# Westcliff Primary Academy
# Attendance Policy
# 2026-2027

## Introduction

Westcliff Primary Academy is committed to maintaining high standards of attendance to ensure every pupil fully accesses the educational, social, and developmental opportunities available to them. Evidence demonstrates a direct link between regular school attendance and pupil outcomes; pupils who achieve higher attainment levels by the end of Key Stage 2 consistently demonstrate significantly higher overall attendance rates throughout their primary education than those with lower attainment levels.

In accordance with statutory requirements, every child of compulsory school age is legally entitled to receive an efficient, full-time education tailored to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Parents and carers hold the primary legal responsibility to ensure their child receives this education, either through regular attendance at school or via registered alternative provision.

Where parents or carers choose to register their child at Westcliff Primary Academy, they assume a statutory duty under education law to ensure their child attends regularly. Regular attendance requires the pupil to be present on every day the academy is open for instruction, with exceptions permitted only under strict legal provisions, such as documented illness or pre-authorised leave of absence granted in advance by the Headteacher.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to promote children's welfare and safeguarding:

- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It has been developed in consultation with the Local Authority and seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of parents and carers, Schools and Local Authorities to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6ac3c09c11ed58342ad8e4ac/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2026.pdf

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Building strong relationships and working jointly with our families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Setting high expectations for every pupil and communicating those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parent/carers
- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance to ensure our school is a place our pupils want to attend
- Accurately completing admission and attendance registers and having effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, the local authority, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Being particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and providing them with additional support.

## Promoting Regular Attendance

At Westcliff Academy, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day-to-day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The name and contact details of the Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:
Mrs Vanderwal (DHT/ DSL)
Contact Details: n.vanderwal@westcliff.fcat.org.uk

SENDCO - Miss Hazlewood

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Expect high standards of attendance from all pupils and parent/carers and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
- Monitor attendance data rigorously to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
- Be alert to any pattern of absence and address pupils and parents/carers. Listen and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- Facilitate support to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include Family Help or a whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
- Formalise support where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or Education Supervision Order.
- Enforce attendance through statutory intervention where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, which may include a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.
- Ensure robust governance oversight by presenting attendance data and trend analysis to the Local Governing Body on a termly basis, enabling governors to rigorously scrutinise attendance, challenge emerging patterns of absence (including persistent and severe absence), and hold school leaders to account for attendance outcomes across all pupil cohorts.

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parents/carer's responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority Pupil Welfare Service, for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however, this list is not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session.
- Shopping trips.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parent/carers to medical appointments.
- Their own or family birthdays.
- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Day trips.
- Other leave of absence in term time, which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

The government classifies any pupil missing 10% or more of their total school sessions, whether for authorised or unauthorised reasons, as a "persistent absentee." Because absence at this level severely impacts a child's learning, schools and the Local Authority actively partner with families to deliver targeted support to overcome attendance barriers, to help families and pupils to raise their attendance. We need the full support and co-operation of parents and carers to resolve this.

The Government defines a pupil as 'severely absent if they miss 50% or more schooling'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need support that is more intensive.

Absence Procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff members which parents and carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is: Mrs Joanne Kellett or Mrs Katie Walker

Mrs Joanne Kellett
Position: Office Administrator
Phone number: 01253 353792
Email address: admin@westcliff.fcat.org.uk

Mrs Katie Walker
Position: School Business Manager
Email address: admin@westcliff.fcat.org.uk

We thoroughly monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are provided.
If a child is absent from school the parents or carers must follow these procedures:

Contact the school office on the first day of absence before *9:15 am, when our register closes;*

- The school office has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school to discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before *9:15 am.*
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence.
- Medical evidence may be requested if the school has a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of your child's illness, or if your child is at risk of persistent absence and their attendance is below 93%.
  Examples of medical evidence could include support from a GP or other health practitioner, an appointment card from a health practice, or proof of medication. The Headteacher will then consider this. For health and dental appointments, the expectation is that your child attends school either side of that unless advised otherwise.
- When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents/carers and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness Is my child too ill for school?
  https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

<u>If your child is absent, we will:</u>

- Telephone you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us.
- If we are unable to make contact with parents/carers by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.

<u>If absence continues, we will:</u>

- We will notify parents/carers and pupils when attendance drops below 97%, taking into account a child's historical attendance.
- A child whose attendance falls below 95% will miss 2 weeks of school over the year. For this reason, we will communicate further with parents/carers to share our concerns and offer support.
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion Mrs Vanderwal or Mrs Watson, our Family Support Worker.
- Create a personalised action/support plan, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child.

- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate.
- Make a request for support from Blackpool Council, Pupil Welfare Service.
- Provide the Local Authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded as unauthorised.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

Punctuality

Westcliff Primary Academy expects all pupils to arrive at school on time each day. Late arrivals disrupt valuable morning learning time and make it difficult for children to settle into their daily routine. Where a pupil arrives after the school day has begun, parents and carers will be asked to provide a valid reason for the lateness. Our pastoral support will actively engage with families to offer support and address recurring lateness. Good time keeping is a vital life skill, which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

Start and finishing times of registration**:** our gates open at 8.35am. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised and occasions of lateness should be rare. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved immediately, it can be referred to the Pupil Welfare Service.

**The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Westcliff Primary Academy are:**
Gates open: 08:35am
Registration starts: 08:45am
Registration closes: 09:15am
End of the school day: 15:15pm

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 08:35 when children can begin to come into school.

- Registers are taken at 08:45.
- Children arriving after 08:45 are required to come into school via the school office. Children should be accompanied by a parent/carer and should be signed in via our “Checkie” digital registration system, providing a reason for their lateness, which is recorded.
- At 09:15, the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – ‘U’, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence.
- The school will contact parents /carers regarding punctuality concerns.

Punctuality Expectations Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement and critical to academic progress. Westcliff Primary Academy strictly discourages late arrival to school.

In any instance of late arrival, parents/carers must submit an explanation to the school office. Poor punctuality will be monitored closely. Persistent unexplained lateness may trigger informal or formal attendance monitoring procedures.

How our school is promoting and incentivising good attendance

Excellent attendance is an expectation for all our pupils. At the same time, we will use acknowledgement, praise and rewards as an integral part of our approach to encourage high standards and improvement.

- We will praise and reward all classes with 100% attendance each week.
- We will praise and acknowledge pupils with 100% attendance each term.
- We will praise and reward pupils who significantly improve their attendance.
- The Trust will recognise excellent attendance, including significant progress, annually.

At Westcliff Primary Academy, we recognise that establishing strong attendance habits begins from a child's very first day in Nursery and Reception. We work in close partnership with parents and carers to emphasise the educational and social benefits of high attendance, instilling positive routines from the outset of their educational journey. For pupils who are not yet of compulsory school age and attend on a part-time basis agreed with the academy, any session they are not timetabled to attend will be recorded in the attendance register using Code X (Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend). Where a pupil is timetabled to attend a scheduled session but is absent, parents must report the reason following our standard first-day reporting procedures, and the absence will be recorded using the appropriate national attendance code.

Understanding barriers to attendance

We understand that attending school regularly can be more challenging for some pupils than others. At every stage of improving attendance, we work closely with pupils, parents, and carers to build strong, trusting relationships. Together with our partners, we aim to identify and remove any barriers to attendance by putting tailored support in place.

Some pupils, including those with long-term medical conditions, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or other vulnerabilities face greater obstacles to attendance than their peers. While we maintain high attendance expectations for all pupils, we are committed to supporting families by making reasonable adjustments and arranging additional guidance from external partners where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are now required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis.

Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence

If a pattern of absence becomes persistent, our Attendance Officer, Mrs Vanderwal, will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents or carers to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, the Attendance Officer will work with the Headteacher, Mrs Shaw and any relevant school staff to address this.

Local Authority attendance support services

The Local Authority Pupil Welfare Service supports our school, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents and carers are encouraged to work with the school to address any attendance concerns and 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 support that is more formal and/or refer to the Pupil Welfare Service. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Our Pupil Welfare Officer is: Samantha Rydell.

School Attendance and the Law

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

Parents and carers may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent/carer', in relation to a child or young

person, includes any person who is not a parent/carer (from which can be inferred 'biological parent or carer') but who has parent or carer 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.

Legal Sanctions

Prosecution:

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time), the Local Authority Pupil Welfare Service will liaise with school and the Family Help lead practitioner or social worker (where applicable) to take forward attendance legal intervention to formalise support and/or enforce attendance. Legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence. A parent or carer found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months. Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Attendance Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

Under The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 all state funded schools must consider as soon as practicable, whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Penalty notices will be issued to parents/carers as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools (with the exception of independent schools) where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent/carer liable for the offence or offences.

As of 19th August 2024, there is now a 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/carer (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/carer, 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/carer may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/carer 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 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 sets out the statutory requirements for schools. The amendments specify that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered 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, on the form provided by the school. Where a parent/carer 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 a penalty notice will then be requested, in line with the National Framework and the local Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent/carer believed to have allowed the absence.

Notices to improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent or carer 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 carer or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support.

If a Notice to Improve is requested by school, the Local Authority will:

- Issue a formal written Notice to Improve to the parent/carer of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued.
- In the same letter, set a period of 15 school days during which the pupil's attendance will be closely monitored.
- Issue a penalty notice through the post if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

Deletion from Roll

In accordance with The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the prescribed reasons apply.

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/regulation/9/made

Annex A

## Attendance Codes – September 2026

| Attending the school | |
|---|---|
| / \ | Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session |
| L | Late arrival before the register is closed |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority the nature of the educational provision is also to be recorded in the attendance register. |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity |
| W | Attending work experience |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity the nature of the educational activity is also to be recorded in the attendance register. |
| D | Dual registered at another school |
| Absent – Leave of absence | |
| C1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. |
| M | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment |
| J1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution |
| S | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination |
| X | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school |
| C2 | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable, agreed with the parent |
| C | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance |
| Absent – other authorised reasons | |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes |
| R | Religious observance |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) |
| E | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made |
| Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes | |
| Q | The pupil is unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements. The pupil is unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable the pupil's attendance at school and have failed to do so. |
| Y1 | 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 proprietor or a local authority is not available. |
| Y2 | The pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency |

| | |
|---|---|
| Y3 | Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those Y3<br>who the proprietor thinks cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the<br>premises that remain in use. |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed |
| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention<br>(a) in police detention within the meaning given in section 118(2) and (2A) of the Police<br>and Criminal Evidence Act 1984(b);<br>(b) remanded to youth detention accommodation under section 102 of the Legal Aid,<br>Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012(c); or<br>(c) detained under a sentence of detention. |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause the<br>nature of the unavoidable cause is also to be recorded in the attendance register. |
| Absent – unauthorised absence | |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school |
| N | Reason for absence not yet established, needs to be amended in 5 school days |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed |
| Administrative Codes | |
| Z | Prospective pupil not on admission register |
| # | Planned whole school closure |

Annex B:

Parental Request form for leave due to exceptional circumstances.
Please note that completing this application does not guarantee that it will be granted

Date of request:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name of Children: | First Name | Surname | Year Group/Class |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| If this request is for a holiday please list who is going | | | |
| 1st date of school absence: | | Last day of absence: | |
| Length of absence applied for (number of school days only): | | | |
| | | | |
| Siblings in other schools:<br><br>Please note this request / information may be shared with the school in which the sibling/s attend | First Name | Surname | School |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Contact Details | | | |
| Parents:<br>(e.g. Mother, Father, Step Parent, Grandparent, Carer): | First name:<br>Surname:<br><br>DOB: | First name:<br>Surname:<br><br>DOB: | |
| | Address:<br><br>Postcode: | Address:<br><br>Postcode: | |
| | Email:<br><br>Home phone number:<br>Mobile: | Email:<br><br>Home phone number:<br>Mobile: | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Emergency Contact Details (preferably someone who is staying in Blackpool): | First Name:<br>Surname:<br>Address:<br><br>Postcode:<br>Relationship to the child:<br>Contact Number: |
| Reason for absence including full explanation including destination (use a separate sheet of paper if necessary). Please supply any supporting documentation you wish to be considered.<br><br>The exceptional circumstances are… | |

## Statutory Declaration

Legal responsibility
As a parent/guardian I understand all children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education, and under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, it is my responsibility as a parent to ensure the regular school attendance of my children and that failure to do so could result in legal proceedings being taken by the Local Education Authority.
I understand that requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances, and holidays are not considered exceptional. They must also be made to the school in advance, as the Department for Education has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

Fines

I understand if my request is unauthorised I am most likely to be issued a Penalty Notice and fined, per parent, per child.

Once a penalty notice is issued, I have 28 days in which to pay the fine of £160, per parent, per child. If this is a first offence and I pay the fine within 21 days the fine will be at the lower charge of £80 per parent, per child.

If I fail to make payment after 28 days then the local authority has the power to prosecute me in the Magistrate's court for the offence of failing to ensure my child attends school regularly. A guilty verdict at court can lead to a fine of up to £1000.

I understand that I will only be issued with a maximum of two penalty notices within a three year rolling period, any further offences will be dealt with by way of a prosecution in the magistrate's court for the offence of failing to ensure my child attends school regularly under the following sections of the Education Act: Section 444(1): where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly, and fails to ensure the child does so. Please be aware that the maximum sentence for this offence is a fine of £2,500 and/or up to 3 months imprisonment. A conviction could also result in a criminal record, which may affect employment opportunities.

School places

I am aware that a referral will be made to the Local Authority Children Missing from Education Team (CME) if my request is unauthorised and my child hasn't returned to school on the agreed date. This could result in my child losing their school place, being a detriment to their education.

Parent's Full Name: Parent's Signature: Date:

Parent's Full Name: Parent's Signature: Date:

| For School use only | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Any previous request:<br><br>No/Yes<br><br>Notes: | Is the requested absence during exams:<br><br>Yes/No<br><br>Notes: | Do the contact details for Parents match those held on our system:<br><br>Yes/No<br><br>Notes: | |
| Reason for decision: | | | |
| Authorised | | Number of School days | |
| Unauthorised | | Number of School days | |
| Headteacher Signature | | | |

## Useful Links relating to this Policy

- Working together to improve school attendance
  Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19th August 2024
  Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
  The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)

- Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire County Local Authorities Code of Conduct in relation to Penalty Notices

  https://www.bwdservicesforschools.co.uk/Pages/Download/34f055da-fcb9-4a4d-b879-3e4f960dd1d5/PageSectionDocuments

- Guidance for parents/carers on school attendance
  Resources for families | Children's Commissioner for England (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

- Keeping Children safe in Education
  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6ac3c09c11ed58342ad8e4ac/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2026.pdf

- Is my child too ill for school
  https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/contents/made

Other relevant legislation

The Education Acts 1996 and 2002
Education Act 1996 (legislation.gov.uk) Education Act 2002 (legislation.gov.uk)

The Children Act 1989
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