



## **West Wimbledon Primary School**

# **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2014/15**

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|----------|---|
| Title:   | School Attendance Policy  |
| Status:  | Draft   |
| Version: | 1.0   |
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| Owner    | Full Governing Body   |

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2014-2015

## **Rationale**

West Wimbledon Primary School is committed to providing a broad, full and high quality education to all pupils, and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We continue to strive to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, West Wimbledon is committed to ensuring that each child achieves a high level of school attendance, as we know that this is essential. We consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity is utilised to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance, and the proven link this has to achievement and attainment. To this end, the School keeps under review the ways in which it rewards and celebrates attendance and achievement.

West Wimbledon Primary School continues to promote early intervention and the prevention of poor attendance.

School attendance is subject to various pieces of education law and their consequent regulations, and this policy has been written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

As part of a weekly cycle of review, the school examines its attendance figures and, on an annual basis, we set challenging attendance and reduction of absence targets. The School regularly reviews its systems for improving attendance to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy contains within it the indicative procedures that the School intends to use to meet its attendance targets, as Appendix 4.

## **School Procedures**

### **Absence**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration session must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on her/his behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as 'no reason given' and a phone call made to the parents, followed by a letter if a reason is still not obtained. On the first day of absence parents are required to telephone the school to inform us why their child is unable to attend and how long they are expected to be absent. The School is then able to mark the register appropriately as either an authorised or unauthorised absence. The decision to authorise or unauthorise absence rests with the school.

If a child is absent from school, s/he should not be on the school site during the day of the absence.

### **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place, after the children are collected and taken to their classroom, at the start of school. School begins at 08:45 and the expectation is that the register is called at 08:50. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late. If they arrive after registration is closed, and without an acceptable reason they will be marked as having an absence. Pupils who arrive late following an early morning appointment should bring evidence of this, e.g. an appointment card.

Afternoon registration is at 13:00 for Reception, Key Stages 1 and 2.

Nursery afternoon registration is at 12:30

### **Frequent Absence**

Registers are monitored regularly by the Headteacher, the School's Attendance Officer and the LA designated Education Welfare Officer to identify any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the School will try to resolve the problem, depending on its severity, using strategies such as:

- Letters from a child's class teacher;
- Meetings with the class teacher and the child's family;
- The Headteacher talking to the parent/child;
- A letter from the Headteacher;
- A meeting with the Headteacher;
- A referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Where attendance falls below 90%, and that poor attendance has been predominantly based on medical absence, the School will request medical evidence (and provide parents with guidance on future acceptable examples of medical evidence) for all future absences where illness is the cause. The School may also refer the child to the School Nurse or to the Specialist nurse in the Education Welfare Service if there is a high level of absence for medical reasons. If medical evidence as requested is not provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. A high level of unauthorised absence will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer who may issue a Penalty Notice warning. A monitoring period will then follow, and if attendance does not improve within the monitoring period, a Penalty Notice fine of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay this can lead to prosecution in a magistrate's court. If found guilty, a fine of up to £1,000 can be imposed. Conviction, following a failure to pay, will result in a criminal record.

For pupils with adequately evidenced illness, the School will follow appropriate procedures to offer support. Please see the School's Medical Policy for further information.

## **Reintegration**

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include a discussion about the best ways for the child to catch up on missed work, and to be brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

## **Absence notes**

The School retains notes from parents, explaining absence as per current protocol/legislation.

## **Promoting/improving attendance**

The School will use every available opportunity to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their full entitlement to their education. A regular newsletter informs parents about strategies being used in school to raise attendance, as well as to publish summary data for each class's attendance over the regular, specified time period.

## **Leave of absence**

The Governors of West Wimbledon Primary School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a pupil's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be exceptional, extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2013** state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.
2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form, or communicated to the School's Office orally, where it will then be recorded in writing.
3. This must include the reason why you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A decision as to whether the absence will be authorised or not will be communicated within 7 days.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the London Borough of Merton. The Penalty Notice fine is £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

## **Attendance Awards**

The School will continue to use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

- Weekly attendance award.
- Termly attendance and punctuality certificates.

We will also continue to investigate a range of means and strategies to encourage and celebrate improved attendance, both at an individual, family and class level.

### **Attendance Targets**

The School sets attendance targets each year. Progress towards these targets is analysed regularly by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and shared with Governors on a weekly basis. Strategies adopted in line with this policy are implemented to achieve or exceed the target. It is seen as the responsibility of all parents, staff and pupils at West Wimbledon Primary School to ensure good attendance and to contribute to the achievement of our targets.

### **Our 2014 - 15 School targets are:**

|                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Attendance – Reception to year 6 | 96.5% |
| PA% (based on 46+ absences)      | 2.0%  |
| PA% (based on 38+ sessions)      | 3.5%  |

### **Registers**

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. As West Wimbledon Primary School now uses a computerised registration system, data is maintained and backed-up indefinitely. Computer registers can be printed out at as required and bound into annual volumes.

### **Register Security**

Computerised records of attendance and registers are safely stored, in accordance with the School's policies relating to management information. Administrative access to electronic registers is carefully controlled to ensure that the correct personnel in the School, with requisite access privileges, can deal effectively with all aspects of registration, attendance and absence entry and monitoring.

### **Review**

This policy is due for review in September 2015 in line with a full evaluation of this policy, its effectiveness and changes in legislation.

# Appendices

## 1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] To any special needs he may have

*either* by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

### **Register and Admission Roll keeping**

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

**The full legislative framework for school attendance can be found in the following statutes and their consequent regulations:**

### **Pupil registers and attendance codes:**

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments, most notably, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

### **The School day and year:**

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Education Act 2002
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011

### **Statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures:**

- The Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education Act 2005
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments
- The Education and Skills Act 2008

## **2 Categorisation of Absence**

**Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.**

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

### **1. Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

### **2. Authorised absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

### **3. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

This can include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

# West Wimbledon Primary School

## Leave of Absence Form



### Request for Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances during Term Time

It is not advisable to take your child/ren on a leave of absence during term time as this causes disruption to their education. Schools must follow the law in this regard and may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances if certain criteria are fulfilled.

#### The Pupil Registration Regulations (England) 2006 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances is authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. (This is not an automatic right of parents/guardians)
- You should not normally take your child(ren) on a leave of absence during the school term.
- **Please do not book your leave of absence until authority is given.**
- Each request for leave of absence will be considered individually, taking into account: the circumstances for the request, the supporting evidence provided, the overall attendance of your child(ren), your child's stage of education and progress and where appropriate both internal and external examinations and assessments.
- If the absence is approved by the Headteacher you will be advised as to how many days the Headteacher has approved for your child's absence.
- If the school does not agree the absence and you take the leave without permission or your child is absent for more than the agreed number of days the absence will be unauthorised.
- Leave of absence taken without the authorisation of the school may lead to your child(ren) being referred to the Education Welfare Service and the possibility of statutory action and a fine.

In order for your application for absence to be considered, please complete below:

|   |  |                   |  |
|---|--|-------------------|--|
| <b>Name(s) of Child(ren)</b>                                    |  | <b>Class (es)</b> |  |
| <b>Home address:</b>  |  |                   |  |
| <b>Dates of absence (Start)</b>                                 |  | <b>End</b>        |  |
| <b>Reason for request (additional evidence may be required)</b> |  |                   |  |

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Carer    Date form submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

|                       |  |                             |  |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Email address:</b> |  | <b>Mobile phone number:</b> |  |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|

**The above request for leave of absence in term time for has / has not been authorised.**

**If authorised, your child/ren should return to school on:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Designation: *Headteacher*

## ABSENCE AND EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE POLICY

The Governors of West Wimbledon Primary School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a pupil's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2013** state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

With regard to the regulation outlined above the school's policy is as follows:

2. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.
2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form.
2. This must include the reason why you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. This form, outlining the decision of the School will be sent to you within 7 days.

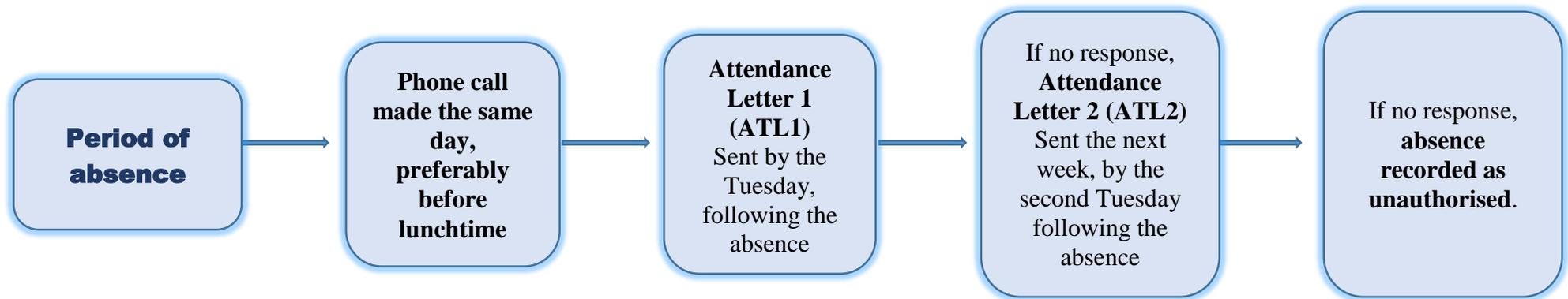
Any extended absences that are not authorised are very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the London Borough of Merton. The Penalty Notice fine is £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay this can lead to prosecution in a magistrate's court. If found guilty, a fine of up to £1,000 can be imposed. Conviction, following a failure to pay, will result in a criminal record.

### SCHOOL DATA CHECKLIST:

#### For School Office Use Only

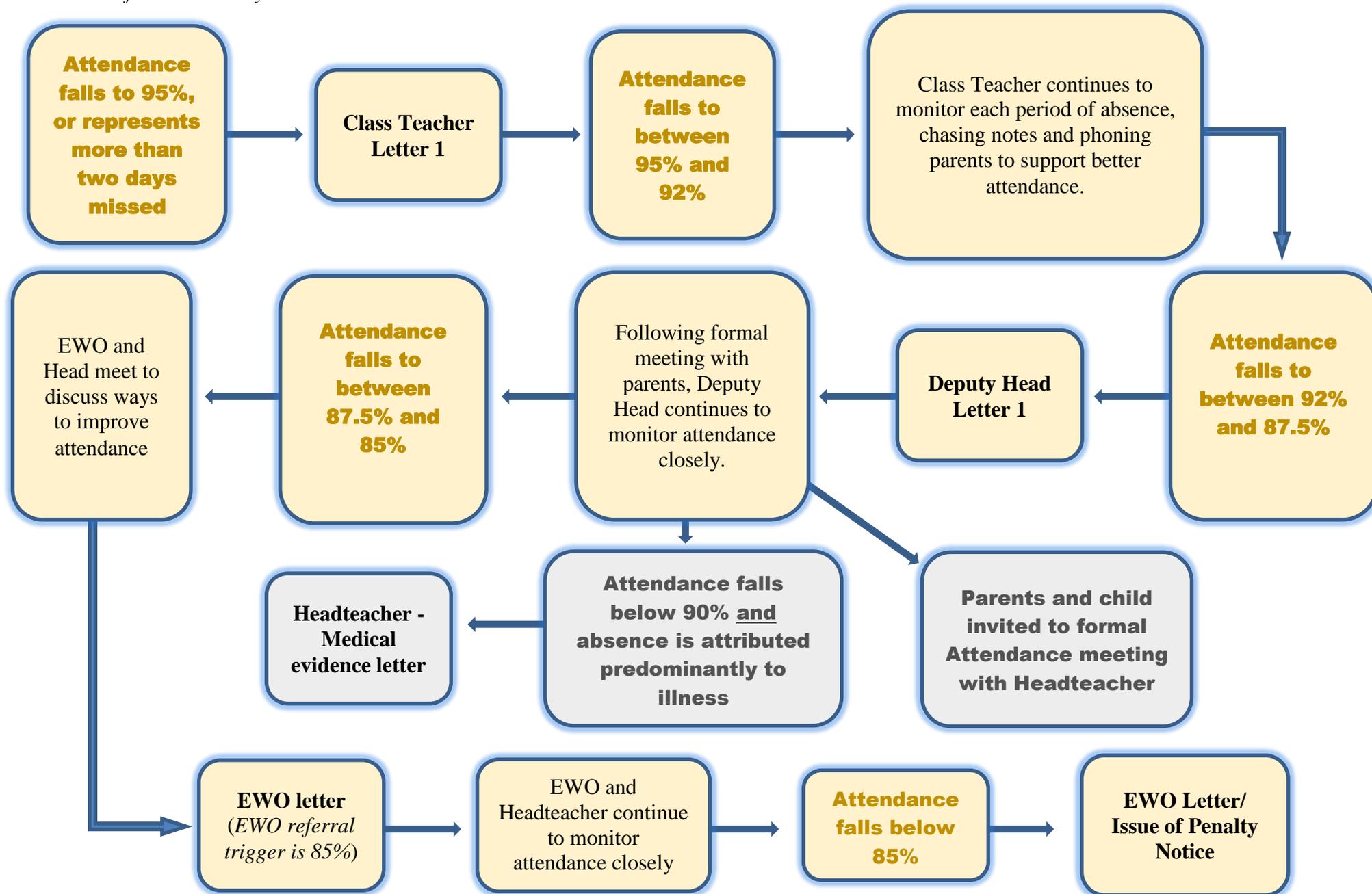
|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Pupil's name</b>  |  |
| <b>% Attendance Year to date</b>                                 |  |
| <b>Attainment/Progress</b>                                       |  |
| <b>SATs/Exam Check</b>   |  |
| <b>Previous leave of absence requested/taken (last 2 years)</b>  |  |
| <b>Nature of exceptional circumstances and evidence provided</b> |  |

## Individual periods of absence without explanation



# Cumulative absence

The process, below, provides an indicative model of the ways in which the School hopes to proceed. It does not, however, identify a prescriptive process which must - or will - be followed in every instance.





**West Wimbledon  
Primary School**

**Indicative  
Attendance  
Letters**

**Attendance Letter 1**

«date\_of\_printing»

«address\_block»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname» «reg»

It has been brought to my attention that «chosen\_forename» has «total\_unexplained\_absence» unexplained absences on «periods\_of\_absence»

If your child is absent for any reason, the law states that the School needs to be informed immediately. If the School is not informed of a pupil’s absence, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

It is a legal requirement that pupils attend school regularly, unless there are legitimate reasons. Please would you complete the attached slip and return to me, Mrs Howells in the School Office, within one week from the date of this letter. Please note if no reason for absence is received, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs Howells**  
Attendance Officer

.....

PLEASE RETURN TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE

Re: «chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname» «reg»

Please give the reason for your «son\_daughter»’s unexplained absences.

«periods\_of\_absence» .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

**Attendance Letter 2**

«date\_of\_printing»

«address\_block»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname» «reg»

As you will be aware, the School contacted you last week about «chosen\_forename»'s «total\_unexplained\_absence» unexplained absences on «periods\_of\_absence». Regrettably, I have no record of a response and so I am writing to ask that you inform the School of the reason immediately.

As was previously explained, the law states that if the School is not informed of a child's absence, this must subsequently be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Please note that an unsatisfactory number of unauthorised absences may lead to your child being referred to the Education Welfare Service and result in a Penalty Notice fine of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay this can lead to prosecution in a magistrate's court. If found guilty, a fine of up to £1,000 can be imposed. Conviction, following a failure to pay, will result in a criminal record.

Therefore, may I urge you to complete the attached slip and return it to me, Mrs Howells in the School Office, within one week from the date of this letter. Failure to do so will result in this absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs Howells**

Attendance Officer

.....

PLEASE RETURN TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE

Re: «chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname» «reg»

Please give the reason for your «son\_daughter»'s unexplained absences.

«periods\_of\_absence» .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

## **Class Teacher Letter 1**

«date\_of\_printing»

«address\_block»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname» «reg»

I am writing to you as «chosen\_forename»'s Class Teacher to register my concern about «her/his» current level of absence at school. As you can see from the enclosed print-out of attendance, «her/his» attendance has now fallen below 95%.

To put this in context, if this were repeated across the school year, «chosen\_forename» would miss the equivalent of nearly two weeks of school. As you will appreciate, this can only have a serious impact on the chances of «her/him» making the kinds of progress we expect, and achieving all of which «she/he» is capable.

I will be continuing to monitor «chosen\_forename»'s progress carefully and will be in contact with you again if it does not appear to improve.

I hope that I can continue to rely upon your support to ensure that «she/he» comes to school each day and that, together, we can ensure that «she/he» takes full advantage of the opportunities available to «her/him» at School.

Please feel free to contact me here at School if there is any further information you require or would like to discuss this matter with me in more detail.

With very best wishes,

«Class Teacher»

**Class teacher**

## Deputy Head Letter 1

«date\_of\_printing»

«address\_block»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname» «reg»

I am writing to you as «chosen\_forename»'s to register the School's serious concern over «her/his» current level of absence at school. I know that you have been in contact with «her/his» Class Teacher but, as can be seen from the enclosed print-out of attendance, «her/his» attendance continues to decline.

This level of attendance can only have a serious impact on the chances of «her/him» making the kinds of progress we expect, and achieving all of which «she/he» is capable. Government research shows that of those pupils who miss between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of school, only 35 per cent then go on to achieve five A\* to C GCSEs including English and maths, when they transfer to secondary school. This compares to 73 per cent of pupils with over 95 per cent attendance achieving five A\* to Cs including English and maths.

In addition, the failure to ensure regular attendance can lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Service and this may lead to a Penalty Notice fine of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay this can lead to prosecution in a magistrate's court. If found guilty, a fine of up to £1,000 can be imposed. Conviction, following a failure to pay, will result in a criminal record.

What I would like to do is meet with you as a matter of urgency so that we can discuss «chosen\_forename»'s poor attendance and discuss strategies to work with you to ensure that it improves rapidly. It is vital that this meeting takes place urgently to stop the likely outcome that «chosen\_forename» fails to make full progress, as well as avoiding my having to discuss «her/his» attendance pattern with the Education Welfare Officer.

Therefore, I should be grateful if you would phone me here at the School on 020 8946 1620 to make an appointment with me at your earliest possible convenience so that we can ensure that «chosen\_forename» comes to school more regularly and is better able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to «her/him» at School.

I look forward to hearing from you very soon,

«Deputy Head»

**Deputy Head**

## Headteacher Medical Letter 1

«date\_of\_printing»

«address\_block»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname» «reg»

As you will be aware from previous school communications, «chosen\_forename»'s poor attendance has become a serious concern, and has failed to improve significantly. Specifically, it now stands at <attendance percentage>%. This is far below what we expect and, to put this into perspective, a level of 90% attendance across a whole school year is equivalent to missing 19 full days (which is nearly four school weeks) a year.

When looking into the reasons why «chosen\_forename» has been absent from school, it has become evident that the majority of the absences have been put down to illness and/or medical reasons.

Due to the level of illness and/or medical absence, I must now insist that if any further absence occurs and is attributed to health reasons, relevant evidence must be received to the School that shows that s/he» has been absent and that this absence is supported by a doctor. Some examples of acceptable evidence include: doctor's appointment cards, prescriptions, letters from doctors, etc.

If this evidence is not supplied when your child returns after an illness or medical absence, that period of absence will be recorded as an "unauthorised" absence – which is the legal term for an absence recorded as truancy from school.

I would appreciate your support in trying to ensure that «chosen\_forename»'s attendance improves as a matter of urgency. The School will continue to monitor the situation and will be in contact again if it does not improve. It is worth reminding you, at this point, that failure to ensure regular attendance can lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Service and may lead to a Penalty Notice fine of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay this can lead to prosecution in a magistrate's court. If found guilty, a fine of up to £1,000 can be imposed. Conviction, following a failure to pay, will result in a criminal record.

Thank you for your cooperation and do please feel free to contact me here at School if you would like to discuss this matter with me in more detail.

Yours sincerely

«Headteacher»

**Interim Headteacher**