Authority as such.

Yours sincerely

Copy - Pupil File

## Appendix E – Punctuality Attendance Letter

Date

Re

Dear Parent/Carer

During routine monitoring of attendance, your child has been identified as having poor punctuality.

I am aware that there may be reasons for your child's lateness, however, as you are aware, lateness significantly impacts upon learning, and from xxx inclusive, will be registered as an unauthorised attendance. Even being a few minutes late on several occasions can make a significant difference to how that child engages with the lesson and can impact upon the rest of the day.

We will next monitor attendance at the end of term, and I am sure there will be an improvement during this time. If your child's punctuality does not improve during this time, I will write to you further, a copy of which has to be forwarded to the appropriate officer for further investigation.

Please find enclosed your child's attendance record. If you have any reasons for unexplained absence, please complete the attached form.

If you wish to discuss your child's attendance, or you would like us to support you in improving your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Copy - Pupil File

## Appendix F – School Attendance Meeting

Date

Present

Focus	Key Discussion Points	
Action Plan		
<b>Parent/ Carer will:</b>		Signed
<b>Pupil will:</b>		Signed
<b>School will:</b>		Signed
<b>Appropriate Attendance Officer will:</b>		Signed
<b>Review arrangements</b>		

## Appendix G – Term Time Leave Statement

The intention of this Statement is to provide a coherent, consistent approach across the Trust in managing term time leave and to maximise children's opportunities to achieve.

The Statement sets out clear expectations in relation to:

- procedures for requesting and granting term time leave
- procedures for sharing with families (and pupils) the details of the policy statement
- register coding for authorised and unauthorised leave
- procedures for a child not returning to school after term time leave

### Rationale

#### DfE Guidelines

*Can pupils go on holiday in term time?*

No, not unless *exceptional circumstances* are met. Under current regulations, Headteachers *only have* discretion to grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances only in term time. It is the Headteacher's decision as to the number of days authorised.

Parents are not entitled to remove children from school for holidays; leave of absence must be applied for, and the decision to authorise absence for holidays rests entirely with the Headteacher.

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

An application for leave of absence should (and from certain schools must) not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstance of the case which justify the leave.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion

#### Guidance to Parents/Carers

- Wherever possible they should take holidays during school holidays.
- They should avoid taking a school aged child out of school at times when they should be taking exams or tests.
- They should not expect their child's school to agree to a family holiday during term time.
- Each Trust school will carefully consider their request, but it should always be assumed that leave will not be authorised.

#### Guidance to Schools:

- If a Trust school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised and will be recorded on the child's records and annual report
- If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.
- In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (8), schools may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within 20 school days, unless there is a good reason for the continued absence such as illness.

## Legal Position

The legal position is as follows:

1. Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school.
2. In the event of a parent taking their child on authorised holiday a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority, leading to a fine. If the parent does not pay, they will be prosecuted, and if found guilty are liable to a larger fine, and possibly a criminal record.

## **Response to Request**

- Each Trust school will consider the circumstances on an individual basis according to attendance records, Local Authority and Government guidance.
- The school will inform the parent in writing advising whether the leave has been authorised or unauthorised. It should be made clear the reasons why a decision has been taken and the criteria used should be re-iterated.
- If the school authorises the term time leave, the register code 'H' (authorised absence)
- If the school declines the request for term time leave, and the child is absent due to the leave still being taken, the register code 'G' (unauthorised absence) should be used. In this case, normal procedures for non-attendance apply and the school is likely to make a referral to the appropriate officer following agreed procedures.

## If the child does not return to school on the date agreed after authorised leave

- If another reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer the pupil should be registered appropriately. In all other cases register the absence as unauthorised.
- Normal procedures for non-attendance apply and the school should make a referral to the appropriate officer following agreed procedures.
- The appropriate officer will then inform the school of the outcome of the visit and make recommendations for action.

## Procedure for sharing this policy with families

- Each Trust school will share with parents and pupils the expectations outlined in this document by the school yearly letter about leave.
- New intake evenings/meetings and parents' evenings can also be used to share the information.
- Children with attendance below 96% will be monitored carefully, and may be referred to the appropriate officer and a comment usually made on the child's report.
- Reference will be made to this policy in the school prospectus.
- Specific reference to attendance will also be made in Home/School Agreements.
- This policy is available on the Trust website



Appendix H: Plymouth City Council Absence Request Form (for all Plymouth Schools)

Notes to parents/carers

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance and must be for exceptional circumstances. If you do not have Parental Responsibility and/or normally live with the child, you must seek the consent of the parent who does, and that person should complete this form. Schools will only consider requests from that parent and absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

When deciding whether to allow term-time-leave, for any reason, the school will only consider:

- The reason for the leave
The time and duration of the leave
Whether or not the leave could have been taken during the statutory school holiday periods
Your child's record of attendance
Learning that will be missed

WARNING: IF THE SCHOOL REFUSES YOUR REQUEST AND THE CHILD IS STILL TAKEN OUT OF SCHOOL, THIS WILL BE RECORDED AS AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE AND MAY MAKE YOU LIABLE TO A £60/120 FINE.

To the Headteacher/Principal of School/College
I wish to apply for
Name(s) of Child(ren) DOB School
(Include siblings attending other Schools) DOB School
DOB School

to be authorised as being absent from school from to inclusive

Reason for request for absence during term time:
If this is a holiday request please explain the exceptional circumstances which mean that the holiday cannot be taken during a school holiday:

Signature of Parent/Carer Date

Signature of Parent/Carer Date

Authorised The School/College agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.

Absence dates / / to / /

Unauthorised The School/College does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason(s):



Learning that will be missed		No Exceptional Circumstances	
The time and duration of the leave		Leave could have been taken during school holiday periods	

Signed..... Designation..... Date .....

**Please read overleaf**

**Holidays in term time**

**Important:** please read carefully the information below.

**Warning:** If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be issued a £60/120 Penalty Fine, per parent, per child.

As a Parent/Carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by, whenever possible, taking your holidays during school holidays.

The Facts	The Law
<p>We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term time leave for their children. However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the course work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>What you should consider There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term time leave such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closeness to exams or tests (Standard Attainment Tests in Year 2, 6 and 9).</li> <li>• During GCSE, and other examination courses.</li> <li>• During the first year at a new school.</li> <li>• At the beginning of a new school term.</li> </ul> <p>If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and may lead to a <b>£60/120 fine per parent, for each child.</b></p>	<p>The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.</p> <p>However, in <b>exceptional circumstances</b> school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of 4 weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p> <p>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on the 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that <b>Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.</b> Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.</p> <p>Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances.</p>

**Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:**

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents where the school is informed beforehand

**Other absence from school will not be authorised:**

- For any type of shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Because holidays are cheaper in term time
- More than one day for a family wedding.

Please contact your child's Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

**The law requires schools to be open to pupils for 190 days each year, and every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.**

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to take holidays during term time.

MARCH 2015

# Appendix I: Torbay Council Absence Request Form (for all Torbay Schools)

To: *The Principal / Head Teacher of* .....

*I wish to apply to have an absence authorised from (DATES):* ..... *To:* ..... *(inclusive) for the following child(ren)*

Child(ren)'s name(s)	Class/Year

Do you have a child who attends at a different school that will also be absent? If so, please state the child's name and school:

Name of child(ren):	Registered school

If the children will not be with you, but be with another parent/carer during the absence please provide their details:

Name:	
Address:	
Relationship to child	

Please fully explain the **exceptional circumstances** that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed and attach any supporting documentation you would like the school to consider:

<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	

Office use only		<input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised      Code ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised  Signed _____ Head Teacher
Date form received	No of days absence requested	

✕ .....

**This portion to be returned to parents/carers**

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable,

Pupil(s) name(s).....

Class/Year.....

Absence authorised                      from ..... to ..... (Inclusive)

Absence unauthorised      current attendance ..... % as of ...../...../20.....

Signed ..... (Head Teacher)                      Date.....

**NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS:** The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission **must** be sought in **advance**. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactorily up to the date covered by this request.

**WARNING TO PARENTS:** If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months. Parents should note that in normal circumstances, current practice is that only one penalty notice will be issued to a parent relating to the absence of a particular child within a two-year period. Should a further period of unauthorised absence be recorded, then the parent(s) will normally be summonsed to appear at a Magistrates Court.

## AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

**IMPORTANT:** Please read carefully the information below.

**WARNING:** If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice\* per parent per child or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>Pupils registered at a school are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and you may receive a £60* fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However, before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child, then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>

<p><b>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Genuine illness</li> <li>▪ Emergency medical / dental appointments</li> <li>▪ Days of religious observance</li> <li>▪ Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>▪ External examinations</li> <li>▪ When Traveller children travel with their parents for the purposes of work where this is agreed by the school</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other examples of absence from school that will not be authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Any type of shopping</li> <li>▪ Looking after siblings or unwell parents</li> <li>▪ Minding the house</li> <li>▪ Birthdays</li> <li>▪ Resting after a late night</li> <li>▪ Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li> <li>▪ The Department for Education states: "Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of</li> </ul>
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	time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.”
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**The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full-time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.**

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.

\*Penalty Notice £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid between days 22 and 28.

## Appendix J: DfE Exceptional Circumstances & absence codes

The Government have changed their policy regarding school attendance and existing legal regulations, which come into force from September 2013. This means that term time holiday is removed from the regulations. **Head Teachers are no longer allowed to authorise absence from school unless it is due to exceptional circumstances.** The Absence Request form should be completed by parents/carers when requesting term time absence from school for their child, regardless of whether the absence is for a holiday, or any other reason. Also, all requests for absence should be evidenced based, e.g. medical appointment cards, letters from employers etc. **It is extremely important all schools are consistent, when authorising/refusing absence during term time.** The following is a guide as to what could/could not be exceptional circumstances for approving a child's absence from school: **Exceptional circumstances:**

- A specified, limited period may be granted when a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness.
- Funeral of immediate family member
- Religious observance
- Transport was not provided by the LA when it should have been
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer)
- **One day** of absence could be authorised for a wedding of an immediate family member and the invitation has been provided as evidence
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence
- **One day** of absence could be authorised for an immediate family members graduation ceremony/passing out parade
- Medical appointments (parents/carers should be encouraged to arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours when possible. If the medical appointment is during the school day, **evidence must be provided.** Schools should not authorise a whole days absence for a medical appointment that occurs in the morning – the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa.

### Absence should not be authorised for reasons such as the following:

- To care for other family members
- Birthdays
- To interpret for other family members
- No school uniform/shoes
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice
- Learning difficulties
- Family holiday
- Weddings abroad – regardless of whether it is for immediate family members
- Family Anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Travel problems
- School refusal

This list provides examples and is not exhaustive.

*(The **immediate family** is a defined group of relations, used in rules or laws to determine which members of a person's family are affected by those rules. It normally includes a person's parents, spouses, siblings and children. It can contain others connected by birth, adoption, marriage, civil partnership, or cohabitation, such as grandparents, grandchildren, siblings-in-law, half-siblings, adopted children and step-parents/step-children, and cohabiting partners)*

**Absence codes:**

- B** – Educated off site (approved education activity)
- C** – Other authorised circumstances (authorised absence)
- D** – Dual registration (pupil attending another educational establishment)
- E** – Excluded (authorised absence)
- F** – Extended family holiday agreed (authorised absence)
- G** – Family holiday not agreed (unauthorised absence)
- H** – Family holiday agreed (authorised absence)
- I** – Illness (Not medical/dental appointments) (authorised absence)
- J** – Interview (approved educational activity)
- M** – Medical appointment (authorised absence)
- N** – No reason provided yet for absence (unauthorised absence)
- O** – Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code)
- P** – Approved sporting activity (approved education activity)
- R** – Religious observance (authorised absence)
- S** – Study leave (authorised absence)
- T** – Traveller absence (authorised absence)
- U** – Late after registers close (unauthorised absence)
- V** – Educational visit or trip (approved educational activity)
- W** – Work experience (approved education activity)
- X** – Non-compulsory school age absence
- Y** – Enforced school closure
- Z** – Student not yet on roll
- #** – School closed to students