



Effective Date:

April 2024

Date of minuted approval by the Local Governing Board:

April 2024

Review Committee:

Local Governing Board

Review Date:

September 2026

Owner:

Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral (Secondary phase)

Rationale

1. Introduction

Our school recognizes the critical role of regular attendance in promoting student achievement, well-being, and social development. This policy aims to create a positive attendance culture, emphasizing collaboration among students, parents, staff, and local authorities.

Persistent absence from school can have serious and long-lasting effects on a student's education, well-being, and future opportunities. Here are some key consequences:

1. Academic Achievement:
 - Students with **high attendance** tend to achieve better results in **GCSEs** and **A Levels**.
 - Persistent absence correlates with lower academic performance.
 - Missing school days accumulates, impacting learning and exam preparation.
2. Employment Opportunities:
 - Regular attendance increases access to employment opportunities.
 - Children with persistent absence may face challenges in finding stable employment later in life.
3. Social and Emotional Development:
 - Being in school provides social interactions, friendships, and emotional support.
 - Persistent absence isolates students and affects their social development.
4. Risk of Involvement in Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour:
 - Students who miss school frequently are at an increased risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour.
 - Absence can lead to disengagement and vulnerability to negative influences.
5. Long-Term Impact:
 - Persistently absent children are more likely to obtain **no qualifications** and be **out of the labour force** by mid-adulthood
6. Health and Well-Being:
 - Regular school attendance ensures access to pastoral care and support.
 - Persistent absence may indicate underlying health issues or emotional challenges.
7. Parental Responsibility:
 - Parents and carers have a **legal duty** to ensure their child receives full-time education.
 - Consistent attendance is essential for a child's overall development.

2. Aim

We strive to achieve the highest possible attendance by our learners; our target attendance for every child is a minimum of 96%. Good attendance is an essential prerequisite to achieving high standards and we will take every opportunity to reinforce the importance of attendance with learners and parents. We provide appropriate early intervention and support plans for learners with a record of poor attendance and monitor groups of learners so that individuals are given the best opportunities to learn and achieve success.

3. Expectations

What you can expect from our school

Our school will:

- Adopt a whole school approach 'attendance is everyone's business'
- Promote good attendance and punctuality and investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence
- Encourage students to attend school regularly through the provision of engaging learning opportunities that are appropriate to their needs
- Support students to secure good attendance and punctuality
- Recognise and reward students for good attendance
- Work hard to build supportive relationships with students and their parents/carers
- Provide parents/carers with a clear statement of attendance on student's reports
- Work closely with parents/carers where student absence is a cause for concern
- Support students returning to school following prolonged absence
- Work closely with the LA Education Welfare Service and relevant external agencies
- Only remove a student from the school roll when they have legally left
- Inform the Governing Body of attendance levels as part of each KPI report
- Where required, provide information for the prosecution of parents/carers whose children do not attend school and who do not have a substantive reason

What we expect of our students

- Students will be expected to attend school every day.
- The school expects all students to attend lessons punctually.
- If leaving during the school day, students will be expected to report any absence immediately to the Attendance and Welfare Manager in the Attendance Office.

What we expect of our Parents/Carers

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Call the school 01482 648604 (attendance option) or email attendance@hessleacademy.com to report their child's absence before 8.30am, on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Work with the school where support to improve their child's attendance is being offered

4. Legal Framework

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 [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- It also refers to:
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

5. Promoting Good Attendance

Primary Phase Weekly attendance figures are calculated and a certificate awarded to the winning class. This is then celebrated publicly in the weekly celebration assembly. All students achieving 100% weekly attendance are given a sticker. Pupils achieving termly and yearly 100% attendance receive a certificate.

Secondary Phase Students achieving 100% attendance and good punctuality are celebrated within the school community. Year group attendance is published on a weekly basis. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in a number of 'Celebration of Success' events throughout the year i.e. termly/yearly 100% attendance and punctuality certificates, recognition of any previous poor attendee who improves their attendance.

Senior staff, Heads of Year and tutors will be emailed the weekly attendance figures to enable them to keep track and reward learners in passing and tutor time.

Across the Academy attendance is shared on Academic Reports sent home to parents to explicitly make the link between academic progress and attendance.

6. Recording Attendance

Learner attendance and punctuality is recorded electronically using Arbor.

Primary Phase learners are recorded daily in the morning sessions and the afternoon session

Secondary Phase learners are registered in each lesson of the day. This enables the Attendance Team and Year Leaders to track internal truancy. Period 1 and Period 4 marks become the statutory recorded attendance marks.

Absence codes used in line with DFE Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities 2022 can be found at Appendix 1. Registers will close 30 minutes after the start of the main session. As a result, learners registering after 9.20am and 1.20pm at primary phase and 9.10am and 1.20pm at Secondary Phase will be marked as a U and given an unauthorised absence mark.

7. Absence Guide

Education is very important and children should be in school, on time ready to learn every day that the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. The Academy requires all parents to notify us of absence as follows:

Day 1 of absence Inform the Academy before 8:30am of the reason and expected date of return of your child. Any medical advice should be shared with the school. Please continue to email or call the attendance office daily while your child is off school.

Day 5 onwards Medical evidence **will be** required to authorise five or more days of absence in line with East Riding of Yorkshire Council Education Welfare Service guidance. If no medical evidence is provided to support a period of absence of five days or more the Attendance Manager will notify the Education Welfare Service who may consider issuing a penalty notice

Please note that only the Academy can decide whether to authorise an absence and will only authorise:

- Illness / Sickness (if current attendance is 96% or more)
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments when supported by medical evidence
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- If permission for absence has been granted by the Headteacher
- Arranged transport has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond the statutory walking distance

The Academy will not authorise when:

Parents/carers keep children off school unnecessarily i.e. birthdays, shopping, visiting family, taking care of relatives, house minding, long weekends, holidays taken without permission of the Headteacher, absence for illness and child's attendance is below 96% unless medical evidence is provided.

Medical appointments

Always look to make medical/dental appointments outside of school time wherever possible and do not keep your child out for a whole day for an appointment unless there is no alternative (e.g. hospital appointment some distance away). You will be required to provide an appointment card, text message or letter from the practice for the absence to be authorised.

If your child feels "under the weather" in the morning, please provide us with any appropriate relief/medication and send them to school whenever possible. Let the school know what this issue is, and we can support them with administering some medication if needed. We expect your child to attend if they have a minor illness that can be managed in school. There is a useful [NHS page](#) that advises on illness and Public Health guidance on when a child should be kept at home from school.

8. Attendance Monitoring

Daily Monitoring

- Attendance is checked at least twice daily by the Attendance Team. The Attendance Officer will contact the parent on the first and every day of absence. If contact cannot be made, then a letter will be emailed that day, and the Attendance Officer will contact the child's emergency contacts and/or other professionals who may be able to advise us of the child's whereabouts. If no response to the letter is received within three days of posting the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Whenever a learner absence is recorded as unauthorised parents will be sent a letter explaining that this has been done and providing an opportunity to discuss the absence further (Appendix 2). **When a learner has 10 unauthorised absences in a 10-week period the Attendance Manager will notify the Education Welfare Service who may consider issuing a penalty notice.** Weekly attendance totals will be issued to Heads of Year and Senior Leaders for review.
- The Local Governing Board will receive phase relevant termly updates on attendance and punctuality.
- All parents are emailed every two weeks with an update on their child's attendance (appendix 3).

Longer term Monitoring

- The Attendance Manager will work closely with the Head of School (primary phase) and Pastoral Deputy Headteacher (secondary phase) to identify learners causing concern. The team will work together to monitor learners with 90% or less in either phase on a fortnightly basis to attempt to resolve any issues and put together attendance support plans for learners/families when required.
- For learners with 90% attendance or less, parents will be notified via the regular attendance email which explains the concern and next steps below their child's attendance data (Appendix 3).
- Learners affected will be closely monitored and if significant improvements are not made, parents will be given the opportunity to attend a school-based attendance support plan meeting (with the student in the Secondary Phase). The support plan meeting will be run by the Attendance Manager and member of the pastoral team. During this meeting the reasons for absence will be analysed and support offered by the school to help improve attendance/punctuality. Medical evidence may be requested at any stage to support a learner's

absence if attendance is below 96%. This requirement is removed once a learner is sustaining attendance levels above 96%.

- If the learner's absence does not significantly improve over the next four weeks a Pre-Legal Meeting will be held with the Assistant Head – Student Welfare, the Attendance Manager and a member of The Hessle Academy Local Governing Board who will endeavour to attend.
- The monitoring of the 90% or lower learners will continue at fortnightly intervals and follow the above procedure.
- If a learner continues to achieve attendance of 90% or less despite the above procedure being followed, then the Attendance Manager will refer the learner to the Education Welfare Service who would then compile the case for the Local Authority legal team. This is the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority.

*The staff involved in attendance across the Academy will be expected to contribute to the LA legal case and will therefore undergo regular training to remain up to date with expectations.

Headteacher Authorisation of Absence

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is, however, a discretionary power held by Headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Please note this is **not an entitlement**. The Headteacher will only authorise absence in line with the [East Riding Behaviour & Attendance Partnership 'Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances' Policy](#). Headteachers will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education. **Please note that supporting documents to aid decision making must be submitted with your request for absence. The request must be submitted at least 21 days in advance of the proposed absence along with a leave of absence form.** The leave of absence form can be found in (Appendix 4)

There is no longer a provision in law for Headteachers to authorise an absence for the purpose of a term time holiday. Students are in school 190 days out of 365, this leaves 175 days for holidays.

If your request is authorised, parents are required to ensure their child catches up on any missed school work. This is the parents' responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for the child to complete. Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on each child's attendance records. This may result in legal proceedings, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

9. Penalty Notices

Local authorities and schools can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay the local authority £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the local authority will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution.

In line with statutory guidance ([working together to improve school attendance](#)) headteachers will decide whether it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice for any student where their attendance meets the national threshold for issuing a penalty notice

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Persistent late arrival after the close of registration
- If a child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absence, parents may be liable for a penalty notice (one day's absence equals two sessions and a five-day absence is equal to 10 sessions etc.).
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

As stated at the start of this policy, the school is committed to building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school. The headteacher will not issue penalty notices where they are of the view that:

- The parent/carer is working proactively with the school to improve their child's attendance
- Issuing a fine would be counterproductive.

We advise all parents not to plan for their child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from their school first. Headteachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.

Court Action

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority. Where penalty notices are not paid within the published time frame then the Local Authority may be required to initiate legal proceedings in line with their statutory obligations. Any queries regarding penalty notices should be referred to the Local Authority:

Telephone: 01482 887700

Website: <https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-attendance/attendance-in-school/>

Internal Truancy within Secondary Phase

All learners are registered electronically in each lesson-by-lesson monitor. The Attendance Officer will check the registers three times daily and, if staff do not mark registers they are immediately prompted to do so, the accuracy of the register marks is checked by the Attendance Officer. In cases of suspected internal truancy, the Attendance Manager will perform initial investigations and then refer the issue to the Head of Year.

Maintaining high standards of punctuality

Staff are given regular reminders regarding the importance of accurate marking of registers which are statutory documents, in terms of absence as well as arriving late.

At Primary Phase, the responsibility for ensuring pupils arrive at school lies with the parent(s). The Academy endeavours to ensure parents are aware that children need to arrive promptly for school session times and if punctuality becomes an issue, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Head of School to discuss the challenges they are facing.

At Secondary phase, any learners that are not in the school line-ups by 8.30am will receive a sanction for late arrival; we will endeavour to administer this sanction on the day of poor punctuality. The parent/carer of any student who is persistently late will receive a call from the Head of Year / Assistant Head of Year.

A half termly review of learners who are frequently late across the Academy may result in further action from the Assistant Head – Head of School, Head of Year or Attendance Manager.

The Attendance Officer will monitor punctuality to all lessons at Hessle High School & Sixth Form College and report concerns/patterns to the relevant Head of Year and the Attendance Manager who will initiate appropriate action.

Children Missing Education

Tracking learners who are missing education is a statutory duty shared between all schools and the Local Authority and all schools follow the locally agreed policy on this matter. Any learners who have not attended school, without a parental reason being provided for their absence, for ten school days or more will be referred to the Local Authority.

If a parent plans to move their child to another school, they should continue to attend until they actually start at the new school or we will follow this up as a non-attendance issue.

Elective Home Education

Elective Home Education is the term used by the Department of Education to describe parents' decision to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. This is different to home tuition provided by a Local Authority or education provided by a Local Authority other than at a school.

Parents' legal duty is set out in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 as follows:

'It is the duty of parents of every child of compulsory school age "to cause the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".'

Further information for parents considering educating their child at home is available from:

<https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/schools-and-school-places/elective-home-education/>

Supporting Guidance

Definition of terms

PACE caution	The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
PA	Persistent absence (legal requirement is learners with 90% attendance or less)
OA	Overall absence
DFE	Department for Education
LA	Local Authority
HHS	Hessle High School
PPS	Penshurst Primary School
U	Unauthorised absence (late after registers have closed)

Appendix 1

Attendance codes - The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable

C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		

G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2

Dear parent / carer

We regret to inform you that [STUDENT NAME] has a recorded unauthorised absence today.

As you are aware the school closely monitors absences from the school as a poor attendance record not only has a negative impact on educational attainment but is also a breach of the Education Act (1996). It is therefore important that does not receive further unauthorised absences.

Please do not hesitate to contact us on attendance@hessleacademy.com should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours faithfully

Appendix 3

Dear parent / carer

Welcome to your regular attendance update. This week I would like to draw your attention to this useful web page. At this time of year there are a lot of winter bugs going around and this NHS web page offers advice on when to send your child to school and when to keep them at home. [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

If your child is off school for any reason, it is important to contact the attendance team before 8.30am on the day of absence. You can call 01482 648604 option 1 or email attendance@hessleacademy.com with your child's name, class and reason for absence.

[STUDENT FULL NAME]'s current attendance is

Please note that this data is shown in sessions, not days. There are two sessions in a day, AM & PM. E.g. six sessions of absence equals three days.

- Number of late marks (L Code):
- Number of late marks After Registers Closed (U Code):
- Number of sessions illness (I Code):
- Number of sessions unauthorised absence (O code):
- Number of sessions unauthorised holiday (G Code):
- Number of sessions authorised absence (C Code):

Please note – there are two sessions in a day (AM & PM). G codes are only used for holidays where a leave of absence form has been submitted to the attendance team. Other holidays notified by phone/email will be recorded as "O" unauthorised absence. You can download a leave of absence form at the back of the Access to Education Policy [HERE](#).

The Department for Education (DfE) defines persistent absentees as school-aged students missing more than 10% of sessions in a school year.

If [STUDENT NAME]'s attendance is below 90% they are identified as a persistently absent student and their attendance will be monitored. We are hopeful that significant improvement will be made. However, if there is insufficient improvement you may be required to attend a meeting to ensure we are all able to work together to support in improving their attendance.

If we are currently working with your family to improve [STUDENT NAME] 's attendance or we are aware of other circumstances affecting attendance e.g. ongoing medical issues this email is just for your records. Also, if usually has good attendance and has had a recent illness or other absence their attendance should improve without any further intervention.

It is incumbent upon us to remind all parents of the legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school. Please be aware that if your child has 10 unauthorised absences (the equivalent of five school days) in a 13 week period you may be referred for a penalty notice without warning. It is also our hope that by working together to celebrate high levels of attendance and supporting where necessary when attendance becomes a concern that formal action can be avoided.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and please do not hesitate to contact us on attendance@hessleacademy.com if you have any queries.

Kind regards

The Attendance Team

Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Request Form

Child(ren)'s Name(s)	DOB	School Name	Year/Class

Please add all children to one form

Parental Full Name	Parents Tel	Parental DOB

Home Address of parent(s) responsible for this absence	Email address

I request permission for my child/ren to be absent from school between:	Date of first day of school absence		Date to of return to school		Total of days absent from school

All requests should be discussed with the Headteacher prior to submitting this form. Please detail below the reason for your request for absence from school in term time and include any supporting information. The Headteacher will not be able to consider your request without your supporting documents. *Please read carefully the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents attached.*

Parent's Declaration:
*I have read the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents and understand I/we may receive a penalty notice if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. **Please note the school day is divided into 2 registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence equals 10 sessions.***

Full Name: _____ Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer 1) Date: _____ _____	Full Name: _____ Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer 2) Date: ----- _____
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Please note:

- We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from their school first. Headteachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.
- Any disagreement between estranged parents should be resolved prior to submitting this request to your child's school.

For School Use Only

The school has considered your request for leave of absence and your child's absences will be recorded as follows: -					
--	--	--	--	--	--

Number of Authorised Sessions:		Number of Unauthorised Sessions:		Number of Unauthorised sessions to date:	
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Signed:	
Position:	
Date:	

Original signed and completed forms to be retained with pupil's records.

Copy should be returned to the parent/carer of the pupil to confirm authorised or unauthorised absence prior to the intended absence period.

Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents

There is no longer a provision in law for Headteachers to authorise an absence for the purpose of a term time holiday.

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. This has been defined by the Supreme Court as 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school' meaning attending every occasion available unless authorised by the Head Teacher. There is, however, a discretionary power held by Headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Please note this is **not an entitlement**. The Headteacher will only authorise absence in line with the East Riding Behaviour & Attendance Partnership 'Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances' Policy. Headteachers will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education. **Please note that supporting documents to aid decision making must be submitted at the time of your request for absence.**

Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on your child's attendance records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty Notices

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority and schools have statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Headteacher has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent. If your child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absence, you may be liable for a penalty notice (one day's absence equals two sessions and a five-day absence is equal to 10 sessions etc.).

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of a parent after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, warnings may not be given. This includes pupils caught on truancy sweeps, persistent late arrival after the close of registration **or unauthorised absence that has not been authorised as an absence from school for exceptional circumstances**. In these cases, the warning is given on the absence request form and detailed within this information leaflet and no written warning will be given. Where parents do not follow school procedures of submitting a request and simply remove their child without seeking prior approval, a warning may not be given. Parents must complete a request for exceptional leave form and submit this to the school, allowing for sufficient time to enable the school to consider the request and inform the parent of the decision.

Fines are issued for unauthorised absence of 5 or more days and each school day is divided into 2 registration periods. **For example, if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions, and a five-day absence is equal to 10 sessions.**

- If your request is declined and you take your child out of school each person with day-to-day care of the child(ren) may be issued with a £160 penalty notice if paid within 28 days this reduces to £80 if paid within 21 days. If after 28 days the fine remains unpaid you may be summonsed to appear before Magistrates to explain why your child has unauthorised school absences and you may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.
- Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice within 3 years of the first penalty notice, the second penalty notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. If after 28 days the fine remains unpaid you may be summonsed to appear before Magistrates to explain why your child has unauthorised school absences and you may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.
- If a third penalty notice referral is received within a 3-year period, a further penalty notice fine cannot be issued and legal action will be considered.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve an improvement, please contact your child's school to discuss this. **We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from their school first. Headteachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.**

^[1] Parent: In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—
(1) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) who has care of him. (*Education Act 1996 sec.576*)