

Model School Attendance Policy

Coventry City Council has produced this document as guidance for schools and academies when writing their own attendance policy. This guidance has been written in accordance with the Department for Education's (DfE) Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance (2022). Schools and Academies must ensure that when using this guidance to inform their own policy that it reflects their own specific requirements.



Sowe Valley Primary School Whole School Attendance Policy

Policy Consultation and Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. All parents are informed about the policy when their children join the school and on a regular basis through the newsletter and letters home where relevant.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on at least an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body September 2023. It is due for review September 2024.

Signature

Headteacher

Date:

Signature

Chair of Governors

Date:

Contents

1	Introduction/Aim	4
2	Legal Framework	5
3	Attendance Objectives	6
4	Roles and Responsibilities	7
5	Recording Absence and Attendance	10
6	Our Procedures	12
7	Tailored Support	14
8	Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions	15
9	Staged Reintegration/Reduced Timetables	16
10	Related Policies	16
11	Statutory Framework	16
12	Appendices	17

1. Introduction/Aim

At Sowe Valley we value the attendance of all pupils. There is a strong relationship between good school attendance and achieving positive outcomes for children. It is recognised that attending school regularly can be a protective factor for children and young people. It is important that as a school we offer a safe environment, positive relationships, high quality teaching and learning opportunities to develop social and emotional skills.

Ensuring that children attend school every day will help achieve this ambition by maximising their education and social achievements as well as developing self-discipline, organisation and preparedness for the work environment. Improving attendance and reducing absence, especially persistent absence is a priority for our school and Coventry City Council.

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences.
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

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

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

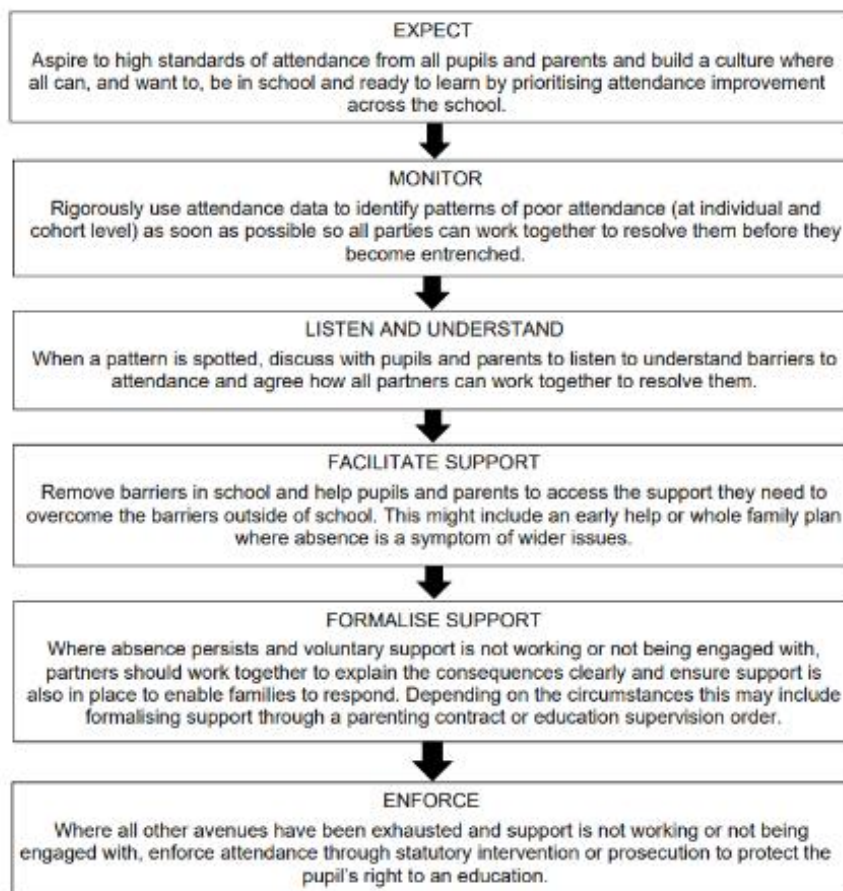
A "Parent" is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

3. Attendance Objectives

Our school attendance policy:

- Is easy to understand by pupils, parents and staff
- Is clear and consistently applied, transparent and fair
- Considers the individual needs of pupils and their families
- Is easy to find so that the whole school community is aware of our attendance expectations
- Includes the contact details of key staff to make it easy for parents to get in touch
- Is reviewed by staff regularly and involves pupils and parents because school attendance matters to everyone
- Is followed in accordance with the procedures in the flowchart below



4. Roles and Responsibilities

At Sowe Valley, we believe that school attendance matters to everyone. School attendance is a shared responsibility by governors, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Lead	Emma White	headteacher@sowevalley.coventry.sch.uk
Attendance Lead	Julie Lowe	admin@sowevalley.coventry.sch.uk
Named Governor/Trustee for Attendance		

The Local Governing Board of Sowe Valley recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Supporting the school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensuring school staff receive training on school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

Sowe Valley Primary School will:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support access to any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners and where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers where absence becomes persistent.
- Hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future where there is a lack of engagement.
- Work with the local authority on legal intervention where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate.
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils with SEND and/or medical conditions and their parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals for children with SEND and medical conditions.
- Regularly monitor data for children with SEND and medical conditions, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
- Inform the pupil's social worker, where there is one, if there are any unexplained absences and if the child's name is to be deleted from the register.

Sowe Valley Primary School requests that parents:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.
-

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher/tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or guardians to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

5. Recording Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department of Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

5.1 Leave of absence

We aim to work with parents to ensure that all parents understand the importance of uninterrupted education. Leave of absence request during term time will not be authorised by the Headteacher. Amendments to The Education (Pupil registration) (England) 2006 regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We do not believe holidays during term constitute as exceptional circumstance. Parents are required to complete a form notifying the reason for the absence from school and the dates, including the expected date of return. The Headteacher will consider all requests on an individual basis and respond in writing with the decision. All absences authorised and unauthorised will go on a child's record. Long term absences will be tracked by the Governing Board and Triumph Trust. All absence due to holiday will incur a fine per pupil once the absence is 7 over 5 days. If a pupil fails to return (after one month) and contact with the parent has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education(Pupil registration)(England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child may lose their school place.

We can only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Parents are required to complete a form notifying the reason for the absence from school and the dates, including the expected date of return. The school will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school and respond in writing with the decision. All absences authorised and unauthorised will go on a child's record. All absences associated with a family holiday (without exceptional circumstances) during term time will be marked as unauthorised on the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority by the school and be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

A penalty notice request may be submitted to the Local Authority by the school should: -

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not authorised by the school but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the head teacher, the parent will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in a possible children missing from education procedure being instigated.

5.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must show the office a copy of the

appointment/appointment letter. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a 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.

5.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Sowe Valley Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

5.4 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

a pupil's/family member's birthday, closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes, holidays taken in term time.

6. Our Procedures

6.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, require schools to take an attendance register at the beginning of the morning session and once during each afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Children absent/ missing from education

Where the parent of a child notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address and will move to a new school, we will record the new address, and the date from when it is expected the child will attend this new school. The child will only be removed from register once the new school has confirmed their attendance. If we receive no such confirmation, we will continue to complete safe and well checks and will inform the local authority that the child is absent. Any child absent ten consecutive days of education shall be reported as absent to the local authority and they shall then begin to take action to ensure that attendance improves.

Home Educated Children

On receipt of written notification to home educate, we will inform the local authority that the child is to be deleted from the admission register. However, prior to submitting this we will make every effort to support the child being educated in school.

Safeguarding Procedures and Attendance

We set high expectations for attendance at school. As a result of this, we monitor carefully any period of absence and visit the family home of any child whose parent or carer has not contacted the school to explain the absence. If we are unable to locate a child, we will contact the police to complete 'concern for safety' checks. We will undertake every reasonable task to find a child and support them back into school, including - using all contact details supplied to us by parents and carers, asking friends and their parents for information and asking neighbours or siblings/relatives' schools or workplaces for further information.

Should we have further concerns, and a child is absent for 10 days, we will complete the Child Missing in Education documentation and submit this to the local authority. Where we have concerns that children and their families have moved out of the area, or are unable to attend school for reasons that cause concern – fleeing DV; FGM; criminal behaviour; substance misuse; poor mental health etc, then we will refer to MASH as appropriate. Staff are fully aware of all concerns that may lead to absences from school and receive regular updates on the various issues during staff training.

Staff will work with families to provide support but sometimes we may need additional support from other agencies, we will always seek consent from parents to make these referrals and will make it clear why we are referring and point out how it will help a family.

6.2 Late Arrival at School

At Sowe Valley all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8.55am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken at 8.55am. All pupils arriving after this time are

required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before 9.30am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9.30am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

6.3 Expected absence procedure for parents

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9.30am and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned.
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out.
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission.

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil.
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Discuss the pupil at the termly Targeted Support Meetings to seek advice and guidance on additional support strategies.
- Refer to Early Help and/or other external agencies to offer support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures.
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.

6.4 Rewards and Interventions

School Procedures to celebrate and encourage high attendance

- Good attendance is a high priority in school as it will help children make the best progress socially and academically.
- Good attendance is celebrated weekly at whole school assemblies and is on our weekly newsletter.
- Highest class attendance is rewarded weekly.
- Individual attendance awards are given out every term.
- Individual attendance is shared and discussed at parents evening.

Monitoring attendance

All attendance records are monitored weekly to identify any areas of concern and agree any action to be taken. The Learning Mentor meets with external agencies on a half termly basis to discuss ongoing concerns.

Individual pupil attendance is also closely monitored by senior leaders so any improvements can be celebrated, and concerns can be swiftly identified. Procedures and strategies used to promote and encourage good attendance in our school will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Headteacher, Learning Mentor, Admin staff and Governors. Actual attendance figures will be reported to the authority through Bromcom on a weekly basis.

We are required to regularly share and report attendance data with the Local Authority and take action as deemed necessary by them. The admissions register will be accurately kept and where a child moves schools or across authorities, their data will be deleted promptly and transferred to the onward school. Any deletion should be carried out on the day that they start their next school. No child will be deleted from registers without receiving notification that it is to do so from either – the onward school; the local authority; the Missing from education team at Coventry City Council. There are several grounds upon which a child may or may not be deleted from registers, we will not undertake to do any other than to transfer a child unless given permission from local authority attendance team.

Actions to be taken if absence is a concern:

Stage 1: Prevention

Criteria: Attendance is between 91% and 100%

Pupils who have attendance between 91% and 100% will receive support from school and other universal services they may be accessing i.e., GP

Stage 2: Early Intervention

Criteria: Attendance is between 81% and 90%

Pupils who have attendance between 81% and 90% may require support from other services outside of school and universal services at stage 1.

Stage 3: Targeted Support

Criteria: Attendance is below 80%

Pupils who have attendance below 80% may require multi-agency support in addition to that provided at stage 2.

7. Tailored Support

At Sowe Valley Primary School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Providing additional uniform or other practical support for family
- Social, emotional or ,mental health support.
- Support with establishing good sleep routines
- Routine charts to help with morning routines
- Sticker charts for home or school
- Offer of breakfast club support
- School nurse referral
- Learning mentor support in school

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. This may include a referral to Early Help or a Parenting Contract.

8. Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 40 sessions (20 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

8.1 Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed penalty notices will be issued by the Head teacher to parents or carers if your children are absent from school for the following reasons:

- Holiday / leave of absence during term time
- Irregular attendance including persistent late arrival to school (after registration has closed) which equates to 10 or more sessions within a current 5-week period

Penalty Notices will issued by post to your home address to each parent or carer by the local authority at the request of the Headteacher. The Penalty Notice is:

- £60 for each of your children if paid in full within 21 days
- £120 if paid in full after 21 days but within 28 days.

9. Staged Reintegration/Reduced timetables

All children of compulsory school age are legally entitled to receive a suitable full-time education and the school and local authority have a statutory duty to ensure that all children in the area receive such an education. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so.

We will not use a reduced timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision where applicable. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family. We will notify the Attendance and Children Missing Education Team of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

10. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medical needs
- admissions
- anti-bullying
- exclusion
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards

11. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, \(September 2022\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(January 2015\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2023\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(July 2018\)](#)

12. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.



APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

This application must be submitted to the Headteacher at least 4 weeks before the proposed period of exceptional leave. As recommended by the Local Authority, the school has a strict policy on Exceptional Leave. This applies to ALL the children of the school community. A copy of this and the school's Attendance Policy can be obtained from the School Office and from the school's website. Please note that you are expected to take family holidays during the school holidays and your child's absence for this purpose will be treated as an unauthorised absence.

Name of child:		Class:
Proposed date(s) of absence	From: To:	
Please give details and reason for proposed absence.		
Signature of Parent/Carer		Date:

Your application will be considered by the school. If the reasons fall outside the criteria set out in the school's Attendance Policy, the request will be considered by a Governor on behalf of the Governing Body. Evidence of travel bookings may be required including return flights. Your child's attendance record will be taken into consideration.

If permission is refused and your child is absent for the above period, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. The school will apply to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice and this will result in you receiving a fine of £60. The fine increases to £120 if not paid within 28 days.

For official use only:		
Action	Initials	Date
Current attendance %		
Seen by Headteacher		
Headteacher's comments		

