

Tattershall Primary School

Attendance and Absence Policy

Aims of pupil attendance policy

- improve pupil attendance
- make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school
- raise educational achievement of all pupils
- provide support and guidance to parents and pupils
- develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data
- promote and reward regular school attendance at whole school, class and individual level

The Law

Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure regular attendance, the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1966.

In cases where the parental duty is not being fulfilled, Section 444B of the same act empowers Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty of either £60 or £120.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) has a duty to ensure that parents meet this responsibility and the service can seek legal redress to secure a pupil's attendance if a parent fails in their duty. The school has a responsibility to keep records on attendance, agree authorised absences and report persistent absenteeism to the EWO at the Local Authority.

Working with the Local Authority

Tattershall Primary School is a local authority maintained school. We will take our guidance from them and they will issue fines/notices as advised by the EWO. Tattershall Primary School may at times purchase additional EWO time to help monitor and manage attendance.

Where a fine is issued by school it then moves to being managed by the Local Authority, they collect the fine and manage any further evidence or prosecution. At this point do not contact the school to discuss the process. Please note fines do not generate an income for the school.

How Our School Manages Pupil Attendance

At Tattershall Primary School the attendance records are initially recorded by the class teacher; these are inputted electronically into our system. This helps us to produce termly data through the School Census. We celebrate 95% attendance or above each half term using stickers and an Attendance prize. Children achieving 100% also get a 100% sticker. Children who achieve 100% across a whole year receive a prize at the end of the school year.

Each reason for pupil absence has a special code and this assists the school to monitor persistent absentees. Through data analysis we can see which pupils fall below this threshold and take action.

The school closely tracks the attendance of children at risk of becoming persistent absentee and produces an action plan for these pupils, this includes meeting with parents and sending notification letters. We have adopted Lincolnshire County Council Attendance Traffic Light Template Letters and Legal Report Guidance. (Appendix 1)

An Amber letter will be sent to parents if a child has achieved less than 95% attendance in a term and a RED letter will be sent if less than 90% attendance has been achieved.

Where children with 90% attendance or below shows no improvement they will be reported as persistent absentees and we will liaise with the EWO/LA as what action shall be taken. Action may include contact Social Services to raise concerns about a child's welfare.

The ongoing process includes the following action points:

Daily: Registers completed twice a day (2 absence marks a day AM & PM)

Weekly: Informal monitoring of attendance

Termly: Pupil with attendance below 94% considered at risk of becoming persistent absentees

Pupils with attendance below 90% to have an action recorded.

(a) Unauthorised Absences

At Tattershall Primary School we have an expectation that parents will telephone/email the school to inform us of their child's absence by 9.30am in a morning. If we have not heard from a parent we will contact them to find out the reason for their child's absence. We may not accept a parent's reason for absence, especially if the child's attendance is below 95%.

Regular unauthorised absences means that a parent or parents may be breaking the law and could be:

- issued with an Education penalty charge notice of £60 - £120 by the Local Authority
- found guilty in a magistrates court and fined up to £2,500

In very severe cases parents can be imprisoned for up to 3 months. Because school attendance is a very serious matter, we aim to have good communication about attendance matters with parents through our newsletter, structured conversations and annual reviews. If there is a problem it is better if a parent speaks with a member of staff rather than allow a situation to escalate.

Note: charges are subject to change and rates provide by the LA will supersede those used in this policy. A fine may be issued for each individual absence period. For ongoing absence periods which may cross a natural break in the school year (eg holiday) this may be seen as different absence periods and fined separately.

(b) Regular Pupil Sickness

If a child is regularly absent due to sickness a parent may be invited to school to discuss their child's absences, this discussion may include the EWO, school nurse or representatives of the SEND team. When a child is regularly absent due to illness the school will request that a parent provides medical details from their doctor before continuing to authorise further absences.

(c) Requests for Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time

Our school actively discourages parents making requests to take their children out of school during term time. The school is closed for around 14 weeks of the year and parents are expected to use this time for taking holidays and visiting family abroad. Legal guidelines were changed in 2013; the amendments specify that no leave of absence may be granted, during term time, unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Exceptional circumstances are decided on a case-by-case request. All evidence to support the request should be presented at the outset. A specific decision given to a request cannot be seen as precedent setting.

It is very unlikely the school will ever authorise a request for more than 5 days. The decision may be made to authorise part of the requested time, meaning any further absence taken would be unauthorised.

Definition for exceptional circumstances

At Tattershall Primary School we accept ‘exceptional circumstances’ as being those of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.

This may include:

- Service personnel returning from/ scheduled to embark on a tour
- Religious celebration or tradition (see “d” below)
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue

- Where families work in seasonal occupation and families have supporting evidence that they are unable to take holiday during school breaks
- Where a member of the family is unable to be released from their employment during school breaks or have restricted holidays at certain periods (evidence will be required in the form of a supporting letter from employer/line manager)
- A unique one-off factor such as a family wedding, a birth or death
- To visit another potential school setting (e.g. Secondary Transfer)
- To support a talent or extra curricular event (see “gifted, talented and production” section below)

This list is not exhaustive and ‘exceptional circumstances’ will be at the headteachers discretion.

The school will not accept as an ‘exceptional circumstance’ the fact that holidays are cheaper.

Previous attendance will always be looked at. Where a pupil’s attendance for a previous year or in current year, is below 95% it is highly unlikely that the school will authorise any further absence, under any circumstance.

Where ‘exceptional circumstances’ are deemed appropriate, the pupil may be required to complete additional home learning. If this is not completed/not completed to the expected standard further requests for authorised absence will be denied.

Parents should not, under any circumstances, make travel arrangements during term time without discussing it with the Headteacher first. Families, who take their children out of school for unauthorised leave during term time, risk receiving a Formal Warning, or Education Penalty Notice.

Gifted, Talented and Production leave

If a pupil has a specific talent or gift which can be best supported by an agency beyond the school (eg gymnastics graded lessons) or is taking part in an event (eg sport championship) or production (eg a theatre show/pantomime) exceptional circumstances can be requested. These will be considered on a case-by-case merit. The decision made in one case will not be set precedent for a future decision.

If a pupil needs to leave school early to attend additional out of school “lessons” and this doesn’t require them to miss a full session, this may be granted for a set period of time/number of sessions.

If a pupil is representing their country or county, this may be granted as required.

If the pupil is taking part in a time limited activity (eg production) this may be granted for a set number of sessions.

If the pupil is required for a specific “one off” event (eg Scout Parade) this may be granted, with each event requested separately, this would usually be limited to a maximum of 3 requests a year.

If the pupil is showing a talent in an area that has ongoing events (eg sporting events) then this may be granted, but this would usually be limited to 3 authorised absences a year.

This list is not exhaustive but may be used as a best fit guide by school leadership.

For all of the above, written evidence from the organisation may be required.

Appealing a decision

The Education Regulations 2013 (Pupil Registration, England, Amendment) states that it is the final decision of the headteacher to authorising leave during term time and there is no right to appeal.

(d) Religious Holidays

Parents may absent their child from school on the day of the religious festival, so that children can enjoy celebrations with their families. The school will also apply the ‘Exceptional circumstance’ criteria above for cultural requests. Additional time to travel to such celebrates may also be granted, but this will not normally be for more than 5 days (10 authorised sessions)

(e) Punctuality

The school gates open at 8.50am and pupils are expected to be in class for register by 9am. The register is taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Pupils arriving after the register without a good reason will be given an

unauthorised late mark. Lateness will generate unauthorised attendance marks. As well as recording that a child has arrived at school, marking the register is necessary for health and safety reasons should the building need to be evacuated. Children should be collected from school at 3.15pm. If a parent is going to be late collecting their child they should ring the school office. Any parent who regularly collects their child late will be invited to meet with the Headteacher. In very serious cases of children being left late at school the child may be deemed to be abandoned with the local police station being informed.

(f) Aggregated attendance percentages

As attendance data is scrutinized termly, all unauthorised absences up until that moment are aggregated together. Please be aware this means it may be the start of the proceeding term where Attendance Meetings, Notification letters or Fines are issued.

When looking at up-to-date attendance data the school will look for patterns in a child/families previous attendance when deciding the best course of action.

School Census Data

Our school must submit data to the Department for Children (DFE) on the number of pupil's that are persistently absent, for whatever reason. The DFE threshold for persistent absenteeism is 90% or below attendance (September 2015). It is well researched that a pupil's attainment is linked to attendance. 'If a school can improve attendance by 1%, they will see a 5-6% improvement in attainment' (DFE) Our school's clear message is "every lesson counts".

Note: if DFE percentage levels change, they will supersede those set out in our policy.

Children on Long Term Leave due to Illness or Medical treatment

Occasionally some children have to be away from school over a long period of time due to illness or for medical treatment. We will ensure that if they are well enough they can continue their education either in hospital or by arranging home tuition.

Dental & Medical Appointments

Wherever possible, parents should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or at the beginning or end of the school day. Most medical appointments do not necessitate a full days absence and it is the parents

responsibility to collect their child from school to take them to appointments and to bring them back to school once their appointment is over.

School Governors

The Headteacher has a responsibility to report on attendance issues at every full meeting of the governing body. Our governors support the Headteacher in managing requests for pupil leave of absence and take the position that families have “no right” to such leave. Our governors decide the start and finish of the school day and determine the dates for the school term and holiday dates. Our Chair of Governors can be contacted via the school office.

Safeguarding Children

Our school must be able to demonstrate to Ofsted that it knows the whereabouts of each child and reason for their absence. It is very important for the local authority to be able to track children if they are not attending school and in some cases for schools to make a referral to Social Care. If a parent is moving house can you please let us know that you will no longer require a place for your child, with the date that they will be leaving. It is also helpful to us to have the name of the new school that your child will be attending. If you do not have this information at the time, please leave a forwarding address and telephone number so that we can contact you. Children who leave the school and their whereabouts are unknown will have their details passed to the Local Authority.

Transition to Secondary School

Some children find the move from primary school to secondary school difficult and this can have a detrimental effect on their school attendance in year 7. Our school aims to support year 6 pupils in their transition from primary to secondary school by:

- having a lead member of staff responsible for transition
- developing pupils’ skills in managing their belongings and homework
- attending secondary school induction and taster days
- working on transition programmes in Year 6

We are committed to ensuring that all our year 6 pupils go forward to their new schools equipped for a successful transition.

National pandemic and lockdowns

During times of national pandemics and lockdowns, usual attendance expectations, tracking data, notifications and fines may not be applied. However, this will follow national guidelines and such events should not be used as reasons for individual pupils having significantly lower attendance than averages.

This Policy was agreed Summer 2022 and will be reviewed every 3 years or as required

Attendance
"Traffic Light" Template Letters
&
Legal Report Guidance

TEMPLATE LETTERS (1) AMBER

ATTENDANCE LETTER

NAME:

Your child has achieved **less than 95% attendance** this term which is below our minimum expectation.

GOOD attendance is very important so that children are given as much opportunity as possible academically and socially. When children are absent from school they often find it difficult to catch up on the work they have missed and can feel unsettled.

We are asking for the support of all parents in improving attendance levels as we believe this is one of the main ways in which our children will be happy at school and achieve their full potential.

Your child has had an above average amount of time off school this year. It may be that these absences have been due to illness but we feel you should be aware that this needs to improve over the coming term.

We thank-you for your support in this and hope to see an improvement in your child's attendance next term.

TEMPLATE LETTER (2) RED

ATTENDANCE LETTER

NAME:

Your child has achieved **less than 90% attendance** this term which is a cause for concern – your child is at risk of underachieving as a result.

We would ask for your support in ensuring that attendance improves over the coming weeks. Your child's attendance will now be monitored on a regular basis and we may invite you into school to discuss this further.

If, following this letter, your child's attendance does not improve we will contact you again in order to discuss the situation further. It may be necessary to ask the Education Welfare Officer for assistance in this matter.

GOOD attendance is very important so that children are given as much opportunity as possible academically and socially. When children are absent from school they often find it difficult to catch up on the work they have missed and can feel unsettled.

We are asking for the support of all parents in improving attendance levels as we believe this is one of the main ways in which our children will be happy at school and achieve their full potential.

FPN LETTER 1: GENERIC (Holidays)

Generic Letter (Holidays)

Date

Address

Dear Mr (one letter to each parent)

Dear Mrs

Childs Name

DOB

I am writing to inform you that The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 has been amended and came into force from the 1st September 2013. The amendments have removed reference to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. (Therefore the previous arrangement whereby schools could grant up to 10 days authorised holiday/absence has now ceased).

As a result, a request for leave of absence will not be granted for the purpose of a holiday **unless deemed to be 'exceptional circumstances'**.

If you wish to seek approval for any request of absence for your child(ren) from School, then you must apply in writing to the Head Teacher/Principle, at least four weeks in advance of the requested for absence. You should only then remove your child(ren) if the absence has been authorised, and notified to you in writing by the School. Any exceptional circumstances must be clearly set out in the written request to the Head Teacher/Principal who will consider each case upon its merits.

If you then choose to take your child out of school during term time and it is **not** deemed to be exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the School, then this will be coded as an unauthorised absence and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for the period of absence. Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty may result in further legal action being taken against you.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.**

Please note: A Fixed Penalty Notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from their school.

- **Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to pupils subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion during school hours the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the LA before a magistrates' court or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £60.00 or £120.00.**

If you have any concerns regarding this please contact:, we appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Principal/Head

FPN LETTER 2: Holidays during term time

Date

Dear

FIXED PENALTY FORMAL WARNING

NAME OF CHILD/YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

PUPIL REGISTERED AT:

This letter is a **Fixed Penalty Formal Warning** and is being sent to you because you have requested a period of absence from school for your child during term time.

During the period you have requested from to , is not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and therefore will be coded as unauthorised absence. If you choose to ignore this warning, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for the above period of absence.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children attending their school under the following legal framework:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.**

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the school on the above contact details.

Yours sincerely

FPN LETTER 3: Persistent absence/lateness

Date

Dear

FIXED PENALTY FORMAL WARNING

NAME OF CHILD/YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

PUPIL REGISTERED AT:

This letter is a **Fixed Penalty Formal Warning** and is being sent to you because your child has an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence.

During the period to , was absent/lateness on sessions out of possible half-day sessions of which were unauthorised and in addition she/he was late on occasions.

's attendance will be reviewed from the date of this warning, with the expectation that his/her attendance increases to 100%. Failure to comply may result in a Fixed Penalty being issued.

Please note if your child's attendance has fallen below 90% due to illness or a medical condition you will be required to provide evidence showing that you have sought appropriate medical advice.

Requesting the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children attending their school under the following legal framework:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.**

Should you wish to discuss this matter further or to access appropriate support, please contact the school on the above contact details.

Yours sincerely

Request for Issue of Fixed Penalty Notice S.444A Education Act 1996

The request form below must be completed **IN FULL** for each child and returned with:

- Completed supplementary information sheet
- Copy of the “Fixed Penalty Formal Warning” letter
- Pupil’s Attendance Print-out.

Return all of the above to: FPN@lincolnshire.gov.uk

REASON FOR FIXED PENALTY NOTICE: * PERSISTENT ABSENCE/HOLIDAY *please delete			
PARENT/GUARDIAN DETAILS		FIXED PENALTY NOTICE (FPN) FOR BOTH PARENTS? *YES/NO *please delete	
PARENT 1		PARENT 2	
Title			
Forename			
Surname			
Address			
If Parents first language is not English which language does the FPN need sending out in?			
CHILD DETAILS			
Child’s Name	Year Group	Date of Birth	School
Date of Fixed Penalty Warning Letter			
EWO/ATTENDANCE OFFICER	SIGNATURE	EMAIL ADDRESS **	DATE
MANAGER/HEAD TEACHER	SIGNATURE		DATE
INCLUSION AND ATTENDANCE TEAM LEADER	SIGNATURE		DATE

**** N.B THERE MUST BE 4.5 DAYS UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE TO ISSUE AN FPN**

Request for Issue of Fixed Penalty Notice S.444A Education Act 1996

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

*This form must be completed and attached to our
Request for Issue of Penalty Notice*

This provides us with the necessary information required to process your request

N.B Minimum of 4.5 days unauthorised absence (over a 6 week period) to request an FPN

General Information	
Has a warning letter been issued informing parent(s) that a Fixed Penalty Notice will be requested from the Local Authority? <i>(please attach copies)</i>	Yes/No
Have any reasons for absences been provided by parent(s)? If Yes please give details: (N/A for Exclusion cases)	Yes/No N/A
Interventions	
<i>(Please list dates and outcomes in space provided)</i>	
Letters sent: (please provide copies)	
Fixed Penalty Warning Letter: Date (please provide copies)	
Text/Telephone calls made: (Call log)	
First SAP date: Target & review date Second SAP date: Outcome:	
Other Meetings offered in School:	
Home Visits Conducted: Arranged visit Dates: Outcome:	

Cold Call Dates: Outcome:	
Additional Evidence:	
Have Parents supplied supporting evidence for absences? e.g. medical, exceptional circumstances <i>(Photocopies of appointment cards and or prescriptions accepted)</i>	Yes/No
Have the absences been unauthorised and have the parents been made aware of this?	Yes/No
Do both parents have day to day care for the child? <i>(consider whether, practically both parents are able to ensure the child attends school)</i>	Yes/No
EHA – Early Help Assessment – <i>Required for Persistent Absence cases</i>	
<i>Poor attendance might be the consequence of underlying home issues or circumstances. An early Help Assessment can be a tool that can identify the needs of the child and provide additional help.</i>	
Have you completed an Early Help Assessment?	Yes/No
SCHOOL CONTACT	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	

Template: FORMAL WARNING (Persistent Absence)

Ref:

Dear

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FORMAL WARNING

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

REGISTERED PUPIL AT:

I need to draw your attention to the fact that parents have a duty in law to ensure their child attends school regularly, unless they are unable to do so by reason of ill-health or other legally acceptable reason.

During the period , was absent from school on out of a possible half-day sessions and no valid reasons have been provided. This is an unacceptable rate of attendance and I attach for your information, a copy of the Pupil Absence Record Sheet.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure their child receives suitable efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or education otherwise. Section 444 (1)(a) of the same Act states that where a parent of a child who knowingly and without reasonable justification fails to ensure regular attendance of a registered pupil at that school, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section. The Local Education Authority may, where necessary, institute legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under this section of the Education Act 1996 against those parents concerned. Alternatively Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Education Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.

Please contact the school to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

Template: FINAL WARNING (Persistent Absence)

Ref:

13 May 2022

Dear

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FINAL WARNING TO PARENTS

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

REGISTERED PUPIL AT:

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly thereat, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section.

TAKE NOTICE that the Local Education Authority considers that you have been guilty of a breach of the law in that you have failed, despite this matter having been previously brought to your attention, to send regularly and punctually to school in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1996. In view of this you have made yourself liable to be summoned before a Magistrates Court for each alleged offence.

This warning is issued in the hope that there may be no necessity to take further steps to enforce the law. However, you are warned that if you do not cause to attend school regularly, proceedings will be taken against you. You do not have to answer this letter and may well wish to seek the advice of a solicitor.

Yours sincerely