BOUGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL: AN ACADEMY

An Academy

An Academy

Attendance Policy and Procedures

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:	***MRS MARY JAMES***
APPROVED:	***JUNE 2026***
BY:	***FULL GOVERNING BODY***
TO BE REVIEWED:	***EVERY TWO YEARS – JUNE 2028***

At *Boughton Primary* the named personnel with designated responsibility for attendance are:

Head Teacher	Administrator and Attendance Officer	Senior Attendance Champion
Mary James	*Natalie Cullum*	*Jodie Hartwell*

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

This policy complies with our Funding Agreement and Memorandum and Articles of Association, and forms part of our Safeguarding suite of policies (including Child Protection & Safeguarding, Behaviour & Anti Bullying, Suspensions & Exclusions).

Version control		
Page	**Update**	**Date**
13	Monitor stage added that parents will told attendance and that they are being monitored.	June 2026
6 and 13	**Now yearly meetings with SASO**	**June 2026**
10	**Attendance team to write letter to parents not Head Teacher**	**June 2026**
4	**Flexi-schooling update**	**June 2026**
9	**Added school website as a way of parents communicating absence**	**June 2026**

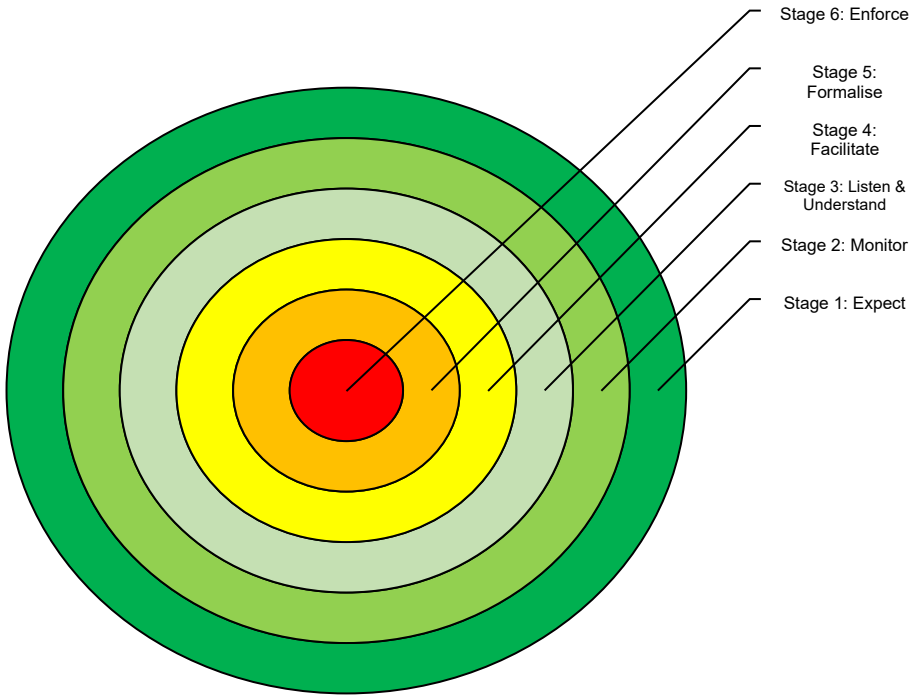
Overview
It is a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this, with the exception of education at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school. Irregular attendance leads to pupils missing teaching, learning and the social and emotional benefits of being at school; it leads to children not fulfilling their true potential.

Put simply, absence from school means missed learning.

Key Principles
Regular attendance and punctuality are learned behaviours, and we recognise that an expectation of both needs to be at the heart of our whole school culture and ethos. This policy applies to both attendance and punctuality. It is our goal to work collaboratively with, not against, families to secure the best possible attendance for every child.

In a nutshell…a two page summary of this policy

Following the principles of the new national guidance, the six stages of this policy are:



What do we mean by "regular attendance"?
We define regular (good) attendance as at or above 96% in a given period, which could be a full school year or a 10-week period in one academic year or across academic years. This is only measured over a period when attendance is possible, i.e. term-time.

What do we mean by "irregular attendance"?
If a child is absent for an accumulative total of 5 days (10 sessions) or more over a period of 10 school weeks, the school deems this as irregular attendance in line with local and national guidance.

STAGE 1: EXPECT

Our expectation mirrors the national aspiration of high standards of attendance from all pupils, building a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn.

Our minimum expectation for attendance is 96%.
Most requests for a leave of absence in term-time will be unauthorised and term-time holidays are never authorised, no matter the reason given.

STAGE 2: MONITOR

We will rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (for individuals and across the school) as soon as possible, so that all parties can work together to resolve difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

STAGE 3: LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, we will discuss with parents and pupils to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how we can work in partnership to resolve them. This may be via a telephone conversation or face-to-face meeting.

STAGE 4: FACILITATE SUPPORT

We will do all we can to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents access the support they need to overcome barriers outside of school. We will offer a Family Help Assessment with access to additional agency support.

STAGE 5: FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working, or there is a lack of engagement, we will work with our partner agencies to explain the consequences clearly to parents and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. This will include formal support through an Attendance Contract, Notice to Improve or Education Supervision Order.

STAGE 6: ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or there is non-engagement, we will enforce attendance through statutory intervention. We will refer to the Local Authority to consider legal action, which could include:

A Penalty Notice payable of up to £160 fine.
Prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1000.
Prosecution under s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Additional notes:

- All term-time holidays are unauthorised.
- The new framework takes into account the accumulated absences, so a term-time holiday of 3 days plus 2 days of other absences in a rolling 10-week period would trigger the intervention processes described.

- A term-time holiday of 5 school days (10 sessions) will automatically result in stage 6, referral to the Local Authority.
- The new framework now accumulates absences across a 3-year period and therefore the stages of penalty will increase with each incidence.
- At Boughton Primary School we do not consider/allow flexi-schooling.

BOUGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL – ATTENDANCE POLICY

Stage 1: Expect

Aims

Boughton Primary aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and its benefits
- 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 attendance or barriers
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the right support in place to attend school.

Definitions

Throughout this document, the following terminology is used with the intended meaning listed below:

Terminology	Definition
Parent	Any adult with parental responsibility for a child, whether the child resides with them or not, including all natural parents whether they are married or not; all those who have parental responsibility for a child; those who have day-to-day responsibility for a child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).
Carer	Any adult in the family without parental responsibility, but with the ability to affect change for a child. For example, a step-parent living in the family home, who does not have parental responsibility but is involved in the day-to-day care of the child.
Authorised absence	An absence that is authorised (allowed) by the school.
Unauthorised absence	An absence that is unauthorised (not allowed) by the school. This includes, but is not limited to: - More than four periods of illness-related absence in a school year, without medical evidence (e.g. GP letter or appointment card, prescription) - Term-time holidays - Non-urgent medical appointments (routine doctor or dentist appointments, that could be made out of school hours or in the school holidays)
Session	Attendance is recorded in registration sessions. Each day has 2 sessions: morning and afternoon. A child is required to be present at school for the full session in order to be registered as attending.
Late	The school gate and doors open at 8.40a.m. and registration takes place at 9a.m. Registers close at 9.10a.m. Our early opening time allows a good window of opportunity for the children to arrive punctually, ready to begin their lessons when registration ends. Late arrival to school is recorded as: - Arrived before the end of registration (L)

	- Arrived after registration (U) Lates after registration count as an unauthorised absence for the session.
Local Authority	Within this document, the following terminology is interchangeable: Local Authority/LA West Northamptonshire Council West Northamptonshire School Attendance Support Service

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs (reasonable adjustments)
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The **Learning and Outcomes committee** takes responsibility for monitoring of attendance data and feeding back to the board.

The **Safeguarding Governor** meets with the Head Teacher each term to discuss and monitor any individual or whole school welfare issues including attendance.

At Boughton Primary, our Attendance Team comprises: the Head Teacher, the Senior Attendance Champion and the Attendance Officer.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Delegating day-to-day responsibilities to the Attendance Officer (e.g. reviewing leave of absence requests)
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Deciding when intervention is needed (stage 4 to stage 6) and arranging this, supporting the attendance team to fulfil any statutory duties in this area, including authorising referrals to the Local Authority.
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance
The designated senior leader (also known as the 'Senior Attendance Champion') works in partnership with the Head Teacher, to:

- Lead, champion and improve attendance across the school, following the school's vision of good attendance for every child
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence, making sure they are followed by all staff
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Officer to monitor concerns and progress in attendance
- Meet termly with the Attendance Team to monitor actions and next steps
- Join yearly meetings with the Attendance Team and SASO
- Report to the Learning and Outcomes Committee regarding attendance data analysis and the success of any initiatives or actions
- Support the Attendance Team in liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, including involvement in Stages 4, 5 & 6 of the policy, where needed

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Mrs Jodie Hartwell.**

The Attendance Officer
The school Attendance Officer works in partnership with the Head Teacher and Senior Attendance Champion, to:

- Support teachers/teaching assistance with the correct coding of attendance
- Monitor individual attendance, liaising with school staff to identify concerns (Stage 2)
- Telephone or meet with parents to discuss attendance and liaise with staff to initiate early intervention (Stage 3)
- Meet regularly with the Senior Attendance Champion to monitor concerns and progress in attendance
- Meet termly with the Attendance Team to monitor actions, next steps and follow up as required by the Head Teacher
- Report yearly to the Local Authority's School Attendance Support Service (SASS) and join meetings with the school's allocated officer (SASO) to tackle persistent absence and irregular attendance
- Support the Attendance Team in liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, including involvement in Stages 4, 5 & 6, where needed, and any administration required by the Head Teacher.

The Attendance Officer is **Mrs Natalie Cullum**.

Class teachers
Class teachers or delegated teaching assistants are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see appendices) and submitting this information to the school office via SIMS, by 9.10a.m. or 1.10p.m. for the morning or afternoon session, respectively.
Class teacher or delegated teaching assistants will ensure that attendance messages are reiterated to parents, by giving them absence forms to complete rather than accepting requests for leaves of absence at the doors or gate.

Any direct communication to class teachers (e.g. via email) regarding pupil absence will be communicated immediately to the school office.

The Office Team
The office team take calls and emails from parents about absence and record information on SIMS, using the correct codes.
The office team are able to over-ride information on SIMS when there is an update regarding pupil absence or attendance, to ensure that absences are recorded appropriately when authorised or unauthorised.
The office team liaises with class teachers, teaching assistants, and the attendance team, as and when needed.

All staff
All staff record any safeguarding concerns related to attendance/absence on My Concern, with support from senior staff if needed, which is followed up by the DSLs.

Parents, Pupils and Home-School Partnership
Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care; securing regular attendance is part of this responsibility. Non-attendance can be closely linked to disengagement, and even anti-social behaviour.
This responsibility requires the school and home to work closely together; to this end, we ask parents and carers to:

1. **Ensure that their child arrives on time** for morning and afternoon school; register is at 9am. Persistent lateness over time has the same impact on learning as persistent absence. It is imperative that parents and carers do everything in their power to secure their child's punctuality;
2. **Notify the school on the first day of absence**, before 9.00a.m., and keep the school informed during the period of absence;
3. **Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns** they have about their child's attitude to school that may be impacting their attendance;
4. **Provide the school with more than one emergency contact** for their child/ren;
5. **Ensure that appointments are made out of school hours;**
6. **Work in partnership with the school** by engaging with any support offered to maximise their child/ren's attendance.

In return the school will:

1. **Contact parents/carers on day one of absence** if no message has been received from home (known as first day response);
2. **Contact parents/carers as soon as we are beginning to become concerned** about their child's attendance.
3. **Follow up promptly any concerns that parents pass on to us** that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in, school;
4. **Regularly remind pupils** of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
5. **Ensure that parents/carers understand that attendance and punctuality is their responsibility** and not their child's as in most cases children have limited power over their arrival time at school and attendance;
6. **Follow the procedures and processes within this policy,** if attendance is a cause for concern. This includes making referrals to West Northamptonshire Council.

The children have a part to play in our partnership too, although we recognise that attendance can be out of their control. We expect the children to aspire to our high expectations for all and believe that good habits can be fostered early in life.

School procedures at Stage 1

Attendance register

By law, all schools must keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

The attendance register is taken at the start of the first session (9a.m.) and second session (1p.m.) each school day. This is done electronically using SIMS.

The attendance register will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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
- See Appendices for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age: whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Details of the school day at Boughton Primary:

Timings: Morning	**What happens**
8.40a.m.	Playground gate opens (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) Classroom doors open (Years 3 to 6)
8.55a.m.	Classroom doors and gate close
9.00a.m.	Registration for all classes
9-9.10a.m.	Pupils arriving after registration begins at 9a.m. but before registration closes at 9.10a.m. are marked L (late before close of register)
After 9.10a.m.	Pupils arriving after registration closes at 9.10a.m. are marked U (late after close of register), which *counts as an unauthorised absence for the morning session*.
Timings: Afternoon	**What happens**
1p.m.	Registration for the afternoon session. Pupils need to be present for the full afternoon session. A present mark at 1p.m. followed by early collection before the end of the school day *counts as an absence for the whole session*.
3.20p.m.	End of school day for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
3.30p.m.	End of school day for Years 3 to 6

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9a.m. or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents need to make DIRECT CONTACT with the school office, either by telephone, email or via the school website, as outlined below.

HOW TO CONTACT THE SCHOOL
We ask that parents contact school by 9a.m. to report absence, either **telephone: 01604 842322 or email: admin@boughtonacademy.co.uk**
Please do not pass messages on via other parents, through personal contact to staff or at the gate; ***we need direct contact from the child's parent or carer to the school office***. This is to ensure the safety of your children, so that we have a record of their whereabouts if they are not here.
If we have not heard from you by 9a.m. you will receive a telephone call from school to ascertain the reason for your child's absence.

The first ***four*** periods of absence due to ill-health will usually be authorised, unless the school has concerns about the authenticity of the illness. **After this, all absences will be unauthorised.**

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.
If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

NB: the school will use discretion in exceptional circumstances, where a child has a significant or severe health need or disability.

Absence due to parental ill-health will be unauthorised; whilst we will endeavor to be understanding of family circumstances, it is a parent's legal duty to ensure their child attends school.

Medical or dental appointments
Parents/carers need 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. Non-urgent appointments need to be made out of school hours and will not be authorised during the school day.

Punctuality and lateness
Morning session:
A pupil who arrives after registration begins (9.00a.m.) but before the register has closed (9.10a.m.) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Lates after the register has closed are marked as unauthorised absence for the session. This is because every part of the school day counts towards a child's attendance record.
Persistent lateness will be addressed initially by a conversation with parents/carers to ascertain the reasons for this. The stages of the policy will be followed for persistent lateness after registration, as this is recorded as an absence for the session and therefore will be included in the thresholds for intervention.

End of the school day
All pupils need to be collected by 3.30p.m. (3.20p.m. in Reception and Key Stage One).
Early collection counts as an absence for the afternoon session, and is usually unauthorised.

Late collection can cause a child considerable distress. We ask that parents/carers inform the school if they are going to be late so that their child/ren can be advised. This often helps to alleviate a child's anxiety.

- After 15 minutes, children not collected will be brought to the office and a telephone call will be made to the 1st Contact, followed, if no response, by all other contacts in numerical order.
- If there is no response, the child/ren will be taken to after-school club and parents will be charged for using this facility.
- If we have heard nothing from parents/carers by 5p.m. school staff will need to contact the MASH team (0300 126 1000) and possibly the police.

Following up absence
The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is authorised or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Where a pupil we expect to attend does not arrive at school by the end of registration, without reason, we will call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.

If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts during the morning of an unexplained absence, we will:

- Log the absence on My Concern
- Attempt a home visit
- Contact MASH and/or the police, as appropriate, if no contact has been made

The process will be repeated for each day of unexplained absence.

If absences are a cause for concern, support will be offered to try and maximise pupil attendance (Stage 3). Sometimes a conversation between the school and home is enough to deal with any concerns before they become big issues.

Early intervention may take the form of meet and greet for a pupil, some additional support or mentoring by the teacher or a teaching assistant.

Reporting to parents
The Attendance Champion writes to all parents each term, with a summary of attendance across the school. Where a pupil has irregular attendance, we will write to parents as soon as we become concerned and will provide a copy of their child's attendance record.

We report to parents at the end of the school year and enclose their child's attendance record with their annual report.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Term-time absence
The over-riding expectation for school staff and parents must be that EVERY school day matters and any absence results in missed learning.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum: routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours, without the need to collect children early from school.

Exceptional circumstances

The Head Teacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad*
- Attending an interview, e.g. for entry into another educational institution
- Study leave for public examinations, agreed in advance*
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable. This can only be for 6 weeks before returning to full time.

**some of the criteria apply to secondary schools.*

Schools can grant a leave of absence for other "exceptional circumstances" at their discretion, requested in advance by the parent with whom the child normally lives. Schools are expected to consider each application individually by taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

A request for a leave of absence form (see appendices) must be submitted in advance. This is available from the school office.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school (i.e. how long is authorised). **However, the majority requests will be returned as unauthorised.** A leave of absence that may have been otherwise granted can be declined if the pupil's attendance record is below 96% (as defined – regular attendance).

Generally the Department for Education does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.
Therefore Boughton Primary School NEVER authorises term-time holidays.

Schools are able to allow pupils of non-compulsory school age to be absent for sessions they are not timetabled to attend (e.g. a part-time timetable or staggered start for a child under the age of 5).

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) – authorised for up to 4 occasions across the school year
- Scheduled hospital appointments
- Emergency medical or dental appointments, or those which can't be made out of school time (e.g. blood tests, orthodontist)
- Religious observance – where the day is **exclusively set apart** for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Unauthorised absences are those where there is not an acceptable explanation for the absence and it doesn't fall into one of the authorised categories above.

Legal sanctions
The school can refer parents to West Northamptonshire School Attendance Support Service, for consideration of legal action, due to the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. See Stage 6: Enforce.

Providing learning activities during periods of absence.

The school will **not** provide any work or learning tasks for children during periods of unauthorised absence, including injury/illness when the child's attendance is already below 96%, and will never provide remote learning when families take term-time holidays. By providing work, the school would in effect be authorising the absence.

The school will consider providing pupils with remote education for exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis, but ONLY if the absence is **authorised.**

Strategies for promoting attendance

At Boughton Primary School, we believe that good attendance is an expectation rather than something to be rewarded. The benefits of attending regularly, apart from those mentioned earlier, include children being able to be included in special experiences and activities.

Good attendance is something that may be out of the control of children, depending on their own health or family's circumstances. For that reason, we do not give individual awards for attendance; instead, the class with the best overall attendance each term earns a treat e.g. a mufti day.

Stage 2: Monitor

Attendance monitoring

The attendance team monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis and meets at least monthly to discuss issues and concerns.

We have the support of a School Attendance Support Officer (SASO) from West Northamptonshire Council. They review our data yearly and discuss any concerns or issues with us. They may become directly involved where there are ongoing issues with a child's attendance, for example, by contacting the parents or attending a meeting in school.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The threshold for "good" attendance is above 96%.
It is important to note that 96% still indicates 8 school days (16 sessions) missed in a full school year. Ideally, the aspirational aim should be that our children are attending **every day**, and **arriving on time** and ready to learn.

During this monitoring stage any parent with a pupil with attendance below 96% will be provided with their child's attendance data and told they are being monitored by the attendance team.

As soon as concerns arise, we will move to the INTERVENTION stages of our policy:

Stage 3: Listen and understand

Parents will be contacted for a conversation, either by telephone or face-to-face, to explore the barriers to good attendance and reasons for absence. Where possible, this will be a joined up process; the initial contact could be made by the attendance officer, with a follow-up conversation involving the class teacher. In this way, changes can be actioned which may be sufficient to support improved attendance.

Stage 4: Facilitate

Where the initial conversation(s) have not had the required impact, and attendance difficulties persist, we move to stage 4. A letter will be sent to the parents, inviting them into a meeting at school to set up a Family Help Assessment. This allows for multi-agency support in tackling the barriers to good attendance, e.g. health, additional needs, emotional support.

Stage 5: Formalise

Where stages 3 and 4 have not been successful, or if there is non-engagement at stage 4, we move to stage 5. This involves formalising targets and support within an Attendance Contract. A time limit is placed upon necessary improvements, with targets for school and home to meet. The expectation will be that the pupil's attendance is at least 96% for a set period of time, from the start of the contract. Regular reviews and meetings are organised to promote the success of the contract.

If there is continued non-engagement with the support on offer, the school will consider asking the local authority to issue a **Notice to Improve**.
This gives parents a final chance to engage with support.
Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the West Northamptonshire.

A final period of improvement is set, with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, decided on a case-by-case basis. A timeframe is set (usually between 3 and 6 weeks) and the grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued are set out, which can take place at or before the end of the improvement period.

After the school has exhausted avenues of support, or in the case of a term-time absence, we move to the final stage of the framework: stage 6.

Stage 6: Enforce

The school makes a referral to West Northamptonshire School Attendance Support Service, asking them to consider legal action: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework, or prosecution, to protect the child's right to an education.

Criteria for referral:

- Absence for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a rolling period of 10 school weeks
- An unauthorised period of 10 sessions (5 days) or more as a result of a requested leave of absence (usually a term-time holiday).

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This could include:

- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.

- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

APPENDIX 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's current guidance for school attendance.

Code	Definition	Explanation
Present – all count as present mark on register		
/	Present (a.m.)	Pupil is present at the start of morning registration (9a.m.)
\	Present (p.m.)	Pupil is present at the start of afternoon registration (1p.m.)
L	Late arrival	The pupil is absent from school when the attendance register begins, but attends before registration ends.
B	Approved off-site educational activity	The pupil is attending a place for any other approved educational activity, arranged by the school, that is not a sporting activity or work experience.
K	Other educational provision	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the 1996 Act (exceptional provision of education) or section 42(2) or 61(1) of the 2014 Act (exceptional provision of education), e.g. unregistered Alternative Provision.
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity, arranged by the school that is a sporting activity.
V	Educational trip or visit	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.
Authorised Absence (absent with leave – requests must be applied for in advance)		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil is absent with leave (exceptional circumstances).
C1	Performance or employment	Pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because, in accordance with an agreement between a parent who they normally live with and the school that the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis, their timetable does not require them to attend.
D	Dual registration	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending another school at which they are a registered pupil.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Pupil is suspended or permanently excluded from school on disciplinary grounds with no alternative provision.
I	Illness	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).
J1	Interview	Pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment. See notes below.
Q	Access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements for them.
R	Religious observance	The day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent of the pupil belongs (not the parents themselves).
S	Study leave	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child, their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with that parent.
X	Part-time table: not of compulsory school age	Pupil is not of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend.
Y1	Local authority transport	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from school that is *normally* provided for the pupil by the school/local authority is not available.
Y2	Local, national or international emergency	The pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency.
Y3	Partial closure of school premises	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those who the school considers cannot be practicably accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use.
Y4	Full, unplanned closure of school premises	Pupil is unable to attend due to the school closing unexpectedly (e.g. adverse weather).

Y5	Criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend because they are in criminal justice detention.
Y6	Infection control	The pupil is well enough to attend but there are government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease, which say they should not attend. The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be: (a) Contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care; (b) Prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.
Y7	Unavoidable absence – emergency	The pupil is unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause that affects the pupil, not just the parent.
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register has been set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole/partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/ INSET day
Unauthorised Absence (absent without leave) NB: A leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively.		
G	Term time holiday	The pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.
N	Reason not yet known	The circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established.
O	Other or unknown circumstances.	No reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes classified as authorised.
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed but before the end of the session.

APPENDIX 2: The Impact of Persistent Absence

There are 190 school days each year, where children are required to attend school, each with two sessions a day, which adds up to 380 registration sessions.

This means there are 175 days (weekends and school holidays) for shopping, birthday treats, non-urgent medical and dental appointments and family holidays.

If a child misses 16 days of school in a year, then s/he spends more time out of school than in school (191 days out, 174 in).

If a child misses one day a week for their entire school life (ages 4-16) it is equivalent to missing 2 entire years of school.

The table below shows the potential impact:

% Attendance	School days a year attended	% Absence	School days a year missed	School weeks a year missed	Over 5 years, entire school years missed
100	190	0	0	0	0
90	171	10	19	4	0.5 (6 months)
80	152	20	38	8	1
70	133	30	57	12	1.5
60	114	40	76	15	2
50	95	50	95	19	2.5
40	76	60	114	23	3
30	57	70	133	27	3.5
20	38	80	152	30	4
10	19	90	171	34	4.5

APPENDIX 3: Attendance Policy Stage 3 - Listen and Understand

BOUGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Record of Telephone Conversation re: Attendance

Child's name and class:
Parent's name:
Date of conversation:
Current attendance (attach SIMS print out)

Explain reason for call: I am phoning to advise you that we are concerned about your child's attendance. What can the school do to help?
Notes from conversation:
Agreed actions:
Agreement:
Attendance needs to be 96%+ from the date of the call onwards. If it continues to fall, this will trigger a meeting with the Attendance Team and a Parent Contract will be established.
Signed:
Counter-signature of Head Teacher:
Cc: Pupil file Parent School Attendance file
Date of review by Attendance Team:
Notes:
Further action:

APPENDIX 4: Attendance Policy Stage 4 - Facilitate

Boughton Primary School

An Academy

Moulton Lane,
Boughton,
Northampton.
NN2 8RG
Tel: (01604) 842322

Email:
admin@boughtonacademy.co.uk

Head Teacher:
Mary James BEd (Hons)
Senior Leaders:
Jodie Hartwell (Deputy Head)
Elaine Webster (School Business Manager)

To the parents of
ADDRESS

DATE 2024
Our ref: stage4/facilitate/initials

Dear SALUTATION

Further to your telephone conversation with Mrs Cullum, I am writing to update you regarding <FORENAME'S> attendance which is **<percentage_attendance>%** this year and **<percentage_attendance>%** over the past 10 weeks. The attached attendance register shows the authorised and unauthorised absences.

As you will be aware, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives their entitlement to a full-time education. New government guidance has been issued this year, requiring schools to take a robust approach to maximising every child's attendance. We have updated our policy to reflect this. Details regarding the school's definition of irregular attendance can be found overleaf.

We would like to work together with you, to address any barriers to attendance. This will involve multi-agency working, where we explore the support that your child or your family need to maximise attendance.

Therefore, we are inviting you to a meeting, to set up a **Family Help Assessment**. It is intended to be supportive enabling us to work in partnership to ensure that your child has the best possible chance of a full-time education, whilst also addressing any other concerns or issues there may be. We need your consent to proceed with a Family Help Assessment. There is information enclosed about this process.

The initial meeting will take place on TUESDAY _____ at 9a.m. Present at the meeting will be Mrs Cullum, Attendance Officer; Mrs Hartwell, Senior Attendance Champion; and Mrs James, Head Teacher.

Please confirm your attendance at this meeting by emailing admin@boughtonacademy.co.uk

I need to make you aware that, should you decide not to consent, or if you do not attend the meeting/make arrangements with the school for a further meeting, we will move to stage 5 of our policy, where support is formalised. This involves setting up an Attendance Contract. Failure to meet the requirements of the contract will result in the considering a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action, in line with our policy. Further information is overleaf.

I look forward to hearing from you and working in partnership to secure the best possible outcomes for your child.

Yours sincerely
signature
Mary James
Head Teacher

'Excellence through Effort and Enjoyment'

Back of Stage 4 letter

What do we mean by "regular attendance"?
We define regular (good) attendance as at or above 96% in a given period, which could be a full school year or a 10-week period in one academic year or across academic years. This is only measured over a period when attendance is possible, i.e. term-time.

What do we mean by "irregular attendance"?
If a child is absent for an accumulative total of 5 days (10 sessions) or more over a period of 10 school weeks, the school deems this as irregular attendance in line with local and national guidance.

The stages of our Attendance Policy

STAGE 1: EXPECT
Our expectation mirrors the national aspiration of high standards of attendance from all pupils, building a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn.

Our minimum expectation for attendance is 96%.
Most requests for a leave of absence in term-time will be unauthorised and term-time holidays are never authorised, no matter the reason given.

STAGE 2: MONITOR
We will rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (for individuals and across the school) as soon as possible so that all parties can work together to resolve difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

STAGE 3: LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND
When a pattern is spotted, we will discuss with parents and pupils to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how we can work in partnership to resolve them. This may be via a telephone conversation or face-to-face meeting.

STAGE 4: FACILITATE SUPPORT
We will do all we can to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents access the support they need to overcome barriers outside of school. We will offer a Family Help Assessment with access to additional agency support.

STAGE 5: FORMALISE SUPPORT
Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working, or there is a lack of engagement, we will work with our partner agencies to explain the consequences clearly to parents and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. This will include formal support through an Attendance Contract, Notice to Improve or Education Supervision Order.

STAGE 6: ENFORCE
Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or there is non-engagement, we will enforce attendance through statutory intervention. We will refer to the Local Authority to consider legal action, which could include:

A Penalty Notice payable of up to £160 fine.
Prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1000.

Prosecution under s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

APPENDIX 5a: Attendance Policy Stage 5 - Formalise

Boughton Primary School
An Academy

ATTENDANCE CONTRACT

Date and time of meeting		
Chair of Meeting		
Others present/roles		

<u>Purpose of Agreement:</u> **To improve the above pupil's school attendance record and avoid legal action being taken.**

Pupil and family details					
Pupil's name:			**Pupil's D.O.B.**		**Y_**
Pupil's address:	**Post Code**		**Pupil's ethnicity:**		
Parent 1 – name:			**Parent's D.O.B.**		
Parent 1 address (if different to child)			**Parent 1 ethnicity:**		
Parent 1: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	**No**	**Yes – give details**	**Parent 1 gender:**		
Parent 2 – name:			**Parent 2 D.O.B.**		
Parent 2 address (if different to child)			**Parent 2 ethnicity**		
Parent 2: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	**No**	**Yes – give details**	**Parent 2 gender:**		

Please include all those with parental responsibility including those who have day to day care for the child.

Sibling 1: name		**D.O.B.**		**School**	
Sibling 2: name		**D.O.B.**		**School**	
Sibling 3: name		**D.O.B.**		**School**	

Are there any attendance issues with these children?

SUMMARY OF INVOLVEMENT **Dates from to**	
Listen and understand: calls or conversations	
Letters from school	
Home visits	
Facilitate support: Family Help Assessment	
Meetings	
School has made you aware of your legal responsibilities in relation to this matter via the following means:	**Attendance policy on website, paper copy available on request** **Attendance leaflet** **Letter(s) home**
If you are unsure of your legal responsibilities, this meeting is intended to ensure that you now have a clear understanding.	
<u>YOUR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES</u> *Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at schools is, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996,* ***a legal requirement,*** *parents being responsible for ensuring that any 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. *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 school year in which the pupil becomes 16.*

MULTI-AGENCY INVOLVEMENT		
Are any agencies currently involved with either parent or with the family?	**NO** **Offer EHA**	**YES** **Give details**
If FHA is declined, give reasons:		

VOICE OF THE CHILD
Summary of young person's strengths
Young person's views

Summary of Areas of Concern:					
Attendance in last ____ weeks ____out of _____ = _____% Attendance ___% Un.Abs					
Issues Raised	**YES**	**NO**	**Issues Raised**	**YES**	**NO**
1.Alleged Bullying			**5.Peer/Staff relationships**		
2.Medical			**6.Academic**		
3.Home related difficulties			**7.Behaviour/Attitude**		
4.Transport			**8.Community/other**		

Areas of concern identified – please describe their impact upon attendance.

Agreed Action:- We agree to address the following target areas for improvement in attendance and/or punctuality and to co-operate fully within these aims:
Please include actions for all (where appropriate) and ensure these are clear with who is carrying out action and timescales.

Action point	ACTION	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
1.	**Attendance between now and Review Date – minimum 96%**	**Parents**
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

If I am concerned about my aspect of the delivery of the plan I will contact _____immediately.

Review meeting (within 10 school weeks)

Date: _____ Time: _____ Venue: _____

If the targets are met within the 10 week period, this contract will be reviewed. If there is significant improvement and support has been put in place that needs to be monitored the contract can be extended with a review within a further 10 weeks.

The attendance team will agree at the review meeting whether the contract needs to continue, even if targets have been met.

However, if the targets are not met and there is no legitimate reason for the non-attendance then a contact will be submitted to the Local Authority Education Inclusion Partnership Service. This may result in:

- **A Fixed Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine for each parent**

Alternatively you may be subject to proceedings by way of:

- **Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.**
- **Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £*2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment*.**

SIGNATURES OF ALL INVOLVED WITH THIS CONTRACT	
PARENTS' SIGNATURES Parent 1	
Parent 2	
HEAD TEACHER	
SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES	
PUPIL	
OTHERS	

APPENDIX 5b – Attendance Policy Stage 5: Formalise
ISSUING A NOTICE TO IMPROVE

In line with the working together to improve school attendance guidance, West Northamptonshire Council will prioritise the 'support first' approach expecting that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is appropriate.

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve may be issued to give parents a final chance to engage in support.

The length of the period of improvement will be 4 school weeks. What sufficient improvement will look like will be decided on a case-by-case basis considering a child and family's circumstances.

A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact. A Notice to Improve is not appropriate in cases where a term time absence has been taken.

The School Attendance Support Service will issue the Notice to Improve via a referral from schools using the report a child with attendance issues online form below and provide the requested documentation. At the end of the improvement period, school will be contacted to provide an update on attendance to allow the LA to consider whether proportionate support has been offered, the impact of the support offered and whether to issue the penalty notice.

The School Attendance Support Service will inform the school referrer of the outcome and issue the penalty notice if this is the action decided. Before a penalty notice is issued, school will need to provide S9 witness statement, if this is not provided the School Attendance Support service will not proceed with legal action.

APPENDIX 5c: Request for Leave of Absence Form (Exceptional)

BOUGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Request for a Leave of Absence: Exceptional Circumstances

PART 1: PARENT TO COMPLETE

Please read and tick.

I/we understand that term time holidays are never authorised.	
I /we understand that very few requests for a leave of absence will be approved, as very few circumstances when attendance is expected will be considered exceptional.	
I/we understand that a referral to West Northamptonshire could result in legal action: A Penalty Notice payable of up to £160 fine. Prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1000. Prosecution under s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.	

Child's name and class:				
I request permission for the above-named child to be allowed to have a leave of absence for:				
Start date:		Morning	Afternoon	All day
End date:		Morning	Afternoon	All day
Please give more information about dates/times here (e.g. exact times if known):				
Please state below, the "exceptional circumstances" that necessitate a leave of absence from school in term time :				
Signature of Parent/Guardian: **Printed Name of Parent/Guardian:** **Date:**				

Reverse of form - Additional guidance for Parents and Carers re: Leave of Absence Requests

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at schools is, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, a legal requirement, parents being responsible for ensuring that any 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.

The 2024 guidance "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" expects schools to promote the benefits of good attendance. At Boughton Primary, we define good attendance as at least 96% or above, within a given timeframe (a school year or ten week rolling period).

The Head Teacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad*
- Attending an interview, e.g. for entry into another educational institution
- Study leave for public examinations, agreed in advance*
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable. This can not be longer than 6 weeks before returning to full time.

**some of the criteria apply mainly to secondary schools.*

Schools can grant a leave of absence for other "exceptional circumstances" at their discretion, requested in advance by the parent with whom the child normally lives. Schools are expected to consider each application individually by taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Please note that, if a child's attendance is already below 96%, we will not grant a leave of absence, regardless of the circumstances.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include (but are not limited to):

- Medical/dental appointments that cannot routinely be taken at another time (e.g. orthodontist), emergency appointments, hospital appointments. The school will ask for evidence of appointments, wherever possible (e.g. text message, letter).
- Religious observance – where the day is **exclusively set apart** for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart: the school can only record one day using this attendance code; any additional time requires a leave of absence, granted at the school's discretion.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller 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.
- Other approved educational activities, e.g. assessment by specialist services, transition days etc.

Having decided the criteria, based on local and national guidance, the Head Teacher delegates reviewing each request to the Attendance Officer, who decides if it meets the criteria for authorisation.

Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has been granted an authorised leave of absence during term-time.

Appendix 5d: Reply to Leave of Absence request

PART 2: ATTENDANCE OFFICER TO COMPLETE

Outcome: Authorised **AUTHORISED AT THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER'S DISCRETION, AS DELEGATED BY THE HEAD TEACHER, IN LINE WITH DfE GUIDELINES**	Tick
Emergency medical appointment	
Hospital scheduled appointment or treatment	
A single day exclusively for religious observance	
Approved educational activity e.g. visit to a new school, entrance examination	
Other approved exceptional circumstances (Attendance Officer to complete):	
Outcome: Unauthorised	Tick
Term-time holiday ***All** term-time holidays will be unauthorised.*	
Leaving school early	
Routine doctor/dental appointment, which could be made outside school hours	
Attendance is below 96% (%) which means an absence which would usually be authorised cannot be.	
Other unauthorised absence (Attendance Officer to complete):	
Signature of Attendance Officer: **Date:**	

Irregular attendance, and/or unauthorised term-time absences, as defined in the school's policy, may result in a referral to West Northamptonshire, for consideration of legal action:

A Penalty Notice payable of up to £160 fine.

Prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1000.

Prosecution under s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

APPENDIX 6a: Attendance Policy Stage 6: Enforce

Letter from Head Teacher re: Leave of Absence request

Boughton Primary School

An Academy

Moulton Lane,
Boughton,
Northampton.
NN2 8RG
Tel: (01604) 842322

Email:
admin@boughtonacademy.co.uk

Head Teacher:
Mary James BEd (Hons)
Senior Leaders:
Jodie Hartwell (Deputy Head)
Elaine Webster (School Business Manager)

To the parents of
ADDRESS

DATE 2024
Our ref:stage6/enforce/initials

Dear SALUTATION

Child/ren's name(s)	
Dates of absence	
Reason given for absence	

With reference to your request for a leave of absence in term-time, I need to notify you that your request has not been authorised. The enclosed form explains the reasons for this.

As stated in our Attendance Policy, if your child is absent from school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of 10 weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action. This could include:

- **A Penalty Notice payable, of up to £160 fine.**
- **Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.**
- **Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.**

Should you choose to continue with the request for absence, the school will follow the processes outlined in our Attendance Policy, in line with local and national guidance. This means that we will refer to the Local Authority, who may take legal action, as outlined above.

Yours sincerely,
signature

Mary James
Head Teacher

APPENDIX 6b: Stage 6 – Enforce

Penalty Notice (PN) Request Checklist

Before completing form

- ☐ Has the period for which the PN is requested been recorded as unauthorised?
- ☐ Are there any missing marks or coding irregularities?
- ☐ Does coding on the register accurately reflect the dates for which the PN is being requested?
- ☐ Is the reason for the request indicated on the form eg unauthorised holiday or unauthorised absence?
- ☐ Have the parents/carers been informed that they could receive a PN.

Criteria for issuing PN

- Term time absence - 5 days or more continuous
- Irregular attendance – 10 sessions of unauthorised attendance within a 10 week period

Documentation to accompany term time absence request

- ☐ School non-attendance S.9 school witness statement
- ☐ Completed contact form
- ☐ Pupil registration
- ☐ 10 week attendance record
- ☐ Year to date attendance record
- ☐ School's attendance policy
- ☐ Copy of request for leave of absence received from parent/carer and signed by all relevant parents or carers and any letter pertaining to that request
- ☐ Signed evidence that school have informed parent or carer in writing that the absence will be unauthorised and that this could lead to a PN being issued. Reasons for not authorising the holiday should be clearly stated to the parent or carer.

If a Leave of Absence Request Form has not been completed by parent or carer

- ☐ Evidence as to why the school believe that the absence was for the purpose of a leave of absence
- ☐ Signed copy of letter to parent from the head teacher stating that the absence will be coded as unauthorised as it is believed to be for the purposes of a leave of absence without exceptional circumstance and that this could lead to a PN being issued.

Documentation to accompany irregular attendance request

- ☐ Completed contact form
- ☐ 10 week attendance record
- ☐ Evidence of actions taken:
    - Letters issued
    - Notes of meetings held
    - Attendance meeting
    - Chronology
    - Offer of Family Help Assessment (EHA)
- ☐ Evidence that the parent or carer has been notified that they may receive a PN (this can be within documentation of school website, in behaviour policy, in newsletters to parents, etc)

Completing contact form

- Parents' full name and surname – please include parents' date of birth where known
- If there are two parents, details of both parents should be completed
- Address should be checked
- The contact form should only be submitted once the child has returned to school – if the child fails to return, then the school should follow their missing child procedures
- Documentation provided by the school which supports the request for a PN by the Local Authority can be used as evidence should any legal action be taken – all cases where there is non-payment of the PN would be considered for a prosecution under s.444 of the Education Act 1996.
- In the event that the case proceeds to a prosecution, the person completing the S9 witness statement may be required to give evidence in court.

FAQs – S9 witness statements

Are statements required for each individual parent and child?

Provided the school are satisfied that both parents and children live at the same address they can be included in one statement. However, the statement will still need to set out all the evidence required to prove an offence in respect of each parent and each individual child. Care will need to be taken to ensure it is clear which child and parent the school is referring to. The offence will still need to be proven in relation to each child's attendance separate from their sibling.

Who can complete the S9 witness statement?

The Head Teacher or a member of school staff authorised by the Head Teacher.

Can the template S9 witness statement be used for both term time absence and irregular attendance?

Yes. The version provided to schools can be adapted to cover all absence reasons.

Why are schools required to complete the S9 witness statement?

The elements of an irregular attendance offence are:

a. A child of compulsory school age
b. Who is registered at school
c. Fails to attend regularly, according to the attendance rules of the school at which they are registered

Due to the rules of criminal evidence, a local authority cannot prove any of those elements on behalf of a school simply because they have been told about them. That includes exhibiting registration and attendance certificates provided to them by a school. An FPN can be offered as an alternative to a criminal prosecution for an offence by a local authority, but only if it believes that sufficient evidence exists to prove that offence to the criminal standard. Schools are therefore not referring the parents of children to a local authority for an FPN to be issued. They are referring them to the local authority because they believe a criminal offence has been committed.

The point of this process is to standardise it as far as possible for both schools and the council and ensure that no person is unlawfully convicted of a criminal offence (e.g. on evidence which was inadmissible because of the rule against hearsay evidence in criminal proceedings), by asking schools to submit the minimum required to obtain a safe conviction in the event of issue and non-payment of an alternative to prosecution for an irregular attendance offence.

Why do schools need to provide their attendance policy?

The 2017 Supreme Court decision explicitly and clearly stated that a local authority cannot lawfully determine what is "irregular". Only a school can lawfully do that. School's attendance policy should

set out what they define as irregular attendance and this needs to be exhibited to prove the offence. They should also state their attendance expectation.

APPENDIX 7– FURTHER CLARIFICATION FROM WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT SERVICE, REGARDING LEGAL ACTION

1. The primary responsibility for the issuing of Penalty Notices will rest with the Local Authority in the WNC area. The School Attendance Support Service ("SAS service") of WNC will therefore issue Penalty Notices in West Northamptonshire. This ensures consistency and will prevent conflict with other enforcement sanctions.
2. Although professionals other than those within the Local Authority (e.g., Head Teachers, the Police etc.) are accredited persons within the legislation, able to issue Penalty Notices, there is no requirement for them to do so. It has been agreed that the Police will not issue Penalty Notices in the WNC area.

If a Head Teacher feels it is appropriate for a Penalty Notice to be issued, they must refer to the WNC SAS Service. This will avoid a Penalty Notice being issued when the SAS Service has already charged a person with an offence under section 444 (1) of the Act, where a Penalty Notice is not deemed an appropriate form of intervention and will prevent duplicate penalty notices being issued.

Considerations prior to the issue of a Penalty Notice for school absence

1. Where difficulties arise with school attendance, professionals should take a 'support first' approach in line with the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance, only resorting to legal enforcement when necessary. The aim is that the need for legal enforcement is reduced by taking a supportive approach to tackle the barriers to attendance and intervening early before absence becomes entrenched.
2. The Local Authority may, where appropriate, seek to utilise alternative intervention to prosecution, such as but not limited to;

- Referral to Social Care, where wider contextual concerns are identified.
- Referral to wider support services, where such support is likely to be effective, has not been attempted or is deemed necessary.
- Issuing a notification of a formal warning, valid for a 12-month period.
- Using a Notice to Improve where support is appropriate but not working or being engaged with, to give a parent/carer a final opportunity to engage in support before they are issued with a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction if it is appropriate in the individual case.

3. In cases where the national threshold is met and support is appropriate, that support should be continued or provided straightaway. In most cases this support is provided at school level and should start early when absence issues are first detected.

4. In deciding whether support is appropriate or not, the school and WNC (and police, if involved) will consider whether the cause of the absence is something for which support could be provided. If support could be provided, the school and WNC will then consider what suitable forms of support are currently available in school and where necessary by other services and agencies in the local area.

They will then decide whether any or all of those things are appropriate in the individual case and for those that are appropriate, whether they have been provided previously or could be provided or continued instead of taking legal action.

5. In determining whether support offered is sufficient, the SAS Service will consider the following:

- The school has considered a Family Help Assessment. If a Family Help Assessment is in place, a referral for tier 3 support is considered and actioned.
- The school has first held attendance meetings, including adequate monitoring periods.

- The school has held an attendance meeting, identifying and addressing concerns raised.
- Appropriate assessments, or referral for assessment, have been completed.
- External support agencies have been consulted.
- Schools have considered the use of a Notice to Improve.

6. Support can be any activity intended to improve the child's attendance not including issuing a Penalty Notice or prosecution. Examples of support include action taken in school such as written communications to parents and meetings with parents and pupils to understand barriers and plan targeted support together.

The form of support will be specific to the pupil and family and could include a range of actions including additional learning support, moving tutor group or school uniform provision. Some support would involve the local authority or other community services such as a family help assessment and support, transport provision or housing support.

The Notice to improve will be issued by the Local Authority and remain in place for 4 weeks, monitored by the school. Where improvement is shown but is not yet at the required level, a further 2 week monitoring period may be agreed if deemed appropriate, though will not exceed a total of 6 weeks.

8. A Penalty Notice may be issued before the expiration of the 4 week Notice period where no improvement/engagement is evidenced or where further unauthorised absences occur. The school do not need to wait for the initial period to elapse to refer to the Local Authority.

For further information:

West Northamptonshire Attendance Enforcement Policy

West Northamptonshire Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices