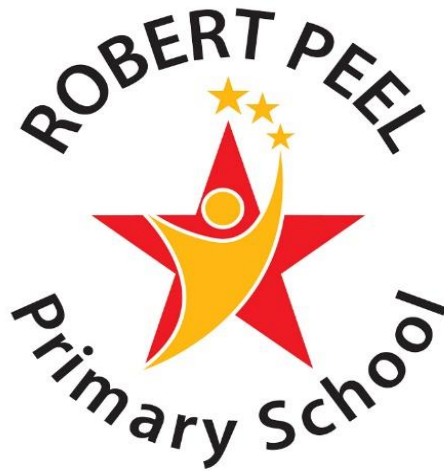


Robert Peel Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy



Date policy last reviewed: September 2025

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of Governors Date: _____

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Statement of Intent

Robert Peel Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We 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 Liesl Ganney, and can be contacted via admin@robertpeel.beds.sch.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

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 (KCSIE) 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 Procedures Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy

Roles & Responsibilities

The Governing Body 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 Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE 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 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.
- 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.

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.

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered 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

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

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 8.45am, 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 by 8:40am with the gates opening at 8.30am. Pupils will have a morning break which lasts for 20 minutes, and a lunch break which will last until 1:00pm.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8.45 am. 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 9:00am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time which will be recorded as unauthorised
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1:05pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at 1:10pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present and this will be unauthorised

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

Absence Procedures

A child not arriving at school where the parents have not informed the school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must:

- On the first day of absence parents/carers are expected to contact the school, preferably by telephone before 9.00 am;
- The parent/carer reporting the absence should give the reason for the absence and the expected date of return;
- If the date of the return is unknown, regular contact should be kept with the school; if the school receives no contact a member of the office team will inform the Headteacher;
- If further contact cannot be made with parents/carers then staff will visit the home to make contact.

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone you on the first day of absence, if a timeframe for the absence is known then follow up calls will only be made if the absence goes beyond this time. In some cases, daily contact will be made whilst the child is absent – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance;
- if long term or ongoing issues about illness parents/carers will be invited in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher;
- refer the matter to the Central Bedfordshire Council's Access and Inclusion Service if absence is unauthorised and doesn't meet school expectations;
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Third Day Absence

Please note: if your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carer, after three days of absence the school is required to consider implementing the Child Missing in Education procedures as set down by Central Bedfordshire Council. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to know friends, wider family and visiting the home.

5-10 Days Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 5 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named Parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the Child is Missing Education. Staff from the Access and Inclusion Service may visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. You can help us and your child by making sure we always have an up-to date contact number and home address. See CME policy for full details of school procedures.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child misses 10% or more sessions of absence across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as a persistent absentee. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child, by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows that these gaps at whatever level affect attainment. We monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department of Education.

All our persistent absentee pupils and their parents are subject to an Attendance Plan or home school contract.

Sickness & Diarrhoea

To limit the spread of sickness and diarrhoea if a child falls ill with sickness (vomiting) or diarrhoea then parents are to keep their child off school 48 hours from their last bout of illness.

Attendance Register

The school uses Integris G2 to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

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.

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.

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 at least four 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.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school does not grant leave of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

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 Fixed 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 & 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 & 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 work packs being supplied. 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. 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 four 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 four weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes and if the child has attended 200 or more sessions at Robert Peel.

SEND & 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.

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 break times.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

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 may 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.

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.

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.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.40am and 1:00pm, where the teacher will record the attendance using the Class Register. 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 in line with the Penalty notices and legal intervention section of this policy where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

Trigger Letter 1	Trigger Letter 2	Trigger Letter 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular lateness• Absence patterns eg same day off each week• Declining attendance rate, the school will use 96% as a measure to review attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No improvement as a result of letter 1• Declining or not improving attendance• Planned intervention meeting at school organised	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuation of issues and patterns• Parents not engaging with attendance meetings• Child classed as a persistent absentee• Result being the issuing of a FPN

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.

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 absent 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
 - 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 absent pupil's teacher will fill in an cause for concern form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- If the absent 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 Promoting Positive 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.

Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, 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.
 - Holding regular attendance meetings.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

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.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Attendance Messages to parents
- Class Attendance Certificates
- Discussions and feedback to parents

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.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer 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, Family Support Worker, PPG Leader, SEND Manager and SENDCO, 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, staff 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.

Persistent absence (PA)

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 regular 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 50 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.

Local Authority Attendance Support Services

Local Authority School Attendance Officers work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this

way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Penalty Notices & Legal Intervention

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that Headteacher's may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance by the parent with whom the child normally lives with, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Central Bedfordshire Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

At *Robert Peel* exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the Headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The Headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

Monitoring & Analysing Absence

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

The Governing Body 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.

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 Body 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 Body 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.

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.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 97 percent.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2026.

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

Annex A: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19th August 2024

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners, understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school- whenever they live or are educated. Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p> <p>(If parents feel the school and or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)</p>	<p>The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.</p> <p>The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.</p> <p>Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making.</p> <p>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.</p> <p>Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>

EVERY SCHOOL DAY MATTERS



Penalty Notice Fines for absence from school are changing

From 19th August 2024 Penalty Notice fines increase to £160 for each parent, for each child.



You can be fined if your child has a total of 5 days of unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks, for things like:

- being late after the register has closed
- truancy
- taking a holiday without permission from the school
- or if a headteacher isn't satisfied for the reason for missing school

Over a rolling 3-year period the sanctions are:

- 1st offence – £160 reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days
- 2nd offence – £160
- 3rd offence – Court hearing and up to £2,500 fine, or up to 3 months in prison and a criminal record

For more information go to:
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/missing-school



Annex B – Trigger Letters

<p>Trigger Letter 1</p>	<p><u>Attendance Letter 1</u></p> <p>Dear</p> <p>School Attendance</p> <p>I am writing to you with reference to the attendance of <u>xxxx</u>. As a school we promote and encourage good attendance as it is a major contributor to good attainment and children's social development. Children who attend regularly generally achieve better outcomes at school and consequently in their futures.</p> <p>As a school and Local Authority we have set the target of 97% for the number of days a child attends school. We feel it is extremely important to keep parents informed about their child's attendance and if their child's attendance dips below the target set. As a result of our monitoring we have noticed that <u>xxx's</u> attendance has dropped to <u>xx%</u> due to illness, lateness and unauthorised absences.</p> <p>We hope that over the coming days and week's <u>xxxx</u> attendance increases so that his rate of attendance improves and his attendance goes back up above 97%. If we can support you in any way with Charlie's attendance rate please do not hesitate to contact your child's Class Teacher.</p>
<p>Trigger Letter 2</p>	<p><u>Attendance Letter 2</u></p> <p>Dear</p> <p>I am writing to you with reference to the attendance of <u>xxxx</u>. As you are aware we continue to work hard to improve our children's attendance levels, thus improving the life chances of your child and enabling them to achieve their full potential. Unfortunately, <u>xxxx's</u> attendance has dropped to <u>xx%</u> which is very low and hugely concerning.</p> <p>After reviewing <u>xxxx's</u> attendance record there are many absences due to <u>xxxxxx</u>. The school's minimum attendance target is 97% and we would appreciate your support in ensuring that your son/daughter's attendance improves to at least our minimum school target. If <u>xxxx's</u> level of attendance does not significantly improve over the coming weeks I will be asking you to provide us with medical evidence for all future absences (prescribed medicines, prescriptions, doctors' notes, hospital letters and appointment cards only). We will not be able to authorise any absences without this evidence from this point onwards, regardless of reasons provided. In addition, an Attendance Support Meeting will be organised with Mrs Savage, our Family Support Worker, where your child's attendance rates and patterns will be discussed and a plan of expectations will be set to improve your child's attendance.</p> <p>Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance at school. I must advise you to make certain that your child resumes a regular attendance as soon as possible and that failure to do will result in the school referring your child's attendance to the Local Authority. This could result in a joint meeting with me and a Local Authority School Attendance Officer. These absences could also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued in line with Central Bedfordshire Council's Code of Conduct</p> <p>If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child's attendance, or if we can support you in any way to help improve <u>xxxx's</u> attendance please do not hesitate to contact me via the school office.</p> <p>Please contact us if you wish to discuss this matter further.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p>
<p>Trigger Letter 3</p>	<p><u>Fixed Penalty Notice for Attendance</u></p> <p>Dear</p> <p>As you are aware we continue to work hard to improve our pupils' attendance levels thus improving the life chances of your child and enabling them to achieve their full potential. As I have explained in my previous correspondence <u>XXXX</u> school attendance is well below the expected target set by the school of 97% and currently is at <u>xx%</u>.</p> <p>As a school we have attempted to organise an Attendance Support Meeting to be able to discuss an action plan to improve <u>XXXX's</u> attendance but you have either not wanted to engage in this process or have not attended a scheduled meeting. This is hugely disappointing and as a result of your non-engagement I am writing to inform you that due to <u>XXXX's</u> irregular school attendance and your non-engagement in improving their attendance I have requested that the Local Authority issues you with a Penalty Notice.</p> <p>This is an action we had hoped to avoid through open dialogue and working together but have had no choice but to take this action which is in accordance with Government set statutory guidance.</p> <p>Should you have further information that would support <u>XXXX's</u> level of absence then I would ask that this is shared with either myself or the Local Authorities School Attendance Officer.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>Miss L Ganney Headteacher</p>

Annex C – Abscene Request Form

<p>Dapifer Drive, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 1QJ Tel: 01767 681185 Email: admin@robertpeel.bedsch.uk</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ROBERT PEEL Primary School </p> <p>Miss Liesl Ganney - Headteacher</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">ABSCENE REQUEST FORM (exceptional circumstances only)</p> <p><i>I wish to apply to have an 'avoidable' absence authorised and give four school weeks' notice, for:</i></p> <p>Child's name Class/Year</p> <p>Child's name Class/Year</p> <p>Date from date to (inclusive)</p> <p>Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):</p> <p>Address:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.</p> </div> <p>Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="3" style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Office use only</th> <th rowspan="2" style="font-size: small;">Code _____</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="font-size: x-small;">Date form received</th> <th style="font-size: x-small;">No of school days absence requested</th> <th style="font-size: x-small;">% Attendance</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 20px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="font-size: x-small;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"></td> <td style="font-size: x-small;">Signed _____ Headteacher</td> </tr> </table> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin-top: 10px;">THIS PORTION TO BE RETURNED TO PARENTS/CARERS</p> <p>Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable.</p> <p>Pupil(s) name(s)</p> <p>Class/Year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised from to (inclusive)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised current attendance % as of /20</p> <p>Signed (Headteacher)</p> <p>Date</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin-top: 5px;">NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactory up to the date covered by this request.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">You can be fined if your child has a total of 5 days of unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks (this equates to 10 school sessions.) This is for things like: being late after the register closes, truancy, taking holiday in term time or if the Headteacher isn't satisfied for the reason to be absent from school and the absence is classed as unauthorised.</p>	Office use only			Code _____	Date form received	No of school days absence requested	% Attendance				<input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised				Signed _____ Headteacher	<p style="text-align: right;">ROBERT PEEL Primary School </p> <p>Miss Liesl Ganney - Headteacher</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">AVOIDABLE ABSCENE IN TERM-TIME</p> <p>IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.</p> <p>WARNING: If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.</p> <p>As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: x-small;"> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">THE FACTS</th> <th style="width: 50%;">THE LAW</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <p>Pupils who attend Robert Peel Primary School are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>What should you consider</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and will result in a £160 Fixed Penalty Notice per parent for each child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days) issued by the Local Authority.</p> <p>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuine illness • Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible) • Days of religious observance • Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces • External examinations • When Traveller children go on the road with their parents </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides and at least two weeks before the absence request.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p> <p>Penalty Notice Fines for Absences</p> <p>Over a 3 year period the sanctions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Offence - £160 fine reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days • 2nd Offence - £160 • 3rd Offence - Court Hearing and up to a £2,500 fine or up to a 3 months prison sentence and a criminal record. <p>Other examples of absence from school that will not be authorised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any type of shopping • Looking after siblings or unwell parents • Minding the house • Birthdays • Resting after a late night • Relatives visiting or visiting relatives • Cheap holidays • Overlaps with the beginning of term </td> </tr> </table> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin-top: 10px;">Please contact your child's Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue. The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time. We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.</p>	THE FACTS	THE LAW	<p>Pupils who attend Robert Peel Primary School are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>What should you consider</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. 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Annex D – Attendance Leaflet

Attendance Leaflet for Parents/Carers

Why is school attendance important?

Pupils with good attendance are more likely to do well at school. When pupils miss school, even if the time period is very short, it can lead to gaps in their learning which might make future lessons more difficult for them.

Regular attendance helps pupils to feel part of the school community and enables them to develop good relationships with their peers and other members of the school community. This can have a positive impact on their wellbeing and help them to feel more settled in school.

When a pupil attends school every day, it helps to establish good routines and habits for their later life.

What does the law say?

It is a legal requirement for schools to keep a record of attendance and the reasons for any absences. There are clear guidelines set out by the government about how schools should manage attendance and schools are expected to follow these.



Only the Headteacher can officially authorise an absence but, unless there is a concern, other staff will usually do this on their behalf. Parents and carers should provide reasons for absences to enable the school to decide whether or not to authorise the absence based on government guidelines.

Parents and carers must ensure that their child attends school regularly. Failure to do so, without good reason, is an offence, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. Parents and carers of children with unauthorised absences may be subject to a fixed penalty notice/legal action.

What are the different types of absence?

There are two broad categories of absence:

Authorised absence: This is an absence that has been authorised by the school for a legitimate medical, emergency or unavoidable situation.

Typical examples of authorised absence include:

illness that means a child is too unwell to come to school;

following NHS advice regarding remaining off school following a period of illness (in the case of certain infectious illnesses);

an emergency medical or dental appointment;

the recent death of a close family member;

religious observance, as long as certain conditions are met.

Unauthorised absence: This is where a pupil's absence is for a reason deemed to be unacceptable by the school or where the reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided and cannot be established.

Some examples of unauthorised absence include:

looking after a younger sibling;

time off for birthday celebrations;

a family holiday (unless there are exceptional circumstances);

oversleeping;

shopping trips or days out;

waiting in for a delivery.

Why is it important that my child is on time each day?

When children are late to school, they may initially feel unsettled and they might miss important information and activities.

Schools are required to record late arrivals. If pupils arrive after the start of the school day but when the register is still open, it will be recorded as a late mark. If pupils arrive after the register closes then their morning mark will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless evidence can be provided that there are exceptional circumstances that led to the late arrival.

How does occasional absence affect my child?

Missing occasional days from school may seem unimportant at the time; however, this can have a significant impact on your child in the long term:

% of attendance in a school year	Number of days absent	Weeks missed
98%	4	Less than 1 week
95%	9.5	Nearly 2 weeks
90%	19	Nearly 4 weeks
85%	28.5	Nearly 6 weeks

A pupil with 85% attendance is missing nearly half a term of learning time each school year.

Regular absences can result in poorer outcomes over time. Research shows that pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school (which is between half and one day per week on average) stand only a 35% chance of achieving five or more good GCSEs, compared to 73% of those who miss fewer than 5% of school days.

Late arrivals also add up over time – being 10 minutes late each day adds up to two weeks of lost learning time over the whole school year.

What about medical appointments?

We understand that pupils need to attend medical and dental appointments and that it is not always possible to arrange this outside of school time. However, we would request that any non-emergency appointments are made for outside of the school day as this keeps the disruption to a minimum and ensures that they do not miss important lessons.

Why won't the school usually authorise absence for a family holiday?

We recognise that family vacations during the school holidays can be expensive and that booking a cheaper term-time holiday might be tempting. However, Headteachers can only authorise leave during term time if there are exceptional circumstances, even if your child has an excellent attendance record or if you believe that the reason for the absence is justified.

Parents and carers should plan their holidays around school holidays and avoid asking for permission to take their children out of school unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

If there are exceptional circumstances, then a request can be made to the school using our absence request form which can be found on the school website or on request from the School Office.

Requests for term-time absences should be made as soon as possible and at least two weeks before the absence is due to take place. However, we recognise that in some rare instances, this will not always be possible.

Requests for term-time absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking the facts, circumstances and any supporting evidence into consideration. Leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances is at the discretion of the Headteacher. This includes the length of time that the leave will be granted for.

What is school refusal?

If your child is refusing to go to school, this is known as 'school refusal'. There are a number of different reasons for school refusal, including general anxiety, worries about leaving home, problems with friends or peers, academic problems and depression. Sometimes, the cause can be a combination of different factors.

If your child is refusing to attend school, you should let us know immediately so that we can work together to put a plan in place to deal with any underlying issues and get your child back into school. The longer school refusal goes on, the more difficult it is to address.

How do I request an absence in advance?

If you want to request authorisation for a planned absence, please use our absence request form which can be found on the school website.

Paper copies of this form are also available from the school office.

Please submit any requests as early as possible and within 4 weeks prior to proposed absence, as we may need to ask for additional information before we can consider your request. Please do not make any plans until you have been told the outcome of your request.

Please be aware that we can only approve absences that are for exceptional circumstances so will be unable to authorise family holidays in most cases.

How do I report an unplanned absence to the school?

Unexpected absences should be reported to school by informing the School Office as soon as possible.

Please report any absences by 9.00 or as soon as you become aware that your child will be absent.

In the case of illness, the absence will usually be authorised unless there are grounds for concern that the illness may not be genuine or that it might not be sufficient to require time off school. In these cases, the school may ask for additional evidence, such as a doctor's note, appointment card, hospital letter or medical report. The school will not ask for this additional evidence unnecessarily.

If you do not provide a reason for your child's absence, we will make contact with you to find out why they are not in school. Unexplained absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

You can be fined if your child has a total of 5 days of unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks (this equates to 10 school sessions.) This is for things like: being late after the register closes, truancy, taking holiday in term time or if the Headteacher isn't satisfied for the reason to be absent from school and the absence is classed as unauthorised.

If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as **unauthorised absence** and will result in a £160 Fixed Penalty Notice per parent for each child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days) issued by the Local Authority.

Over a 3 year period the sanctions are:

1st Offence -£160 fine reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days

2nd Offence - £160

3rd Offence - Court Hearing and up to a £2,500 fine or up to a 3 months prison sentence and a criminal record.

Who should I contact if I have any questions or concerns about my child's attendance?

If you have any questions then contact should be made through the School Office and a member of staff will respond to your request to discuss the matter.

