



Roberts Primary School

Attendance Policy



Revised: Autumn Term 2023
Consultation Period: ended September 2023
Approved by Governors: September 2023

Date of Next review: Autumn Term 2024

To be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Data Protection Policy

Charging and Lettings Policy

[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

[School Census Guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental Health Issues Affecting A Pupil's Attendance: Guidance for Schools](#)

Approved by:

Senior Leader - Mrs D Hunt (Headteacher)

Governor – Mrs S Smith (Chair of Governors)

POLICY RATIONALE

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

At Roberts Primary School we strongly believe that attendance and punctuality are vital for a child to maximise their potential and create a feeling of belonging in their class/school community. The foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive.

In promoting the belief that attendance and punctuality are important values we will be helping to equip our children for life and potentially impacting upon their futures as employees and employers.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The government expects parents to

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

We believe that:

- All absence, in any year group, affects access to the curriculum ultimately impacting on progress.
- Repeated and consistent lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school.

As a school we follow the Department for Education, DfE, guidelines and expect children to maintain an attendance figure above 96% throughout the academic year.

July 2011 DfE documentation *Reducing Absence – ensuring schools intervene earlier* states that;

“The poor attendance of a number of pupils can disrupt their own learning and that of other pupils. The children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never fully catch up with gaps in their skills or knowledge.”

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. The Government has stated that once a child’s attendance figure reaches 90% they are classed as persistently absent. This equals missing nearly 20 school days. (194 school working days. 10% = 19.4 days).

Good attendance at school *makes a difference* to a child’s education. If children get into bad habits at primary school, then they will continue them at secondary school. DfE statistics show that;

- The higher the overall absence rate across Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.
- Of pupils with absence over 50%, only 3% manage to achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 including Maths and English.
- Pupils with no absence are more than 2.2 times likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs at grades 9-4.

It can be extremely hard for a pupil to catch up on missed work, regular absence can really disadvantage your child in life. Children who miss one day each week from school, are missing out on 20% of their education.

Attendance during one school year	Equates to days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022) states that;

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%).

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents are responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have and, where that education is being provided at a school, parents must ensure their child's regular attendance at the school.

Compulsory school age is defined as, commencing at the start of term on or after a child's fifth birthday and concluding on the last Friday in June of the academic year in which the pupil turns 16. In Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's (the LA) area, the Education Support Service instigates statutory intervention on behalf of the LA, when it is notified that a pupil has the relevant level of unauthorised absence.

Children **must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday** and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

THE LAW ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND RIGHT TO A FULL-TIME EDUCATION

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

SAFEGUARDING IN 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/criminal 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.

The Attendance Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Leads work closely to manage risks, 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.

All staff at Roberts Primary School are aware that: "safeguarding is everyone's business". We all play a crucial role in protecting children and young people and keeping them safe or helping them to feel safe. As of September 2009, OFSTED under section 5 of the Education Act 2005, make judgments in relation to the effectiveness of safeguarding. Our school has a clear Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which takes into account the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021; this is reviewed annually, and ensures that all staff including Governors, volunteers and supply staff have undertaken appropriate training with regard to safeguarding. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to inform the designated safeguarding officer and Local Authority of children who are persistently absent or missing (particularly those who are vulnerable) and any children and young people they intend to remove from school's roll.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE GOVERNING BODY

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

PUPILS

- To attend school every day on time.
- To attend registration punctually and promptly for both morning and afternoon registration
- To attend school prepared for the school day

Staggered start times remain in place and are as follows:

- Nursery am - between 8.55am and 9.05am
- Nursery pm - 12.30pm
- Red - 8.45am
- Blue - 9.00am
- Yellow - 9.15am

External classroom doors, where possible, will open 5 minutes before the allocated start time and will close 5 minutes after the allocated start time. Any registration after this is classed as late.

PARENTS/CARER

The definition of Education Law (Section 576, Education Act 1996) of a Parent is:

- *All natural parents, whether they are married or not:*
- *Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person and:*
- *Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child)*
- To ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and to **notify the school office every day of absence by 9.30am.**
- To ensure their child is collected on time at the end of each school session. End times are as follows:
 - Nursery am - 12.00pm
 - Nursery pm - 3.30pm
 - Red - 3.00pm
 - Blue - 3.15pm
 - Yellow - 3.30pm
- To provide written explanation of absences on the first day a pupil returns to school.
- To take family holidays in the school holiday period and not to take holidays in term time
- To provide the school with more than one up to date emergency contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility. If contact details change then we must be informed of new details within 24 hours.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- If a 'Leave of Absence' is required for exceptional circumstances, it must be made in writing to the Headteacher 20 days in advance of the proposed start date of the absence.
- If a 'Leave of Absence' is to be requested it must be for 'exceptional' circumstances. The circumstances you consider 'exceptional' must be detailed and made in writing to the Headteacher at least 20 school days before the start of that 'leave'.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ADVICE

As a parent/carer you are responsible for ensuring your children receive a suitable full time education.

Regular attendance is not only a legal requirement but is essential for children and young people to maximise their educational opportunities.

Absence from school, even the occasional day, is proven to have a negative impact upon a child's educational attainment, personal confidence and enjoyment at school.

The Education Support Service (ESS) has a legal responsibility to monitor school attendance on behalf of Dudley Borough Council. If a school has a concern about a child's attendance they will discuss the issues with the ESS and may request the service considers legal intervention as a last resort.

It is important for you to contact your child's school if you are experiencing difficulties with their attendance, behaviour or accessing support for any additional needs. The school will then work in partnership with you to try and resolve any difficulties you have and overcome any barriers there might be in securing good attendance and behaviour.

If your child's school have any concerns they will contact you and it is vital that you communicate well with the school and work together to resolve any issues.

Schools may offer support from the Early Help service who can aid you to improve your child's attendance. We would encourage you to accept this offer of support.

You can also contact the Education Support Service directly if you are concerned about your child's attendance.

PARENTS CAN SUPPORT REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY:

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents' evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

PARENTAL ADVICE ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Simple things you can do today to help your child to attend school:

- Ensure that your children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and ready to learn
- Instill in your children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Impress upon children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- Take an active interest in your children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- Work in partnership with your child's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- Ensure that you are aware of the attendance policy of your children's school
- Notify the school if your child is absent. This should be done as soon as possible - preferably on the first day of absence. You should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the child returns to school
- Keep them in a routine
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- Avoid booking holidays during term time
- If you are having difficulty with your child attending school ask the school for help today

TEACHERS

- To keep an accurate, timely and up to date attendance register.
- To praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance.
- To take appropriate action when pupils are late.
- To monitor pupil absence.
- To monitor reasons pupil absence including safeguarding reasons and potential bullying.
- To inform Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher when absence is impacting on achievement.
- To inform the DSL when absence is linked to a safeguarding concern.
- To post notes onto Integris as and when notified by a parent that a child is ill, and adjust the mark accordingly.

OFFICE

- To make a phone call home if a child does not attend school. Text messages may be used if no person to person contact can be made.
- Alternative contacts need to be used if contact with main parents/carers is repeatedly unsuccessful.
- To monitor late entrants into school and adjust Integris accordingly.
- To forward phone messages to class teachers regarding absences.

- To monitor register codes and alert staff of inconsistencies.
- To produce individual or class summary sheets upon request of the Education Support Service (ESS).
- To produce weekly class attendance summary sheets for school assemblies.
- To produce monthly class attendance summary sheets for SLT analysis.
- To produce attendance figures for end of year reports.

THE HEADTEACHER AND SENIOR LEADER RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE

The Headteacher, Dawn Hunt, shall have overall responsibility for attendance at Roberts Primary School. The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ken Hughes and can be contacted via 01384 818275 and/or info@roberts.dudley.sch.uk. The Headteacher and senior leader responsible for attendance will:

- Lead attendance across the school.
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Intervene early when individual pupil absences give cause for concern.
- Develop a multi-agency response to the attendance policy, a child's attendance may be reported to other agencies should there be concern.
- Utilise the support of available specialists in relation to the attendance policy.
- Be responsible for the implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitor school-level absence data and report it to governors.
- Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher.
- Issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes.
- Have an oversight of data analysis.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Build relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Create intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.

LATE ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

When your child arrives late at school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

Frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage your child and disrupt the learning of others. Please help your child to be punctual.

PROCEDURES

LATE FOR SCHOOL IN THE MORNING AND AFTERNOON

We are continuing with our staggered start times and these will be as follows:

- Nursery am - between 8.55am and 9.05am
- Nursery pm - 12.30pm
- Red - 8.45am
- Blue - 9.00am
- Yellow - 9.15am

External classroom doors, will open 5 minutes before the allocated start time and will close 5 minutes after the allocated start time. Any child arriving after this time is classed as late.

Registration happens in the classroom and not when a child arrives in school. Children need to be in the classroom by their allocated start time.

If a child arrives for **registration in the classroom** before their allocated start time, they will be marked 'present' (code '^').

If your child arrives more than 10 minutes after their allocated start time, they will need to be signed in at the main school office **by a parent/carer, or adult, and a reason for the lateness must be given:**

For Red classes, children will need to be signed in at the main school office if they arrive after 8.55am.

For Blue classes, children will need to be signed in at the main school office if they arrive after 9.10am.

For Yellow classes, children will need to be signed in at the main school office if they arrive after 9.25am.

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - The original entry
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - The date on which the amendment was made
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Attendance registers are kept electronically. School complies with and uses the DfE compulsory national attendance codes. See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

If your child is absent during the morning but comes back for the afternoon session, afternoon registration begins:

- Nursery am – 11.50am until 12.00pm
- Nursery pm – 3.20pm until 3.30pm
- Red - 1.00pm
- Blue -1.30pm
- Yellow - 1.30pm

All children not present for a morning session will need to be signed in at the main school office **by a parent/carer, or adult, and a reason for the absence must be given.** Children arriving 10 minutes after these times will be marked as being late.

Children arriving 35 minutes after allocated start time for a morning or an afternoon session will be marked as a 'U' which means they are classed as absent for that session.

If your child has to be signed in at the office after their allocated start time due to a doctors/medical appointment this can still be classed as a late mark rather than an absence if you have provided a medical appointment card for the absence.

The school will monitor lates for each academic year. If your child is continuously late, not due to medical appointments, then you will receive a letter from the Deputy Headteacher notifying you of these lates. If this persists then you will be requested to meet with a Senior Leader. If you are more than 35 minutes late, this is classed as an unauthorised absence and will affect your child's overall attendance.

The Pupil Registrations Act 2008 states that it is the duty of the parent to ensure their child/children arrive on time for school.

LATE FOR SCHOOL AT THE END OF THE DAY

If a child is not collected promptly at the end of the day, the school may have to enroll them temporarily in an after school club. A charge will be made for repeated late collections.

End times are as follows:

- Nursery am - 12.00pm
- Nursery pm - 3.30pm
- Red - 3.00pm
- Blue - 3.15pm
- Yellow - 3.30pm

ATTENDANCE AND ILLNESS

If your child is ill your *first action* is to call the school as early as possible (**AND BEFORE 9.30am**) and let the School Office know your child will not be in school – **01384 818275**. If you cannot talk to someone in person, please leave an answer message or contact using the school email - info@roberts.dudley.sch.uk.

This needs to be done **every day** of absence (*unless your child is admitted to hospital, or has a long-term illness related absence for a period of time - in this instance you do not need to ring every day*).

If your child is not in school and we have not had a phone call by 9.30am one of our Office Staff will contact you to find out why your child is not in school.

Where a child is absent from school on a regular basis due to illness, school may ask for copies of prescriptions, appointment cards, to copy letters from specialists involved. We will seek advice and guidance from Dudley School Nursing Team in matters relating to continuing illness.

Where absence due to illness is a continuing issue and where no medical evidence is provided, we will write informing the parent of our concerns regarding the level of absence due to illness and inform the parents that further absence will be unauthorised unless supporting evidence is supplied.

Every half a day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the Headteacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised. For afternoons, a half day absence is a child not completing more than two thirds of the afternoon. For Red classes, this equates to leaving before 2.30pm, Blue classes 2.45pm and Yellow classes 3.00pm

Absence can only be granted by a person, the Headteacher, authorised to do so [*see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 2006/1751) – Reg 7(1)*].

School has procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within 10 school days.

ATTENDANCE AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 20 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, available from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

APPROVAL FOR TERM-TIME ABSENCE

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 20 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveler pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travelers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travelers.
- Absence may be authorised only when a traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

FOLLOWING UP UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

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

- Contact the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- If the school cannot reach the pupil's parent/carer they will attempt contact using the emergency contacts provided.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- If the school cannot reach the pupil's parent/carer or any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact external agencies (Children's Services, Education Support Services or the police for example).

REPORTING TO PARENTS/CARERS

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels annually via written reports.

If a child's attendance falls below government guidelines - currently 96% and above is seen as good attendance and anything below 90% is classed as being persistently absent - school may notify you of this by email and/or letter. If there is no significant improvement in the child's attendance after this letter, a further letter and/or email will be sent out notifying you of this. After this point, if your child's attendance has not significantly improved, school will invite you in for a formal meeting where we will discuss options as to how we can improve your child's attendance and set targets to help you with this. At any point, should you have any concerns with regard your child's attendance, please contact school to discuss this with either your child's class teacher or Mr Hughes.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

PLANNED ABSENCE

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

- If a 'Leave of Absence' is required for exceptional circumstances, it must be made in writing to the Headteacher 20 days in advance of the proposed start date of the absence.
- If a 'Leave of Absence' is to be requested it must be for 'exceptional' circumstances. The circumstances you consider 'exceptional' must be detailed and made in writing to the Headteacher at least 20 school days before the start of that 'leave'.

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

MEDICAL OR DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. School will need to be given evidence i.e. and appointment card for appointments made during school time. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

HOLIDAY ABSENCE

Can I take my child on holiday during term time? You should not book a family holiday during term time. Whilst you may think this is beneficial, taking a holiday during term time means that children miss important school time and it will be difficult for them to catch up on work.

It is at the discretion of the head teacher and governors of the school which the child attends as to whether leave during term time is authorised. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In this instance the head teacher will determine the length of time a child can be away from school. Please note leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

If after considering whether there are exceptional circumstances and the school does not agree the absences, you take your child out of school, the school may record this as unauthorised absence. This could result in a fixed penalty fine being issued by the local authority and as a result you may be fined in respect of each parent and each child, payable up to £120 for each. Therefore, two parents and two children could potentially receive fines

amounting to a maximum £480. If you choose not to pay the fine the local authority may take legal proceedings against you.

DfE guidance, Advice on School Attendance - March 2013, answers the FAQ;

Can a school fine a parent for taking their child on holiday during term time? Yes.

Parents have a *legal duty* to make sure that their child aged 5-16, if registered at a school, attends that school regularly. If taking an unauthorised term time holiday is grounds for issuing a penalty notice according to the local authority's code, and if the leave of absence for holiday was not authorised by the school, either the school or the local authority may issue a penalty notice.

A penalty notice might be issued for unauthorised absence in term time. Where schools or academies have a rule on absence in term time (above) and the head teacher has received written notification of a request for a leave of absence and it has been refused, or a leave of absence has been taken for 10 sessions or more, without seeking the absence to be authorised a penalty fine may be issued in conjunction with, or in isolation of any other absence.

It is the statutory duty of local authorities to carry out investigations including witness statements leading up to prosecutions. Local authorities should conduct all investigations in accordance with PACE and Attorney General's Guidelines for Crown Prosecutors Local authorities cannot delegate this function to schools (including academies) or charge them for this service.

Headteachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

It is now necessary for all parents to seek 'Leave of Absence' at **least 20 school** days before you are intending to take your child out of school. There are 'Request for Absence Forms' at Reception/Office. A leave of absence request must be made by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.

LEGAL SANCTIONS

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty notices will be issued by a local authority officer, the police and, under exceptional circumstances, by the Headteacher. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences. Penalty notices can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority, **the school does not receive the money.**

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

Fixed penalty notices may be imposed if:

- your child's attendance is low due to unauthorised absences
- your child's attendance is low and is not improving
- there is a lack of engagement with the school regarding your child's attendance

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice. Non-payment could result in a fine of up to £1000 or Prosecution in a Magistrates Court where parent may be fined up to £1000 under s444 (1) Education Act 1996.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If a parent doesn't make sure the child regularly attends school, and there's no evidence that the child is being educated at home, the parent may be fined up to £2,500, given a community order or a jail sentence of up to 3 months.

10 CONSECUTIVE DAYS ABSENCE

If your child is absent from school for 10 consecutive school days without contact from parents, we must inform the Education Support Service.

10 DAYS + ABSENCE

If your child has more than 10 days out of school, at any time over an academic year due to illness and leave of absence, then every time your child is absent after this you will be required to provide further information, detail or evidence so we can consider whether the absence can be authorised. An appointment card saying you had an appointment for the doctor is not considered as further evidence. A written document from a registered health professional stating something similar to 'I have seen Jack in surgery today and in my professional opinion he is not fit for school' will be the level of evidence we can accept for absence.

The school's medical policy allows us to administer medicines with written consent which may ensure a quicker return to school. That a child has been prescribed medication does not always mean that they need any time off school.

If no evidence is received by the school the school may involve other agencies. You may be asked to attend a meeting with the Education Support Service to discuss how to improve your child's attendance. Following this meeting you may be issued with a warning notice from the Education Support Service.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MORE THAN 20 UNAUTHORISED DAYS OF SCHOOL ARE MISSED?

The Deputy Headteacher will look at the reasons for the 20 days unauthorised absence. If it is a combination of reasons – including holiday - then you will be informed by letter that further absence will not be authorised.

The Education Support Service may ask to meet with you to decide how to improve attendance – following this meeting you may be issued with a warning notice from the Education Support Service.

Your child's absence will then be scrutinised on a weekly basis.

If your child is absent and is recorded as unauthorised. Once it meets the specification for referral, you will automatically be referred again to the Education Support Service.

You will receive a home visit and written warning from them advising you that any continuing unauthorised absence could lead to Penalty Notice/s being issued against you.

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will further action by ESS which may include Magistrates Court Action a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Once your child has accumulated **10 unauthorised sessions of absence (1 session = ½ day)** within 30 school days **we will** automatically refer your family to the Education Support

Service. As a result, you will receive a warning notice. Prior to this, school will contact you to discuss attendance. A further referral for any continuing absence will lead to the possibility that a fixed penalty fine could be issued per child to each adult who has parental responsibility.

PROLONGED ABSENCE OVER 20 DAYS

LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

If a child needs to be hospitalized for 3 days or more we can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that they work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would mean that your child is being educated off site and would not affect their overall attendance percentage.

If a child leaves hospital and following this is at home for 2 weeks, or more, then we can contact Cherry Tree Pupil Referral Unit and they will support your child at home.

REMOVAL FROM SCHOOL ROLL

If a child is not ill and is continually absent from our school for 20 days, or more, as a school we would work with the Education Support Service to find out where your child is. A result of this investigation may be to remove your child from the school roll. (Section 8 Admissions). It would then be the parent's responsibility to contact admissions in order to re-register the child/children.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

It is not acceptable to assume your child can have days out of school for the following events;

- Moving House
- Funerals (only if immediate family, for instance mother, father, siblings, grandparents, uncles and aunts)
- New babies
- Other child in family is sick and parent cannot get another child to school
- Parent on holiday and child staying with a relative – relative cannot bring child to school - it is expected that other arrangements are made with family members/ neighbours/friends to bring your child to school.
- Parent sick on a long-term basis and cannot get child to school – it is expected that other arrangements are made with family members/neighbours/friends to bring your child to school.
- Inclement weather i.e. severe snow – if you live within a 1-mile radius of the school, unless there is a babe in arms in the household, or you live in a remote setting, you are expected to get your child to school.

COVID-19

Any absences that are related to COVID-19 are marked on the register and do not have an impact on the child's attendance.

UNACCEPTABLE REASONS FOR ABSENCE

We have collated reasons people sent in as to why their child was off school/or why they should be allowed holiday in term time. Some of these are listed here;

- Birthdays
- Trips to Alton Towers/Drayton Manor Park
- Buying new school shoes/summer uniform because parents forgot to do it in the holidays
- Waiting in for the builders/gas man/delivery driver to arrive
- Only Year 6 matters
- Parent has had a foot operation and didn't bring child to school
- Going to the caravan on a Friday to avoid traffic
- Only time we can go on holiday
- Holidays are cheaper - child's attendance is not our problem

If you give these sorts of reasons for absence your child **will** receive an unauthorised absence mark.

ATTENDANCE CELEBRATION

There is a weekly trophy for Reception, KS1 & KS2, which will be handed out to the class with the highest attendance. The class with the best attendance also has a sign on their door celebrating this.

Each Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2 class have weekly and monthly attendance signs on their doors in the form of a traffic light, explaining if their attendance is good (96% and above), nearly there (91% - 95%) or if they need to work on their attendance (90% and below).

Weekly individualised pupil attendance reports are given to class teachers to celebrate those children with good attendance and improving attendance.

Half termly certificates are given out to children to promote attendance:

- bronze certificates out to all children with 90-95% attendance
- silver certificates out to all children with 96-99% attendance
- gold certificates out to all children with 100% attendance

Annually, certificates will be given out to those children who achieved 100% attendance for the whole year.

Monthly monitoring of and meetings with approximately 10 persistent absentee pupils from each year group whose attendance is around the 90% mark.

Should you have any questions about this policy or attendance, please contact Mr Hughes, Deputy Headteacher.