

Attendance Policy

Date of adoption	April 2010
Date of review	6 th December 2018
Review date	December 2021

Headteacher: **Mrs J Gray, MSc, NPQH**

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Statement of intent

St Michael's Church of England High School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- Rewarding regular attendance
- Following the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

Signed by:

_____	Headteacher	Date: _____
_____	Chair of governors	Date: _____

1. Legal framework

1.1 This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- DfE School Attendance Advice 2014
- DfE (2016) 'Children Missing Education'
- DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'

1.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy

1.3 All staff must ensure they adhere to and implement the requirements of any equality legislation.

2. Definitions

2.1 St Michael's Church of England High School defines "absence" as :

- Not attending school at any time without authorisation

2.2 St Michael's Church of England High School defines "persistent absenteeism (PA)" as:

- Missing 10 per cent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

3. Key roles and responsibilities

3.1. The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of the school
- ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy
- having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- ensuring that the school works closely with the LA Attendance Service to minimise children missing education within the school

3.2 The headteacher is responsible for:

- the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the school and distributing these to parents.

- 3.3 Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:
- following the attendance policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
 - modelling good attendance behaviour
 - Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- 3.4 Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and start of each afternoon session.
- 3.5 The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- 3.6 The school will, through the removal from roll referral system, inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they are not attending school.
- 3.7 The school will inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has an unauthorised absence.
- 3.8 Parents, guardian, carers and adults over the age of 18 at the same address are legally responsible for the attendance and punctuality of their child/children during term-time.
- 3.9 Parents, guardians, carers and adults will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure that pupils attend school every day.
- 3.10 Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.
- 3.11 All pupils and parents are responsible for their punctuality to school and pupils are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

4. Training of staff

- 4.1 We recognise that early intervention can prevent bad behaviour. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at risk pupils.
- 4.2 Teachers and support staff will receive training on the attendance policy as part of their new starter induction.
- 4.3 Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Parent expectations

- 5.1 Parents/carers/guardians are expected to ensure that their children attend school every day as they are legally responsible for their children's attendance at school.
- 5.2 Parents/carers/guardians are expected to report any absence to the school on the first day and each subsequent day of absence.

5.3 In addition, written evidence in support of any absences should be provided by parents/ carers/guardians. Doctor's notes, appointment letters or other relevant medical evidence should be provided where appropriate.

6. Pupil expectations

6.1 Pupils will be expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year (appendix b).

6.2 Pupils are expected to attend morning and afternoon registration sessions punctually.

6.3 The school expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually.

6.4 Pupils will be expected to report any absence immediately to the relevant member of staff.

7. Absence Procedures

7.1 Parents/carers/guardians must contact the school before 9.30am on the first day of any absence and each day of absence and each day after.

7.2 Parents/carers/guardians must send a note on the first day their child returns with a signed explanation as to why they were absent. This must be done even if we have already received a phone call.

7.3 Alternatively, parents/carers/guardians may visit the into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

7.4 A phone call/text message/email will be made to the parent/carer/guardian of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

7.5 An absence sweep will take place on a weekly basis. Staff will make home visits to pupils who are absent on the targeted day.

7.6 The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised by the school or not
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census

7.7 If pupil attendance drops below 96 per cent, appropriate action will be taken by the school.

7.8 In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents/carers/guardians to speak to the attendance officer, pastoral leader, head of year or headteacher as appropriate. In addition, governors may arrange a meeting with the pupil and their parents/ carers/ guardians to discuss persistent absence. If the parent fails to attend this meeting, the governors will meet with pupil on their own.

7.9 St Michael's Church of England High School may inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission.

8. Contact information

- 8.1 Parents/carers/guardians must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 8.2 Parents/carers/guardians are responsible for updating the school if the details change.
- 8.3 Parents must provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.

9. Attendance register

- 9.1 The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether the pupil is:
 - Present
 - Absent
 - Attending an approved educational visit
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- 9.2 St Michael's Church of England High School will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way.
- 9.3 When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code # will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, for example, induction days.
- 9.4 All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment, and the name and role title of the person who made the amendment.
- 9.5 Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

10. Attendance Officer

- 10.1 If unauthorised absence becomes an issue, pupils will be referred to the Attendance Officer/HoY who will attempt to resolve the situation through an attendance contract with parent/carer/guardian agreement.
- 10.2 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the local Attendance and Prosecution Service has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

11. Lateness

- 11.1 Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 11.2 The school day starts at 8:40am; pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- 11.3 Registers are marked by 8:40am; pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. This may result in a consequence.
- 11.4 The register closes at 9:10am; pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

11.5 Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

12. Missing children

12.1 Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

12.2 The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the school day:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the DSL immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the DSL.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after **10** minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

12.3 If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

12.4 When the pupil has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

12.5 The DSL will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

12.6 Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

12.7 The DSL will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.

- 12.8 Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy.
- 12.9 Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with clauses 7.7 - 7.9 of this policy.
- 12.10 A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

13. Term time leave

- 13.1 At St Michael's Church of England High School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers/guardians to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 13.2 Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise holidays during term time.
- 13.3 Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- 13.4 Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis. Requests for leave must be submitted on the Leave of Absence Request form (appendix c).
- 13.5 If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

14. Religious observances

- 14.1 St Michael's Church of England High School will allow one day for the observance of religious festivals.
- 14.2 Parents/carers/guardians must inform the school in advance if absences are required for a day-of religious observance.
- 14.3 The day of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious board to which the pupil's parents/carers/guardians belong.

15. Appointments

- 15.1 As far as possible, parents/carers/guardians should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 15.2 Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school.
- 15.3 If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out by a parent/carer/guardian.
- 15.4 Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.
- 15.5 If a pupil's attendance is under 96%, the school will make the decision whether the appointment will be authorised.

16. Young carers

- 16.1 The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school.
- 16.2 The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

17. Exceptional circumstances

- 17.1 Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:
- The school is fully or partially closed
 - Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance
 - There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
 - The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.
- 17.2 Absences for exceptional circumstances do not affect your child's attendance.

18. Rewarding good attendance

- 18.1 St Michael's Church of England High School acknowledges and rewards good attendance and punctuality in the following ways:
- Gold, silver and bronze badges
 - Recognition in assemblies
 - The opportunity to earn rewards and achievement points through house competitions
- 18.2 School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 96 percent, these privileges may be taken away.
- 18.3 Attendance at the Year 11 prom requires 96 percent attendance across all five years.

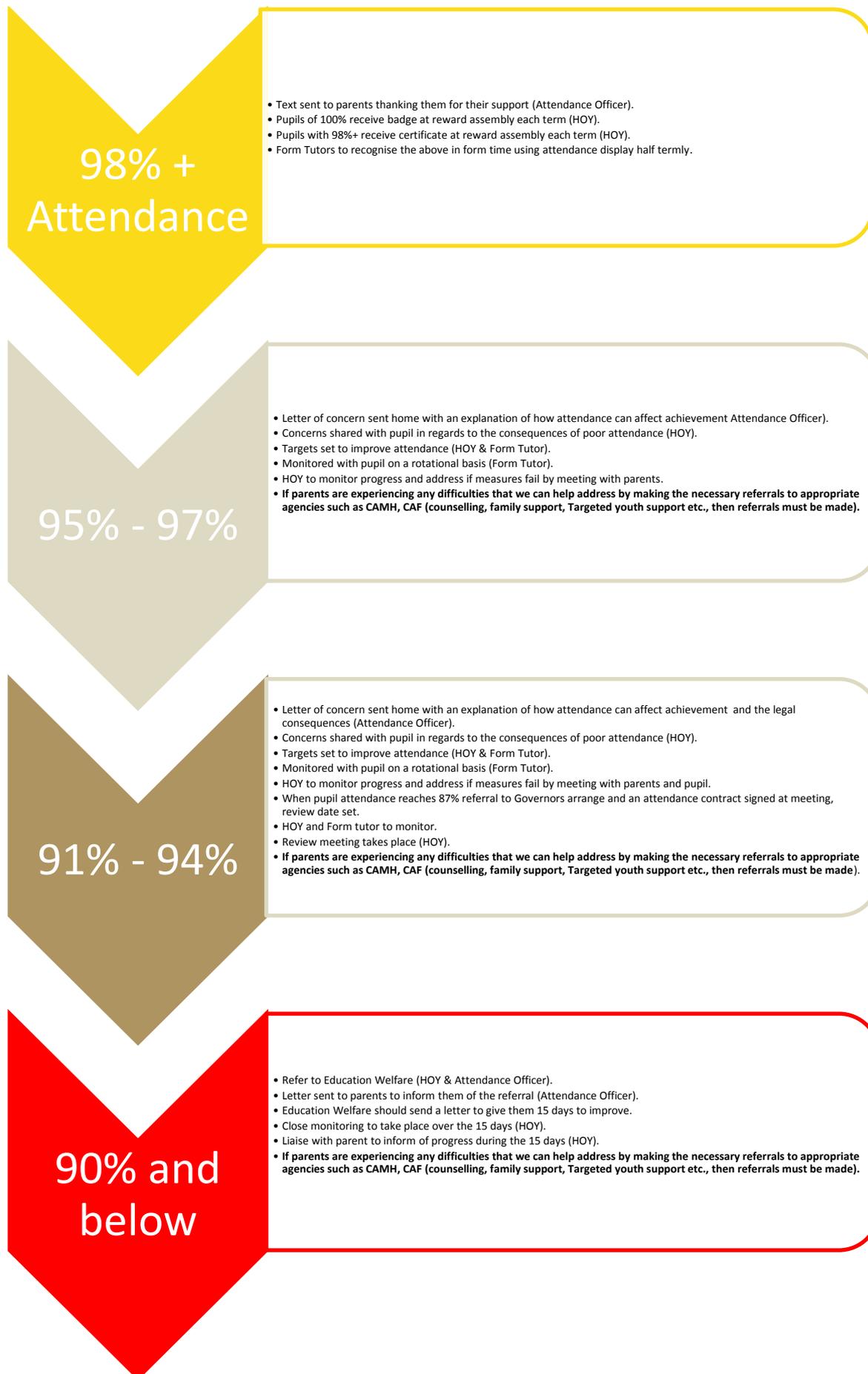
19. Monitoring

- 19.1 The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 19.2 The school's attendance target is 96 percent each year.
- 19.3 Pupils will be closely monitored before and after school holidays and this will include pupils who are absent before and after the weekend.
- 19.4 Details of our absence levels can be found on our website and upon request from the office.

20. Policy Review

- 20.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the headteacher in agreement with the governing board.

Appendix a – Attendance Flowchart



Appendix b – Attendance Agreement Forms Student Attendance Agreement

I, *name of pupil*, agree to attend school and understand the consequences I may face if my attendance drops below 100%. I will ensure that St Michael's Church of England High School is made immediately aware of when I will not reasonably be able to attend, and will give the school full details of my absence.

As a pupil of St Michael's Church of England High School, I am dedicated to:

- Being in attendance every day.
- Always being punctual to school and lessons.
- Informing the school of the reason for any absence.
- Not missing school for trivial reasons.

Pupil name:	Date:
Pupil signature:	Date:
Form tutor name:	Date:

Parental Attendance Agreement

I, *name of parent/carer/guardian*, understand that it is my responsibility to send my child to school. I agree to send *name of pupil* to school every day and understand the consequences if I fail to do so. When *name of pupil* is absent from school due to exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

Parent/carer/guardian name:	Date:
Parent/carer/guardian signature:	Date:
Form tutor name:	Date:

Appendix c – Leave of Absence Request Form



IL2 [PROTECT] when complete

October 2017 (V2)



Attendance & Prosecution Service Leave of Absence Request Form

See Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes attached
****ALL sections MUST be fully completed in CAPITAL LETTERS****
*****If 'None' write 'None'*****
******One Application Per Child******

School	<input type="text"/>	Class	<input type="text"/>
Child's Full Name	<input type="text"/>	Date of Birth	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>	Post Code	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	Landline Tel. No.	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	Mobile Tel. No.	<input type="text"/>

I would like to request a Leave of Absence for the above-named child: (One Application Form per Child)

First day of Absence from school	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>	Returning to school on	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Number of school days' absent	<input type="text"/> day(s)		

Head teachers can only Authorise a Leave of Absence if they consider that the detail and information **you provide** constitutes an **"exceptional circumstance"**. You **MUST** provide **all the details and information** you would want the Head teacher to consider in deciding if your request can be granted.

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

(please attach any further detail)

By signing this application, I understand and agree the following:

1. That I have read the Leave of Absence Request - Guidance Notes.
2. That I am a Parent/Carer with whom the child 'normally resides'.
3. That I understand it is the Head teacher's decision as to what is and what is not an "exceptional circumstance".
4. That I will ask for and know the Head teacher's decision **before** my child is absent.
5. That if I take my child on an Unauthorised Leave of Absence the school can request that I and any other Parents/Carers of my child are issued with a Penalty Notice. (a fine of up to £120 in respect of each child and each Parent/Carer,) and/or be subject to further legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court)

Parent/Carer Applicant PRINT NAME	<input type="text"/>	Date of Birth of Applicant	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Relationship to child	<input type="text"/>		
Parent/Carer Applicant SIGNATURE	<input type="text"/>	Date of Application	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>

You must enter the Names / Dates of Birth and Address details of every **ADDITIONAL** adult who holds Parental Responsibility and /or Care of your child.

Parent/Carer's Full Name	<input type="text"/>	Date of Birth	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Relationship to child	<input type="text"/>		
Address (if different from child's home address)	<input type="text"/>	Post Code	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>		
	<input type="text"/>		

Parent/Carer's Full Name	<input type="text"/>	Date of Birth	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Relationship to child	<input type="text"/>		
Address (if different from child's home address)	<input type="text"/>	Post Code	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>		
	<input type="text"/>		

For School Use Only

Request Form Complete and Received	Date	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>	School Staff	<input type="text"/>
Head Teacher's review	Date	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>	Outcome	<input type="text"/> Agreed / Rejected
Applicant advised of outcome	Date	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>		
How applicant was advised of outcome (i.e. verbally, by letter, by telephone) School staff may need to provide evidence of the above should Court proceedings follow.	<input type="text"/>			
	<input type="text"/>			
	<input type="text"/>			

Schools Request for Penalty Notice

I have read the Leave of Absence Request - Guidance Notes and understand that once requested and issued a Penalty Notice cannot be withdrawn other than in the circumstances detailed. Yes No

Agreed by Head Teacher Date / /

Referral to Attendance & Prosecution Service Date / /

Name Position in school

Have you attached a copy of the student's Attendance Summary/Certificate? Yes No

Have you attached a copy of the rejection letter sent to Parents/Carers? Yes No

Note You do not need to complete a Request for Support Form if all the above details are provided. A Leave of Absence Referral can be accepted when you WEBXCHANGE together a fully completed Leave of Absence Request Form, a copy of the schools rejection letter to parents/carers (or confirm agreement to provide a Section 9 Witness Statement) and the student's Attendance Summary/Certificate.

Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes

Section 1 For Parents/Carers • Section 2 For Schools • Section 3 Penalty Notices

Section 1

For Parents/Carers

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 absence **may not** be Authorised unless:

- (a) An application has been made in advance to the Head teacher by a Parent/Carer with whom the pupil normally resides (lives with most of the time); and
- (b) The Head teacher, or a person Authorised by them, considers that Leave of Absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

It is only a Parent "with whom the child normally resides" (lives with most of the time) that can apply for a Leave of Absence for their child. A Parent/Carer who does not live with the child cannot apply for a Leave of Absence. Any application they might make should be rejected by the school.

Parents/Carers should ensure that any Leave of Absence application is made in advance of any Leave of Absence to be taken. (Schools may have specific timescales for processing Leave of Absence applications. Parents/Carers should make sure they know what these are. Different schools may have different timescales.)

Parents/Carers should ensure that they know if their Leave of Absence application has been Authorised by the Head teacher before planning, booking or paying for anything in relation to that Leave of Absence application.

Parents/Carers should ensure they provide the Head teacher with all the detail and information they would want the Head teacher to know in deciding if a Leave of Absence can be Authorised.

Head teachers can only Authorise a Leave of Absence if they consider that the detail and information provided by a Parent/Carer in the application can be considered as an "exceptional circumstance".

It is at the Head teacher's discretion to decide if the detail and information provided by a Parent/Carer can be considered as an "exceptional circumstance" and agree if any Leave of Absence can be Authorised.

Disagreements between Parents/Carers and schools in relation to what is and is not an "exceptional circumstance" cannot be considered by the Attendance & Prosecution Service.

Section 2

For Schools

Schools should consider having a clear, detailed and published policy or process that Parents/Carers should follow in applying for any Leave of Absence at their school.

Schools should decide on the format of their Leave of Absence Application Form.
(The Attendance & Prosecution Service provide a template document for consideration)

Schools should decide on the timescales for accepting, processing and responding to any Leave of Absence applications received.

Such a timescale would need to consider how the school might inform the Parents/Carer of the outcome of the Head teachers decision so that it is received by them before any planned Leave of Absence starts.

Schools should decide that if any late or incomplete application is received if they will process this or if the Leave of Absence application cannot be considered and the Absence recorded as Unauthorised.

Schools should decide how they will advise Parents/Carers of the Head teachers decision and if the Absence is to be Authorised or not.

Schools should mark all Absences in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations.

Schools can Request that a Penalty Notice be issued to Parents/Carers should any Unauthorised Leave of Absence be taken. (Such a request should be made within 5 school days of the child's return to school after the Leave of Absence is taken)

The Attendance & Prosecution Service cannot issue a Leave of Absence Penalty Notices unless a Request is made by the Head teacher to do so, that the school can provide the required information and detail that allows for the Penalty Notice to be issued in accordance with the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/1990/penalty_notice_code_of_conduct

Section 3

Penalty Notices

If a Leave of Absence is not Authorised and the child is then absent from school, the Head teacher can request that the Attendance & Prosecution Service issue Parents/Carers with Penalty Notices.

The Attendance & Prosecution Service can only issue Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence following receipt of a request to do so by the school.

Penalty Notices are issued based on the information and detail provided by the school and in accordance with the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/1990/penalty_notice_code_of_conduct

Once issued a Penalty Notice cannot be 'withdrawn' unless it meets the criteria detailed in Section 4 of the Code of Conduct (see below):

A penalty notice may be withdrawn if the local authority determines that:

- a) It ought not to have been issued, or issued to the person named as the recipient.*
- b) The notice contains material errors, e.g. sent to the wrong address.*
- c) Where the issuer did not comply with this code of conduct*
- d) Where after the expiry of 28 days the penalty notice is unpaid and the local authority has not started legal proceedings, or wishes to take such action under section 444.*

Unpaid Penalty Notices can result in Parents/Carers being put before the Magistrates Court and fined up to £1,000 per Parent/Carer per child plus Court costs.