

Finstall First School

Attendance and Absence Policy

Date policy last reviewed: 11th May
2025

Signed by:

<u>M Mason</u>	Headteacher	Date: <u>17.05.25</u>
<u>M Evans</u>	Chair of governors	Date: <u>17.05.25</u>

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Statement of intent

Finstall First 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. Absence can lead to educational disadvantage for a pupil and even place them at risk. Truancy all too frequently results in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour and puts them at risk of harm and abuse.

In order to maximise rates of attendance, which is one of our underlying aims, we must, as a staff, remain vigilant and be prepared to react positively and without delay. The issues are complex, since pupils may be failing to attend regularly for a variety of reasons, some of which may be outside the school's immediate control, but nevertheless we must actively pursue the goal of regular attendance. To this end, we will investigate absences rigorously and will applaud and commend regular attendance.

We will ensure, through the School Website and other communications, that parents are made aware of the school's policy on attendance; namely that individual absences will be carefully investigated and that unjustified absence will not be tolerated.

However, as with other aspects of education, regular attendance can only be implemented with the support of parents and School. The school and its parents must work together and maintain close links to achieve success in this and all other policies. However, whilst it is only right that we recognise the problems of individual pupils and families, the aim must always be to expect regular attendance.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow 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 them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Stuart Evans (Head Teacher), and can be contacted via office@finstallfirst.co.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- 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 Policy.

- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this 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.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer (with the support of Office Staff where appropriate) is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance e.g. Investigating causes of absenteeism.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.
- Providing support to families by home visits when needed
- Make referrals to the Education Investigation Service in cases of unauthorised absence

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8:50am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site before this time. The classroom doors are open for pupil access between by 8.45am and 8.50am. Pupils will have a morning break of 15 minutes, which is staggered for different year groups. They will also have a lunch break of 55 minutes, staggered for different year groups between 11.50 and 1.20pm. Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8:50am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:10am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked within 10 minutes of the class returning to their classroom. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close 20 minutes after the children have returned to their classroom. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day. They must keep the school informed if the absence will continue and inform the school when their child will be returning to school following a period of absence, preferably prior to their child's return. Should they wish to take their child out of School during term time, they must complete a "Request for Leave during term time" form, available from the School Office or the School website (See Appendix C).

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. Details of calls made will be recorded on the proforma found in Appendix D.

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

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

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 85 percent, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent. Initially. This will usually be led by the child's Class Teacher.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

6. Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The Local Authority provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns (See Appendix F).

The Attendance Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should work closely to manage risks and to ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement, where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

7. Attendance register

The register is a document required by law and we must recognise that we are under a statutory obligation to mark it with care and accuracy. The school uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. Class Teachers access this through their School

Laptops. The School Secretary checks the registers against her own records of phone calls and messages following their completion.

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 pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed

- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

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, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register unless this is due to a full or partial School closure.

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 of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

8. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil’s education into account. The headteacher’s decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing, by completion of a “Request for leave during Term Time Form” (see Appendix C) at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Parents will then receive, from the School, either:

i) A letter that explains that the request has not been approved and a reminder that, if taken, this leave will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine (See Appendix D)

Or

ii) A letter that explains that the request has been approved because there are exceptional circumstances (See Appendix E).

Examples of such letters are also available on our Website. Please note that such letters will be sent irrespective of the length of the requested absence.

Parents should be mindful of the fact that, as a result of amendments to the Education Regulations 2006, Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. As a general guide, Head Teachers have been informed that, although each application should be considered on its individual merits, any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13-week holiday time should not be authorised during the School term. Should Head Teachers require it, further advice is available from the Education Investigation Service.

Once the Head Teacher becomes aware of the fact that an unauthorised absence has been taken, whether parents have informed the school or not, he or she must inform the Education Investigation Service, who will decide whether to apply a Penalty Notice Fine.

Although the Head Teacher may sympathise with parents who, for different circumstances, feel they need to take holidays during term time, it has been made very clear that the Leadership and Management of Schools will be subject to severe criticism if Head Teachers do not follow the processes described above.

Should parents decide to take unauthorised holiday absence during term time, please do not ask your child to deceive their teachers and friends as we would still prefer that the children have the opportunity to share their experiences. More importantly, asking children to deceive adults is not a good message to be giving them.

Further information about the processes outlined above can be found in the following documents from Worcestershire County Council's Education Investigation Service –

“Education Penalty Notice - Code of Conduct”

“Leave in Term Time – Absence Policy”

The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

9. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.

- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or one-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

10. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the headteacher will ensure a photo lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

11. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

12. Absent pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher 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 headteacher.
- 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 contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, 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.

- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

13. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer (School Pastoral Lead), supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a weekly review with Class Teacher / Attendance Officer.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the [‘Monitoring and analysing absence’](#) section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

14. Rewarding Attendance

Children are rewarded with a certificate for 100% attendance at the end of each term and at the end of a school year.

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

15. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with

pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis by SLT and the Pastoral Lead. If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Pastoral Lead will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

16. Persistent Absence

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.

- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 15 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

17. Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A penalty notice of £120 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 five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. A second fine within a 3-year period will be £160. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

18. Monitoring and analysing absence

The Pastoral Lead and SLT will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The Pastoral Lead and SLT will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Pastoral Lead will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. They will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

19. Punctuality

Children should arrive at school at any time between 8.50am and 9.00am.

The children's entrances are locked behind each class as they enter school so any children who arrive after this time have to enter the school via the office entrance, which is securely controlled by the School Secretary.

Late arrivals create disruption to lessons, which is not fair on those children who are late or the children who have arrived on time.

We accept that anybody can be late for a variety of different reasons and that these are occasionally outside of anybody's control. In an attempt to reduce the number of late arrivals and thus the number of disturbances that children have to put up with at the start of the school day, we ask all parents of children who arrive after the children's entrance are locked, to bring their children to the Office entrance and sign the "Late Book." If a child is late more than three times in a half term, we will either make verbal contact with that child's parents or, alternatively, send out a standard letter asking parents to ensure that their child arrives on time in future. Subsequent late arrivals within the same half term could result in us asking parents to provide us with a further explanation for their child's late arrival.

20. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

21. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

22. Attendance Target

We have set ourselves the following challenging Attendance Target:

>96.8%

23. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96.8 percent – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher.

This policy was approved by the full governing body on

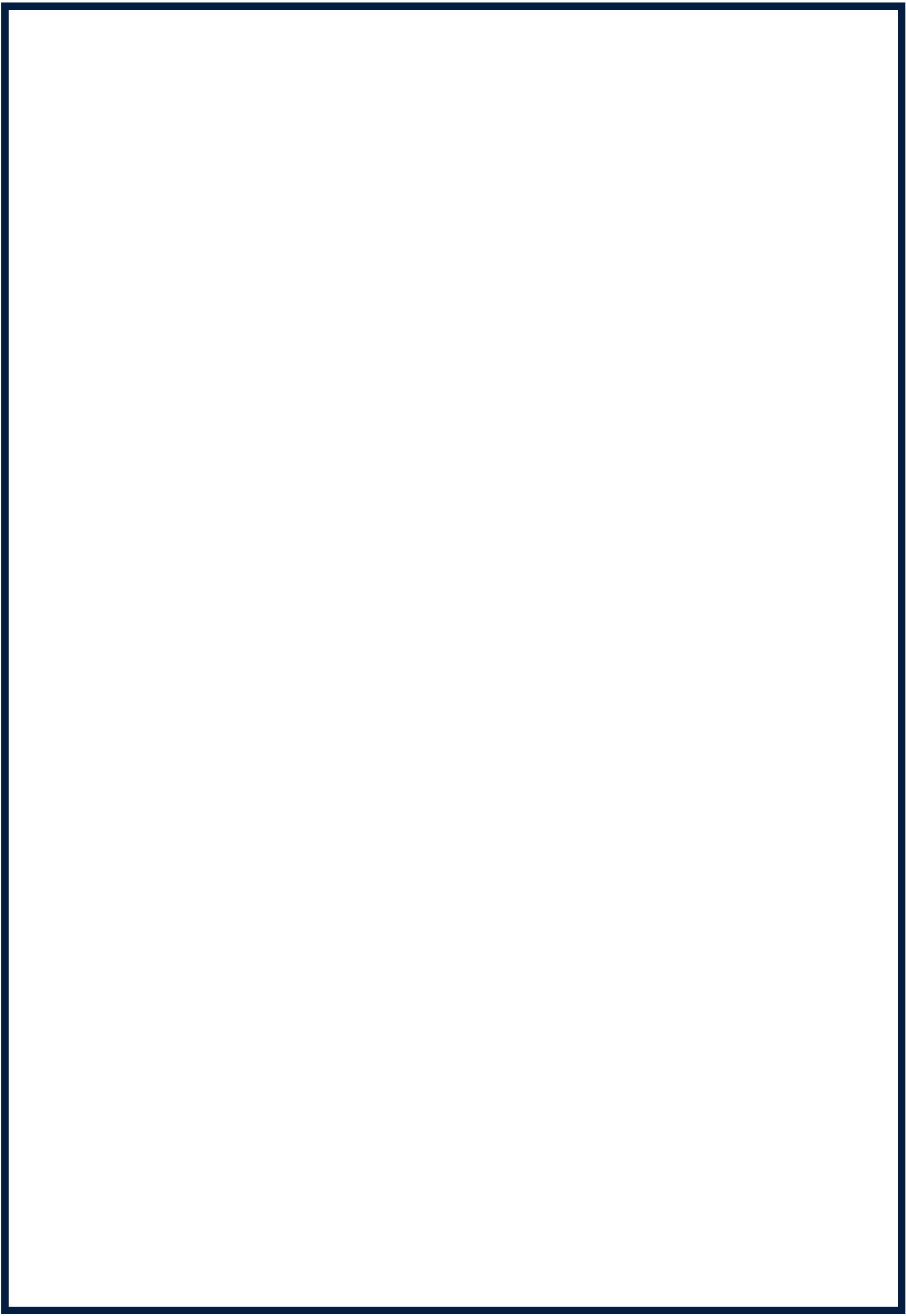
The next scheduled review date for this policy is May 2026.

Governor Responsible: Kelly Joynes

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

24. LIST OF APPENDICES

A	Copy of letter sent to parents with regard to a pupil's late arrival in school.
B	Copy of proforma on which to record attempts by staff to contact parents / carers of absent children.
C	"Request for Leave during Term Time" form
D	Copy of letter sent to parents explaining that a request for leave during term time has <u>not</u> been agreed.
E	Copy of letter sent to parents explaining that a request for leave during term time has been agreed.
F	Children missing from Education Pathway
G	Attendance Monitoring Procedures



APPENDIX A

Dear Parents,

In accordance with our Attendance Policy, I am writing to you because your child has been late for school on more than three occasions during this half term.

We accept that anybody can be late for a variety of different reasons and that these are occasionally outside of anybody's control. However, following four late arrivals during this half term, we politely request that you ensure that _____ arrives on time in future.

We know that mornings can be difficult for some pupils, and we are keen to help to improve {Pupil Name}'s attendance. If you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me to make an appointment.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX B

Absence Check

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

	Details of Contact	Outcome	Time	Initials of adult responsible for contact
Contact 1:				
Contact 2:				
Contact 3:				
Contact 4:				
Contact 5:				
Contact 6:				
Result / Reason for absence:				

Teachers' signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Request for Leave during Term Time

To: The Headteacher of:..... (School) Date.....

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name)

for the period from (date) to (date)

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are:

.....
.....
.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s))School(s) attended

.....
.....

(Signature of 1st Parent/Carer(s).....Print Name.....

(Signature of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) Print Name.....

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance.....%

Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time (this Academic Year)

Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent

APPENDIX D

(Date)

(Parents' name and address)

Dear (Parents' name),

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your request for leave during term time, dated (date), asking for permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school for (number of days) from (dates).

As you may be aware, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Having looked at your application, although understanding of your reasons, I do not feel that your request can be supported in this instance. **Therefore, if the absence occurs, the dates will be unauthorised.**

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

However, should you still decide to take this leave, I am grateful that you have informed us so that your child will have the opportunity to share the experience with their friends and teachers.

As a school, we are asked to inform you that, in line with Worcestershire County Council Policy, following a period of unauthorised absence, a referral will be made to the Education Investigation Service which may result in the issue of a penalty notice fine of £80 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £160 each if not paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings.

We also request that you advise your children's Class teachers of this absence if you have not already done so. Thank you for your understanding; I trust this letter explains the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

(Job Title)

APPENDIX E

(Date)

(Parents' name and address)

Dear (Parents' name),

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your request for leave during term time, dated (date), asking for permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school for (number of days), from (dates).

As you may be aware, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take holidays in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having looked at your application, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance.

Therefore, the absence to include the dates requested will be authorised.

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, in the future, you will continue to support the Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

We also request that you advise your children's Class teachers of this absence if you have not already done so.

I trust this letter explains the reason for the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

(Job Title)

APPENDIX F

Children missing from education pathway

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff in education provision should follow the provision's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential, pupils need to attend regularly. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing in their area.

All education providers should:-

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Ensure parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- Ensure all pupils are punctual to school and lessons
- Ensure they liaise with the named social worker where Children's Social Work are engaged with the child or family

School Requirements

The **law** requires schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. Schools should use the national absence and attendance codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collection statistics through the School Census System. The codes are detailed in School Attendance (DfE, October 2014 -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/361008/Advice_on_school_attendance_sept_2014.pdf). Please note the requirements around the use of the L and U code (page 8), and requirements for recording attendance of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils (page 11).

Schools should promote good school attendance and put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.

It is essential that staff are alert to signs to look out for, and the individual triggers to be aware of, when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM, CSE, forced marriage.

Involving other agencies and signposting:

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent, without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

Pupils at risk of harm/neglect - Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow child protection procedures. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police should also be involved.

Families of members of the Armed Forces

Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MOD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Families

Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. Pupils are particularly vulnerable at transition from primary to secondary where a GRT pupil leaves school without identifying a new destination school. Schools should inform the CME team as soon as they become aware that a secondary school application will not be made for a GRT pupil. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Schools should work with families to minimise disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example if the family need to travel in order to work, they should be supported to dual register with other schools.

Persistent Absence

The definition of persistently absent (PA) pupil as set by the DFE is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). The table below, derived from the census guidance, gives an indication of the minimum number of sessions a pupil would miss by each half term to be classed as PA.

Half-term	10%
Half-term 1	7 or more sessions
Half-term 1-2 (autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half-term 1-3	20 or more sessions
Half-term 1-4 (autumn term and spring term combined)	25 or more sessions
Half-term 1-5	31 or more sessions
Half-term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

Deletion of pupil from the admission register

Schools must notify the local authority when they remove a pupil from roll in line with the Removing Pupils from Roll: Guidance for Schools.

All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, eg: elective home education (EHE). Schools must not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to school at the end of that period
- have been permanently excluded

APPENDIX G

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Finstall First School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the SLT and Pastoral Lead detailing weekly and annual attendance to date, as appropriate.
2. Class Teachers inform the Pastoral Lead if they have any concerns about a pupil's attendance. This is also recorded on the school's safeguarding platform with an attendance tag.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, the Pastoral Lead or SLT speak to the Class Teacher and asks them to make contact with the child's parents to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. At formal parent meetings, such as Parents' Evening, attendance may also be discussed.
6. If a pupil's attendance remains below 90 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance remains below the school's expected standard, explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored and offering support where appropriate.
7. Should further absence occur within a month of the letter being sent, parents may be required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and Pastoral Lead to set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a home visit could be arranged.
8. After the one month monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises and rises above 90 percent.
9. If targets are not met, a parental contract is drawn up. A further four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

