



Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust

ACHIEVING SUCCESS TOGETHER

This Policy has been adopted and approved by Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust and has been adapted for use across all of its academies.

TRUST ATTENDANCE POLICY	
Approved by GCET	14.7.2023
Date of next Review	Summer Term 2023-2024 (<i>Annually</i>)
Responsible Officer	Head of Trust Standards
Policy Number	STS1

Definition of a Parent

- All biological parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- Any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

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.

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Roles and Responsibilities	2
4. Recording attendance	4
Authorised and unauthorised absence	5
5. Legal Sanctions	7
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	7
7. Attendance monitoring	7
8. Monitoring arrangements	8
9. Links with other policies	8
Appendix 1: Attendance Codes	9
Appendix 2: Contact details for key attendance personnel in the Trust.	12
Appendix 3: Attendance Procedure Flow Chart	14
Appendix 4: Letters to be used throughout GCE Trust.	15
Appendix 5: Forms to be used throughout GCE Trust	23

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data through the Principal's report.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school through the Principal's report.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

For contact details see Appendix 2

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at their academy
- Monitoring academy level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

For contact details see Appendix 2

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across their academy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

For contact details see Appendix 2

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal (or the person authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

For contact details see Appendix 2

3.5 Administrative Staff

Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it onto the academy Management Information system (MIS).
- Transfer calls from parents to relevant personnel or record on the MIS for class teachers in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Contact parents whose children have not been registered for the day and whose parents have not provided a satisfactory explanation
- Inform the Leaders of Learning (Secondary) or either the Principal (Primary) or the DSL (Primary) of any pupils that are giving cause for immediate concern. For primary school children a visit will be made on the first day of an unexplained absence. For the secondary academy this would be done no later than day 4
- To provide Daily, Weekly, Half Termly and Termly attendance reports for the whole school, year groups, vulnerable groups and other identifiable cohorts

For contact details see Appendix 2

3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence by 08:00 on the day of the absence; each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Inform the academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the academy by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with the school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time, see information for each academy in Appendix 2
- Be aware of the academy's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, their parents and through the school timetable
- Speak to their class teacher 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
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help each academy 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

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Each academy will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

Each academy will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second pm session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE Attendance Codes.

We will also record:

- For all pupils whether the absence is authorised or not
 - The nature of the activity including if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
 - The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Every entry on the attendance register and store it for 7 years after the pupil has left the academy
All pupils who are in school by the start time (both AM and PM) on each school day as identified for each Academy in Appendix 2

The register for each session will be taken at the time specified for each academy in Appendix 2 and will be kept open until either 15 minutes (in the primary schools) or 30 minutes (in the secondary school) has elapsed. After this the pupils will normally be marked as being absent (at the Principal's discretion). This absence could be either authorised or unauthorised.

4.2 AM and PM Registration Procedures.

Class teachers and/or form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each academy day and once at the start of the second session. See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes. This complies with the legal requirement that the register must be taken twice a day. In addition, the secondary academy registers pupils after each movement during the day.

This information must be submitted to the school office electronically immediately after the close of the registration period as indicated below:

After 15 mins (the primary schools) or 30 mins (secondary school) the student will be marked late. After this period has elapsed then the student will normally be marked as being either authorised or unauthorised absent. See on for allowable authorised absences. In exceptional circumstances a student who arrives after this period may be allocated a late mark at the Principal's discretion

4.3 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the Admin staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with "Supporting Pupils with Medical

Conditions in School" and Suffolk County Council policies. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

4.4 Planned Absence.

Each Principal can authorise a leave of absence for a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. This leave of absence is granted solely at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Parents who wish to apply for leave of absence during term time, **other than for medical or dentistry reasons**, must apply in writing to the Principal at least 4 weeks before the planned leave (see Appendix 5). This is also accessible via each Academy's website. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Principal, and it will be marked as unauthorised. Note absence due for medical and dentistry treatment are exceptions.

Each Academy will treat every application individually and may discuss with parents the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Very rarely will such leave of absence be given, apart from the instances given below. If any Principal is considering authorising an absence due to *exceptional circumstances*, and siblings attend other Academies in the Trust, they will speak to the other Principals to ensure consistency of response.

Retrospective requests **will not** be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as being unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice is issued or consider prosecution.

A fixed penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

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

When leave of absence is granted by the Principal, the parents 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, the school may seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

4.5 Authorised Absences

A. Medical and Dental Appointments - Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected by their parent(s), sign out, indicating that they have left the school site and upon their return to school they must be signed in again. No pupil, apart from those in KS5, will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

B. Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance - All the academies in the Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. This must be 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. Up to 2 days either side of the festival may be allowed to enable participants to travel. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

C. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and other pupils who have no fixed abode.

In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because:

- The parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place
- That the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits

This provision applies only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Suffolk, if the family can reasonably travel back to their base school, then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. The base school will be the school that the child is on the roll. It is therefore the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at the base school will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

Following notification of an intention to travel the Academy's Attendance Officer will inform Suffolk's Local Authority Gypsy Roma Traveller Education Liaison Officer of the expected absence of the child concerned. This person will arrange contact with the parents whilst they are out of the area.

See Appendix 2 for the contact details for Suffolk's Local Authority Gypsy Roma Traveller Education Liaison Officer.

4.6 Lateness and Punctuality.

Each Academy reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to assess the reason for late attendance and has the discretion to authorise lateness during the relevant morning or afternoon session. The school also reserves the right to request evidence of medical appointments.

A pupil who arrives late.

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Note this will be before 15 mins has elapsed in the primary schools and 30 mins in the secondary school as from the start of the registration time as identified in Appendix 2
- After the register has closed pupils will be marked as being absent, using the appropriate code. Note this will be after 15 mins has elapsed in the primary schools and 30 mins in the secondary school as from the start registration time identified in Appendix 2, unless there are exceptional reasons as mentioned above
- Sanctions for lateness may be applied where appropriate at the secondary academy in line with the Academy's Behaviour for Learning policy.

4.7 Following up Unexplained Absence.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, then a home visit to check on their welfare may be done and the school may make contact with appropriate agencies as required
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- If there are concerns over the safety of the child, then an immediate home visit will be arranged, and contact will be made with the appropriate safeguarding agencies
- If absence continues, the school will use the procedure outlined in appendix 3. This may result in the involvement of an Education Welfare Officer and Fixed Penalty Notices being issued

Refer to the flow chart in Appendix 3 for further details.

4.8 Reporting to Parents/Carers.

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance patterns at least 5 times every year. This could take the form of a written report, electronic data or face-to-face meetings.

5. Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Trust policy states that a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can be issued by the Local Authority after 8 unauthorised absences (equivalent to 4 days) in any 12 week period.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent per child must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices will be issued by the Local Authority or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- 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
- Where a suspended pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

It is understood that most students will attend regularly and punctually. These pupils must not be forgotten or ignored. It is hoped that by recognising and rewarding them others may be encouraged to try and follow their good example. All academies within the Trust will determine their own age-appropriate rewards to encourage and support good attendance. The following is a list of possible rewards that could be used across the Trust:

- School communication by school leaders reinforcing the importance of good attendance in say assemblies, corridors and in lessons
- Praise communication either verbal or written
- Certificates for excellent attendance to be issued every half term
- Form tutor award for a 100% attendance
- Small reward recognition for significant improvement in attendance over a term or a year. They might include, for example, games vouchers, chocolate, cinema vouchers etc
- Display boards for top performers in the past month
- Ladders of attendance for top students

7. Attendance Monitoring

Attendance is recorded and monitored twice daily using established attendance procedures.

7.1 Monitoring and Analysing Attendance.

The academies will

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Monitor attendance rates for key vulnerable groups
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to key school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

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

Refer to the flow chart in Appendix 3 for further details.

7.2 Deletions from the Register

All academies in the Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent(s) in advance of the pupil leaving. At each academy we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a 'child missing education' through lack of shared information.

We follow Suffolk County Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team (cme@suffolk.gov.uk) of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Suffolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above. We will also inform Suffolk County Council's Services to Home Educators Team (ehe@suffolk.gov.uk) by completing their referral form.

All GCET academies will follow Suffolk County Council's Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, and the school will carry out joint enquiries with Suffolk County Council and other relevant authorities to establish the whereabouts of the child.

7.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services as appropriate to remove the barriers to attendance

Refer to the flow chart in Appendix 3 for further information.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust Board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2

Contact details for key attendance personnel in the Trust.

Start time and registration times for each academy.

	START TIME	AM REGISTRATON	REGISTRATION CLOSES	PM REGISTRATION
Britannia Primary School and Nursery	School gates open at 8.35 a.m.	8.50 a.m.	8.55 a.m.	EYFS-12:50pm KS1-1:05pm KS2-1:35pm
Rose Hill Primary School	School gates open at 8.40 a.m.	8.50 a.m.	9.00 a.m.	EYFS- 12:30pm, KS1- 13:15 pm and LKS2- 12:30pm UKS2 – 13:15.
Copleston High School	School gates open at 8.00 a.m.	08:30 for Y7-Y10 & Y12-13 08:20 for Y11 only	08:40 08:40	13:00 for all pupils.

Principals

Britannia Primary School and Nursery

Name - Keith Hart

Email – keith.hart@britannia.suffolk.sch.uk

Telephone Number – 01473 728566

Rose Hill Primary School

Name: Georgina Bright

Email – g.bright@rosehillprimary.net

Telephone Number – 01473 727552

Copleston High School

Name: Andy Green

Email – agreen@copleston.suffolk.sch.uk

Telephone Number – 04173 277240

The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

Britannia Primary School and Nursery

Name: Greg Williamson

Email – greg.williamson@britannia.suffolk.sch.uk

Telephone Number – 01473 728566

Rose Hill Primary School

Name: Hayley Dennis

Email – h.dennis@rosehillprimary.net

Telephone Number – 01473 727552

Copleston High School

Name: David Leach

Email – dleach@copleston.suffolk.sch.uk

Telephone Number – 01473 277240

The Attendance Officer

Britannia Primary School and Nursery

Name: Eve Chapman

Email – eve.chapman@britannia.suffolk.sch.uk

Telephone Number – 01473 728566

Rose Hill Primary School

Name: Alie Berry

Email – a.berry@rosehillprimary.net

Telephone Number – 01473 727552

Copleston High School

Name: Jo Pipe

Email – jpipe@copleston.suffolk.sch.uk

Telephone Number – 01473 277240 / 01473 277266

The Administration/School Office.

Britannia Primary School and Nursery

Email – office@britannia.suffolk.sch.uk

Telephone Number - 01473 728566

Rose Hill Primary School

Email – mail@rosehillprimary.net

Telephone Number - 01473 727552

Copleston High School

Email – mail@copleston.suffolk.sch.uk

Telephone Number – 01473 277240

Governor Responsible for Attendance

Britannia Primary School and Nursery

Name - Jean Rogers

Email – c/o office@britannia.suffolk.sch.uk

Telephone Number – c/o Britannia Primary School – 01473 728566

Rose Hill Primary School

Name: Gina Rowlands

Email – c/o mail@rosehillprimary.net

Telephone Number – 01473 727552

Copleston High School

Name: Kathy Ramsden

Email – c/o mail@copleston.suffolk.sch.uk

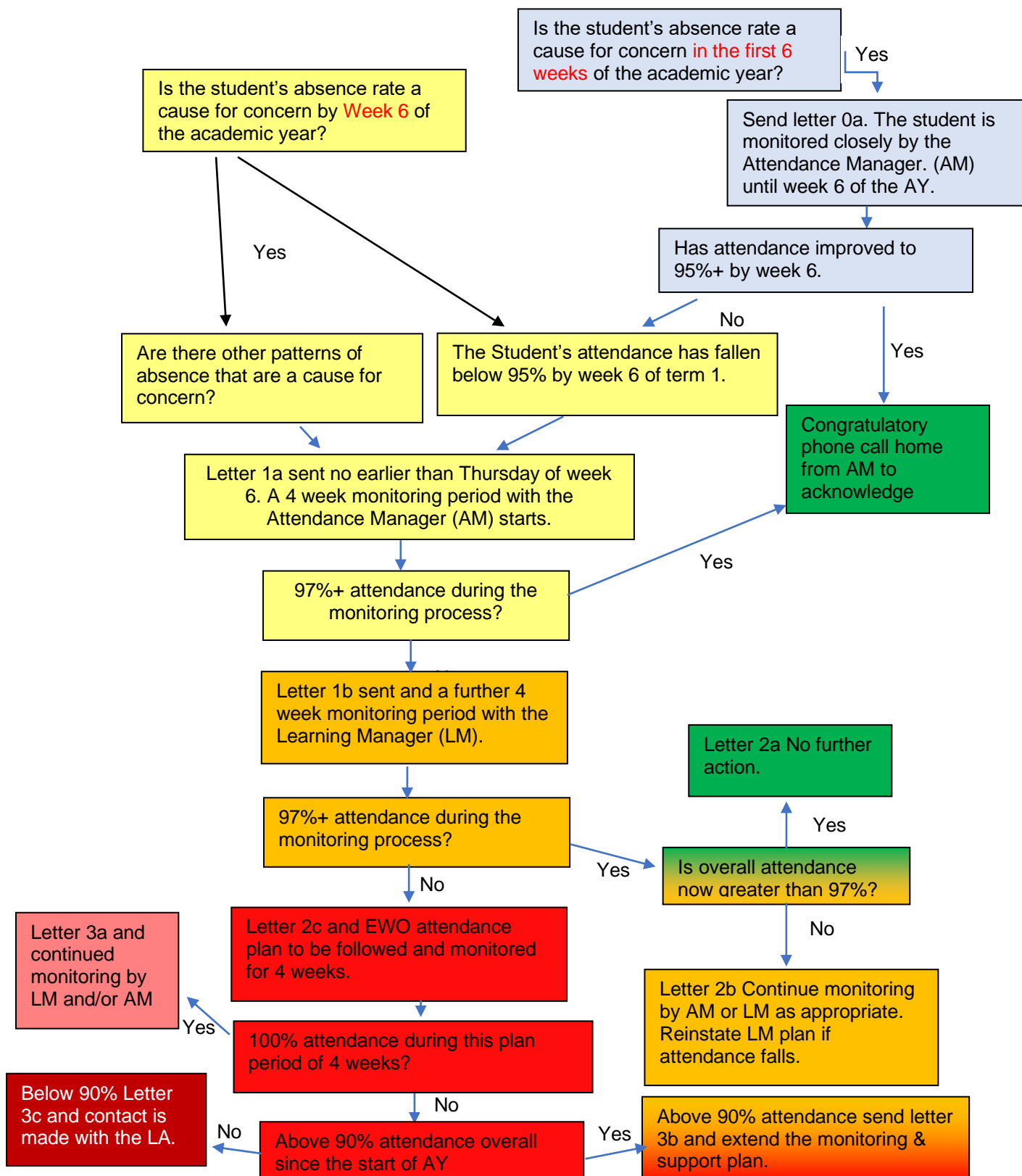
Telephone Number – 01473 277240

Suffolk's Local Authority Gypsy Roma Traveller Education Liaison Officer -

Katie Magill (Katie.Magill@suffolk.gov.uk) .

Appendix 3

Attendance Procedure Flow Chart. Colour coded links with Stage Response document.



This policy recognises and permits the Local Authority (LA) attendance teams to escalate procedures where both the Academy/Trust and Local Authority feel appropriate.

Appendix 4

Letters to be used throughout GCE Trust.

Letter X

To be sent to everyone in the Academy at the start of the Academic Year.

Dear **Name of Parent,**

Attendance at **Name of Academy: Child's name**

As we are about to start a new school year, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you about the importance of school attendance. The absolute minimum expectation is that a child's attendance shouldn't drop below 97% over an academic year. Being absent from school means that your child is missing out on essential parts of their education, which has strong links to underachievement. Poor attendance can also result in students missing out on their preferred next steps.

Another reason attendance is so important is that it forms part of our safeguarding procedures. If students are not in school, we need to know they are safe, which is why we require parents/carers to contact the attendance team as soon as possible and on a daily basis, before **8:00am**, to let us know the reason for the absence.

You can contact the attendance team in the following ways:

- Online form on our website under **??????????????** <http://www.??????????????>
- Direct Dial - **?????????????**
- Email - **??????????@????????????????**

With the importance of attendance in mind, I would like to introduce you to the attendance team at the Academy:

- **?????????** - Senior Management link for Behaviour and Attendance
- **?????????** - Learning Manager
- **?????????** - Attendance Manager
- **?????????** - School Office Manager

The attendance team are located in the School Administration Office.

At our Academy we appreciate what an achievement excellent attendance is for a week, half term, term or a year. Being punctual is also very important.

Persistent lateness can also lower your child's attendance percentage. Students must therefore arrive at school for an **??????** start. If there is a genuine reason for a student to arrive later and it is still in registration time, students should register with their form/class teacher. If they have assembly, or arrive after registration time, they should sign in at the Administration Office.

If students have a legitimate reason to leave the Academy during the school day, prior to an agreed appointment, parents/carers can email us with the appointment evidence. On the day of the appointment students must be collected by the parent(s) and then sign out with our Admin Office staff.

With regards to absence, please see guidance below to help you assess whether your child should be in school:

- If a student is feeling a little unwell in the morning, they may well improve during the day. It is usually better to send them to the Academy and we can send them home if necessary, having called you first.
- We also allow students to leave lessons early and, where available, provide them with a lift pass to avoid crowds should they have an injury.
- We sympathise with how uncomfortable periods can be, however, please note, we are unable to authorise illness due to periods, unless the student is receiving medical treatment for these.
- If your child has continuous sickness or diarrhoea we recommend 24 hours to recover before returning to school.
- A Student Counsellor can be provided for those who have been absent due to bereavement or other personal circumstances.

- Learning Managers and **Form/Class** Teachers are always willing to support students and therefore should your child have any problems or issues that may prevent them from wanting to attend, please contact us immediately so that these problems or issues can be resolved.
- Current guidelines around Covid 19 state that Covid should be treated in line with all other illnesses. If your child is too unwell to attend school, please let us know. Should the guidelines change, the Academy will let you know. We have First Aiders available who can assess the condition and, with your consent, administer medication should your child feel unwell after arriving at School.

If your child starts to feel unwell whilst in school, then they should go to the **First Aid Centre** at the school.

Please find attached the medical consent form you can complete, sign and return.

Government guidelines state that holidays **should not** be booked during term time. Please refer to our term dates, under the **????????** section of our website, when making your holiday bookings. I have also included a letter that outlines the legal position regarding unauthorised absences from school and the potential for Fixed Penalty Notices to be issued. Please do take time to carefully read this information.

Thank you for your support with attendance. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Dear Parent,

Date: xx/xx/20xx

Attendance at school and legal intervention

When parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

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. At **[INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL]** our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The DfE policy document entitled, 'Working together to improve school attendance' states:

- Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should 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, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.
- As headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the head teacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the head teacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention if they have **at least 8 sessions (4 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during 12 school weeks.**

The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any pupil at **[INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL]** who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued, the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. A parent may receive more than one separate penalty notice resulting from unauthorised absence. When penalty notices are issued each parent will receive one per child. Therefore, each parent could receive multiple notices if they have more than 1 child who has been absent. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken. In some circumstances, the Suffolk County Council Attendance Team may choose not to issue a further penalty notice in the same academic year and may instead choose to prosecute a parent under the Education Act 1996 S444. There is no right of appeal by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 0a Students who have started as from Sept of the new AY

Dear **Parent Names**

Absences from School.

I am writing to express my concern at **Childs Name** recent high levels of absence.

Their current attendance has fallen to **percentage**, this already represents **X** days missing from education since your child started school in September. An attendance rate that is below 95% is very concerning. It has been proved that low attendance rates will have a significantly negative impact on academic achievement.

Consequently, our Attendance Manager will closely monitor **Childs Name** attendance for the remainder of this half term. **Name of Attendance Manager** will be here to support you and your family, if needed, to ensure that **Childs Name's** attendance improves as soon as possible.

I am aware that we have only just started the new Academic Year and that there could be special family circumstances that have resulted in this low attendance rate. So, if you would like to discuss this further, then please do not hesitate to contact our school Attendance Team on **Telephone Number in here**.

We appreciate your support to ensure **Childs Name's** attendance improves. Our aim is to work with you to provide the very best education for your child.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Principal

Letter 0b New student starts during the academic year

Dear **Parent Names**

Absences from School.

I am writing to express my concern at **Childs Name** recent high levels of absence.

Their current attendance has fallen to **percentage**, this already represents **X** days missing from education since your child started school on **Date of entry for new student during the AY**. An attendance rate that is below 95% is very concerning. It has been proved that low attendance rates will have a significantly negative impact on academic achievement.

Consequently, our Attendance Manager will closely monitor **Childs Name** attendance for the next 2 weeks. **Name of Attendance Manager** will be here to support you and your family, if needed, to ensure that **Childs Name's** attendance improves as soon as possible.

I am aware that **Child's name** has only just started at our academy and that there could be special family circumstances that have resulted in this low attendance rate. So, if you would like to discuss this further, then please do not hesitate to contact our school Attendance Team on **Telephone Number in here**.

We appreciate your support to ensure **Childs Name's** attendance improves. Our aim is to work with you to provide the very best education for your child.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Principal

Letter 1a.

Dear **Parent Names**

Absences from school

I'm writing to express my concern at **Child's name** recent high levels of absence from school.

Their current attendance has fallen to **percentage**. Falling below a **95%** attendance will have a significantly negative impact on their academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different, and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us, and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment. As a result, **Child's name** attendance will be monitored very closely over the next 4 school weeks by our Attendance Manager, **Name of AM**. We want to support **Child's name** to reach at least an average attendance level of 97% for the Academic Year.

We are available to support **Child's name** education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to their absence.

Please contact the school office on **Telephone number** as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Principal

Letter 1b

Dear **Parent Names**

Continued Absences from school

I am writing to you because **Child's name** has an attendance rate of less than 97%. The total number of recorded absences is **[Number]** sessions absent from school so far this year of which the total number of sessions coded as illness are **[Number]**. Their Attendance Registration Record has been enclosed.

As you are aware from our letter dated **[Date here of letter 1a]** your **Child's name** attendance has been monitored by the school's Attendance manager, **Attendance Managers name**, and they have been supported by their **form/class** teacher **[Name]**. We also addressed the matter in a conversation dated **[date of conversation when this meeting or telephone conversation occurred]**.

Since our previous communication, **Child's name** attendance has not improved. I am therefore informing you that the school will not be able to authorise any future absences for illness. I will be able to authorise absence if medical evidence such as a prescription slip, GP letter or appointment confirmation letter is provided. **Child's name** attendance will now be monitored by the school's Learning Manager **[Learning managers name]** for an additional 4 week period.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for **.....** at **.....**. It is imperative that you attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be led by **[Learning managers name]** (Learning Manager). If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact the school reception on **{number}** at school so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

Further absences may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice and fine being issued. Parents will receive a Penalty Notice if their son/daughter is marked as being:

- absent for 8 or more half-day sessions (four school days), which is unauthorised, during the last 120 possible school sessions This amounts to 12 weeks. Please note that these sessions do not need to be consecutive.
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions after the register has closed; our registration closes at **[time inserted here]**
- persistently late (coded L) for up to 10 sessions before the register has closed: so after **[time recorded here]** but before **[time inserted here]**.

We enclose the following additional information on attendance that you may find useful:

- Parent leaflet on Penalty Notices
- Our school leaflet on absence

Thank you for your support in helping to improve your child's attendance. We trust that your child's attendance will improve. It is our duty to support and inform you of our concerns in order to promote improvement in rates of attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 2a

Dear **Parent Names**

We are writing to say how pleased we are that **[Childs name]** attendance has improved significantly and the close monitoring and support we have put in place will now be scaled back.

[Childs name] will however continue to be monitored in line with the school's policy on attendance and punctuality which sets a target attendance level of 97% for the school year. Please continue to stress the importance of attendance to **[Childs name]**. Should your child's attendance level fall below the school threshold level of **97%** then we will need to contact you again.

Once again thank you for your support in improving your child's attendance record at school.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 2b

Dear **Parent Names**

We are writing to say how pleased we are that **[Childs name]** attendance has significantly improved over the monitoring period. During this time period their attendance has been **(insert % figure here)**

We are so pleased at the progress that has been made and are sure that this will have a positive impact on the academic progress of **[Childs name]**. Once that **[Childs name]** attendance has reached an overall level of **97%** then we will scale back our scrutiny of their attendance to that of all other children in the school.

Unfortunately, **[Childs name]** overall attendance record since the beginning of the academic year remains lower than we would expect. This is due to historical absences. Consequently, **[Childs name]** will continue to be monitored by the **Learning Manager/Attendance Manager [name of monitoring officer in here]** until they reach this important threshold level.

Thank you for your support of the school so far, significant progress has clearly been made. Please continue to support us in the coming weeks. If you need to contact us for any reason, then please do so.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 2c

Dear **Parent Names**

As you are aware your child **[Childs name]** has been monitored carefully over the past 8 weeks. A support plan has been put in place for this period and we discussed the matter in a meeting at the school on **[date here]**. Their total attendance for the Academic Year so far is **[insert data here]**. This is below the school's threshold of **97%** attendance.

Unfortunately, as **[Childs name]** attendance remains unacceptably low, we will now have to involve Suffolk Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO). They will wish to meet with you and **[Childs name]** to discuss how to improve school attendance over the coming 4 weeks. They will be in touch with you to arrange a meeting to discuss this matter further and to put in place a support plan to improve attendance levels.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than **[number]** unauthorised absences within **[time period]**. Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has less than a 90% attendance rate. This would correspond to **[number]** unauthorised absences within **[time period]**. You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office. You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

We are here to support and listen to any concerns that you may have so please contact [?????] if necessary. Our motivation is to ensure that [Child's name] receives a full-time education that will offer the best opportunities in life.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 3a

Dear [Name of Parent],

Following the implementation of the plan with the Local Education Welfare Officer (EWO) [name of officer if known] [child's name] attendance has improved dramatically to 100% over the last 4-week monitoring period. This EWO support will now be stopped but may well be reintroduced if a reduction in [child's name] attendance re-occurs. We will let you know if this is necessary.

As [child's name] has an attendance rate of [x%] [child's name] will need to aim for a 100% attendance rate. If your child misses school on a regular basis, they are damaging their future life choices. Nationally, it has been proven that children with poor attendance miss out on making the expected progress in vital literacy and numeracy skills which is difficult to catch up. In secondary school, 19 days' absence correlates, on average, to the loss of a grade at GCSE in all subjects, whilst in primary schools pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard.

Thank you for your support and help as we have worked together to improve the rate of attendance of [child's name] at school. We hope and expect that this improvement will be maintained during the remainder of the school year. Consequently [child's name] will continue to be monitored closely and supported in school to ensure that this improvement is maintained.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 3b

Dear [Name of Parent],

Following the implementation of the plan with the Local Education Welfare Officer (EWO) [name of officer if known] [child's name] attendance has improved to [x%] over the last 4-week monitoring period.

As [child's name] has an attendance rate of [x%] [child's name] will need to aim for a 100% attendance rate for the remainder of the academic year. If your child misses school on a regular basis, they are damaging their future life choices. Nationally, it has been proven that children with poor attendance miss out on making the expected progress in vital literacy and numeracy skills which is difficult to catch up. In secondary school, 19 days' absence correlates, on average, to the loss of a grade at GCSE in all subjects.

However, as [child's name] overall attendance rate remains a cause for concern at [x%] the support plan that was introduced with the EWO will remain in place for the next 4 school weeks. [child's name] attendance will therefore continue to be carefully monitored during this time period and we will keep you fully informed of developments.

Thank you for your support and help as we have worked together to improve the rate of attendance of [child's name] at school. We hope and expect that this improvement will be maintained during the remainder of the school year.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 3c

Unauthorised Absence – A fixed penalty letter

Dear [Parents name],

With reference to our letter dated [date], [child's name] has now had a total of [number] unauthorised absences within [time period]. These absences occurred on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

In line with our Attendance Policy, and the local authority's code of practice, we have to now request a penalty notice be issued by the local authority.

You are advised that parents/carers are required by law to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in prosecution under the Education Act 1996, section 444(1), and 444(1A). The Local Authority is empowered to issue Penalty Notices to parents/carers whose children fail to attend school regularly and punctually as the absence has been recorded as unauthorised.

On receipt of this Penalty Notice, you must pay:

- £60, if paid within 21 days
- £120, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

We would like to invite you in for a meeting with [appropriate member of staff], so we can discuss how we can support you to help improve [child's name] attendance.

Please contact the school office on [number] urgently so we can arrange this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 5

Forms to be used throughout GCE Trust.

ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

For the Parents to fill in:

I would like to request 'leave of absence' for:

Name	Form	School

****Please include children in the family who attend other schools but you must also complete a separate form for other schools.**

From:	To: (inclusive)	Total School Days =
-------	------------------------	---------------------

Please give a reason why the family cannot take their holiday during school holidays:

Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer) Date: _____

Please return this form to the Attendance Office at least **three weeks** before absence starts, together with evidence, where necessary.

--

For the School to fill in:

Date received:

Student's Name: _____

Form: _____

Attendance record (% of absences):

Evidence provided

Primary School contacted: YES / NO **Date:** _____ **Their decision:**

Authorised by Attendance Officer Signed:	Reason for authorisation:
NOT Authorised by Attendance Officer. Signed:	Reason for refusal:

Pass to LA for penalty fine if 4 days (8 sessions) or more unauthorised		[] (✓ if appropriate)
--	--	------------------------

Absence Request Form

Head teachers have been given the following directive by the Suffolk Director for Children & Young People, regarding requests for holiday/absence during term time.

Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

Schools will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made, with appropriate evidence, **three weeks in advance** of the holiday.

Schools will consider authorising holidays for:

- Service personnel
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis e.g. bereavement.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday
- availability of the desired accommodation
- poor weather experienced in the school holiday periods
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.

Schools will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS and GCSE/GCE examinations.

The Education Attendance Service, on behalf of Copleston High School, will be issuing fixed penalty notices in the following situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- Where a pupil has taken holiday during term-time for 4 or more days and the absence is not authorised by the school;
- Where a pupil has missed at least 8 sessions (4 school days) due to unauthorised absence in a 12 week period (120 sessions).

The penalty is payable to the Local Authority (details for the payment will be contained in the notice). The amount of the penalty is -

- £60 per parent per child paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice.
- £120 per parent per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

PLEASE RETURN TO THE ACADEMY RECEPTION

Authorised Term Time Absence.

Dear [Parent Name(s)],

Thank you for your request to take [Names] out of school between [Date] and [Date].

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application dated [00-00-00] **I am able to agree to your request.** This will mean that only over the dates given above your child will be marked as being absent with the academy's permission.

I have not come to this decision lightly. Our school is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

Each request for an authorised absence is considered on its merits at the time. Please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not guarantee that I will be able to agree to a similar request from you or other parents in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Unauthorised Term Time Absence.

Dear [Parent Name(s)],

Thank you for your request to take [Names] out of school between [Date] and [Date].

Having considered the circumstances set out in your application dated [00-00-00] **I am in this case not able to agree to your request.** This will mean that if your child does not attend the academy without further good cause then their absence will be treated as being unauthorised. Note that unauthorised absences can lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Authority as per our letter sent to all parents at the start of this academic year.

Our school, whilst acknowledging that each family's circumstances are different, is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not come to this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time and many variables are considered. As each request is unique, my decision in this instance cannot be directly compared with decisions made by the school in the past or other schools currently. Also, it does not set a precedent for the future.

I am sorry to have to disappoint you on this occasion.

Yours sincerely,

Unauthorised Absence Fixed Penalty Notice Letter

Dear [Parent Name],

Following my letter dated [Date], [child name] has not attended the academy on the following dates from [Date] to [Date]. This letter clearly stated that the request for leave was refused, so in line with our Attendance Policy and the local authority's code of practice we have to now request a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued by the local authority.

On receipt of this notice, you must pay:

- £60 if paid within 21 days.
- £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If payment is not made within 28 days, then the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

Your sincerely,

Concern about punctuality.

Dear [Parent Name],

I am writing to you because [child's name] has been late to school [number] of times in between [date] and [date].

They have arrived at school after the register has closed on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

They also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

School begins promptly at [time] and registration closes at [time]. Afternoon registration takes place between [time slot].

Arriving promptly ensures that your child does not miss work and that disruption to the teachers and the other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can also lead to a significant loss in learning time and therefore may negatively affect the educational progress of your child.

Persistent lateness can result in a fixed penalty notice being issued, but we wish to avoid that occurring, hence the need for this letter to be sent out. We are committed to working with families to ensure that every pupil gets the support that they need. We would therefore like to arrange a meeting to discuss with you how we improve [name] punctuality.

Please contact the school on [tele number] to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,