

RYHALL CE ACADEMY



POLICY STATEMENT ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE (CHILDREN)

Formulation date:	Sept 2014
Responsibility:	Local Governing Board
Reviewed:	January 2017
Next Review Date:	January 2019

Associated Documentation:

- Penalty Notices (unauthorised absence and Exclusion), Rutland County Council, People Directorate, July 2013
- Home School Agreement 2016-17
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Gov.uk, September 2016
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and PRUs in England, DfE, 2012
- School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools and academies, DfE, November 2016
- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- School procedure flowchart for addressing attendance concerns below 95% (Appendix 1)
- Registration Codes (Appendix 2)
- Snow letter to Parents, Nov 2016, (Appendix 3)
- Request for leave of absence form (Appendix 4)

Summary:

Parents have a legal responsibility to secure the regular attendance of their compulsory school age child/children at the school. Failure to meet a regular level of attendance is an offence under the Education Act 1996 and may lead to prosecution.

Children are expected to attend regularly when the school is in session and be punctual at all times. Parents are expected to commit their children to regular attendance and to the ethos of the school through signing the Home School Agreement.

STATUTORY

1. Policy Statement:

1.1. Ryhall CE Academy believes that regular attendance and punctuality is vital to successful learning.

1.2. This policy applies to parents/carers, children and staff at the school.

1.3. The Government expects:

The school to:

- Ensure full attendance
- Ensure every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and
- Act early to address any patterns of

absences Parents/carers to:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at the School attend regularly; and
- All children to be punctual to the School, to their lessons and attend regularly

2. Basic Requirements

2.1. All children of compulsory school age (5 - 16 years) who are registered at a school are required to attend school from the beginning of the term which follows their fifth birthday (including a term which begins on the child's fifth birthday).

2.2. Where a child begins school prior to their fifth birthday, Ryhall CE Academy will expect the same standards of attendance and punctuality for all reception children regardless of whether they have reached compulsory school age. Good habits start at an early age, and children who regularly miss school in reception are more likely to have problems with attendance as they grow older.

2.3. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the School (not by the Parents/Carers), as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required **in writing**.

2.4. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness. Parents/Carers must inform the School of the symptoms their child has as 'unwell' or 'ill' cannot be authorised.

2.5. Unauthorised Absence is when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher. They are absences which the School does not consider reasonable, for which no explanation has been given or has never been properly explained. Unauthorised absence will be reported to the school governors.

2.6. It is the legal duty of the School to record the presence or absence of children on their roll.

3. Examples of absence the Headteacher is likely to authorise

- Sickness, where the child is too ill to leave the house (if absences are excessive, evidence of medical consultation will be required and a doctor's note will be

requested). (Absence due to sickness and/or diarrhoea requires the child to be absent from school for 48 hours from the cessation of the illness.)

- **Emergency** medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance, e.g. Eid
- Exceptional family circumstances (e.g. bereavement of person close to child)
- **Approved** educational activity: sporting or musical / competition / examination
- Fixed term exclusion

4. Unacceptable reasons for absence

4.1. The following will not be accepted as reasons for absence and would be classified as unauthorised absence:

- shopping
- birthday treats and trips
- looking after others at home
- sibling ill, so other child kept off school
- sleeping-in
- waiting in for a delivery
- non-urgent medical or routine dental appointments
- missed transport
- unexplained absence
- term time holidays (see section 14 'leave of absence')

5. Procedures

5.1. Parents/carers:

- If a pupil is unfit for school, parents/carers are asked to contact the School on the first day of absence by 09.05am either by telephone or email.
- On the child's return the parent/carer should send in written and signed confirmation of the child's absence stating the child's symptoms.
- In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested.
- Parents/carers should be made aware that absence due to sickness and/or diarrhoea requires the child to be absent from school for 48 hours from the cessation of the illness.

5.2. School:

- Each class will have an attendance register, which will be called at the beginning of every session (am and pm registration)
- The register will indicate whether a child is present (diagonal blue or black mark) or absent (red circle) and will be returned to the main office.
- The office manager will identify if the child is engaged in an approved educational activity off site, 'ill' or at medical appt (or other authorised absence) by inserting the appropriate letter within the red circle.
- If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation for the absence by 09.15am the School will contact the Parent/Carer by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence.
- This information will be transferred to SIMS (the whole school electronic register).
- The SIMS register must distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence.

- The Headteacher will be responsible for attendance at Ryhall CE Academy and liaise with the Local Authority's Social, Inclusion and Development Officer (SIDO) and the Directors of the Multi Academy Trust, PDET.
- The Office Manager will be responsible for second day response to absence by contacting the parents.
- The Headteacher will be responsible for the monitoring and intervention of absence which falls below the school target (97.5% in 2016-17). Letters will be sent to parents where there is an increasing concern around their child's attendance.
- The Local Governing Board will also monitor attendance and lateness to ensure the school's target is met.

6. Approved Educational Activities off-site

- Field trips and educational visits in this country and overseas.
- Participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities.
- Special tuition for dyslexic or sick children being taught off site but remaining on roll.

7. Expected attendance level

- The Department for Education expects all children to achieve an attendance level of at least 90 percent in every school year. The school has an agreed target of 97.5%. Pupils who fall below this target will be monitored by the Headteacher and intervention strategies put in place where appropriate.
- Attendance below 90% will be reported to the school governors.
- Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

99+%	Excellent – meeting high standards of expectation – attendance at this level will ensure your child is enjoying and achieving along with their peers
97.5 – 98.9%	Minimum Expected – attendance at this level is not significantly negatively impacting on your child's learning but should be monitored carefully and further absence avoided
96 – 97.4%	Below Expected – this level of attendance will now be negatively impacting on your child's learning. You should now be working with the school to improve this attendance
91 - 95.9%	Causing concern – the cumulative effect of this level of absence could now impact on your child's overall levels at SATS and up to GCSE if not addressed
90% or below	Serious concern – your child is now falling into 'persistent absence'. It is affecting attainment and progress and may lead to your prosecution for failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. Unless medical evidence is provided it is likely that all further absence will now be unauthorised

8. Lateness

- 8.1. Children who arrive in school after registration closes (9.00am) will report to the main office to sign in. Children arriving late to school MUST be signed in by their parents/carers. They are not expected to arrive unattended.
- 8.2. Registers will be kept open until the end of registration. Registers are to be returned to the Main Office at 9.00am.
- 8.3. A late mark is awarded if arrival is after 09.00am but before 09.30am whilst the register is still open. If the pupil arrives after 09.30am when the register has already closed, an unauthorised mark is awarded.

9. The Need for Good Attendance

- 9.1. Research shows that children who attend school regularly are likely to be more successful. A pupil who misses a day of school a week misses an equivalent of almost a whole year in their compulsory school life. This obviously leads to gaps in their knowledge that become difficult to fill. A recent national survey has indicated that more than 70% of children who did not attend school regularly when they got to secondary school, admitted to committing at least one criminal offence. It is imperative that poor attendance habits are broken as early as possible.
- 9.2. All children may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the School, the Parents/Carers and the child. If the child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

10. What happens where attendance is poor?

- 10.1. Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the School may refer the child to the Social Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO) from the Local Authority (Rutland).
- 10.2. Alongside the school, the SIDO will also try to resolve the situation (of poor attendance) by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the SIDO can use court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers and fixed penalty notices can be applied. These will be issued by the Local Authority for absence from school in the following circumstances:
 - Truancy
 - Parentally-controlled absence
 - Term time absence which has not been previously agreed by the Headteacher or when permission has not been previously sought
 - Persistent lateness
 - Absence that has not been authorised by the Headteacher
- 10.3. Parents will be challenged after their child has absence of 10 days if unauthorised and after 15 days if authorised. These do not have to be consecutive days and can span academic years.
- 10.4. Parents/Carers may wish to contact the SIDO themselves to ask for help or information. The SIDO is independent of the School and will give impartial advice. The telephone number is available from the School or by contacting the Local Authority.

11. Deleting a child's name from the register

- 11.1. A child's name can only be deleted from the register if the parent/guardian provides this information in writing, giving the child's leaving date and details of next educational establishment. This will be confirmed with the receiving school or current school. Failure to follow this procedure will result in the child being reported to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education.
- 11.2. If a registered child has been continuously absent for at least 20 school days and after reasonable enquiry neither the School nor the LA (through the SIDO) has been able to locate the child the child's name may be removed from both the admissions register and the attendance register and the Headteacher will inform the Area Child Protection Committee or the Child Protection Officer in the LA.
- 11.3. Any name deleted from the register must be notified immediately to the LA.

12. Temporary School Closures

- 12.1. If Ryhall CE Academy has to close due to severe weather conditions, fire or INSET, no attendance registers are needed.
- 12.2. If the school is to be closed due to adverse weather conditions e.g. snow, parents are asked to follow the guidance for notification as per the letter shown in Appendix 3. All parents are given a copy of this in the Autumn Term and reminded of this at the time when adverse weather is forecast. Details will also be given on the school website.

13. Additional Strategies

- 13.1. Regular reminders to all parents:
- Regarding school procedures on attendance and absence particularly with regard to holidays.
 - Regarding term dates
 - School begins at 8.50am; the first 20-minute session of the day is prime learning time which allows children to refocus on the previous day's learning and ensure misconceptions are addressed before starting the current day's learning.
- 13.2. All school term dates for the current and following academic year will be published on the school website

14. Leave of absence

- 14.1. All absence from school impacts on the effectiveness of child learning.
- 14.2. From 1st September 2013, the amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2013
"removes references to family holiday and extended leave as well as statutory threshold of 10 school days".
The amendments set out 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. The government has not defined 'exceptional circumstances' other than to say it is a 'one-off lifetime event' and 'does not include family holidays'. It is up to each school to consider each request individually and we would consider factors such as:
- The nature of the request and why it could not be taken in school holidays
 - General welfare of the pupil and family circumstances
 - Pupil's educational needs and ability to catch up on work missed
 - Proximity to national tests such as SATs

- Frequency of requests from pupil's parents
- The child's attendance record

14.3. Exceptional circumstances will be regarded as one-off situations e.g. preceding or immediately following a tour of duty in a war zone area. Should a service family wish to apply for absence, a letter of authorisation must be sought from the Unit Welfare Officer in order for the absence to be considered. The following will generally not be considered as 'exceptional':

- Relatives coming to visit
- Family holidays in UK or abroad
- Family day trips
- Taking holiday to coincide with family who have different term times or holidays

14.4 If a parent/carer wishes to apply for a 'request for term time leave of absence' a form (Appendix 4 available from the school office), must be completed, at least 2 weeks in advance, and submitted to the Headteacher.

14.5 All holidays taken during term time will be **unauthorised** and render the parent/carer liable for prosecution or the issue of a fixed penalty notice under the Education Act 1996. Failure to pay the fine may result in court action being taken. Holiday will only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances' and with prior agreement from the Headteacher. Please note that this is a once in a lifetime special circumstance. This means that the School will only authorise one period of absence during your child's time at Ryhall. In this, the School is supported by the Local Authority.

14.6 Teachers are **not expected** to set work for absent pupils where the absence is due to an unauthorised or authorised holiday in term time (or short term illness).

15. **Ethos Statement**

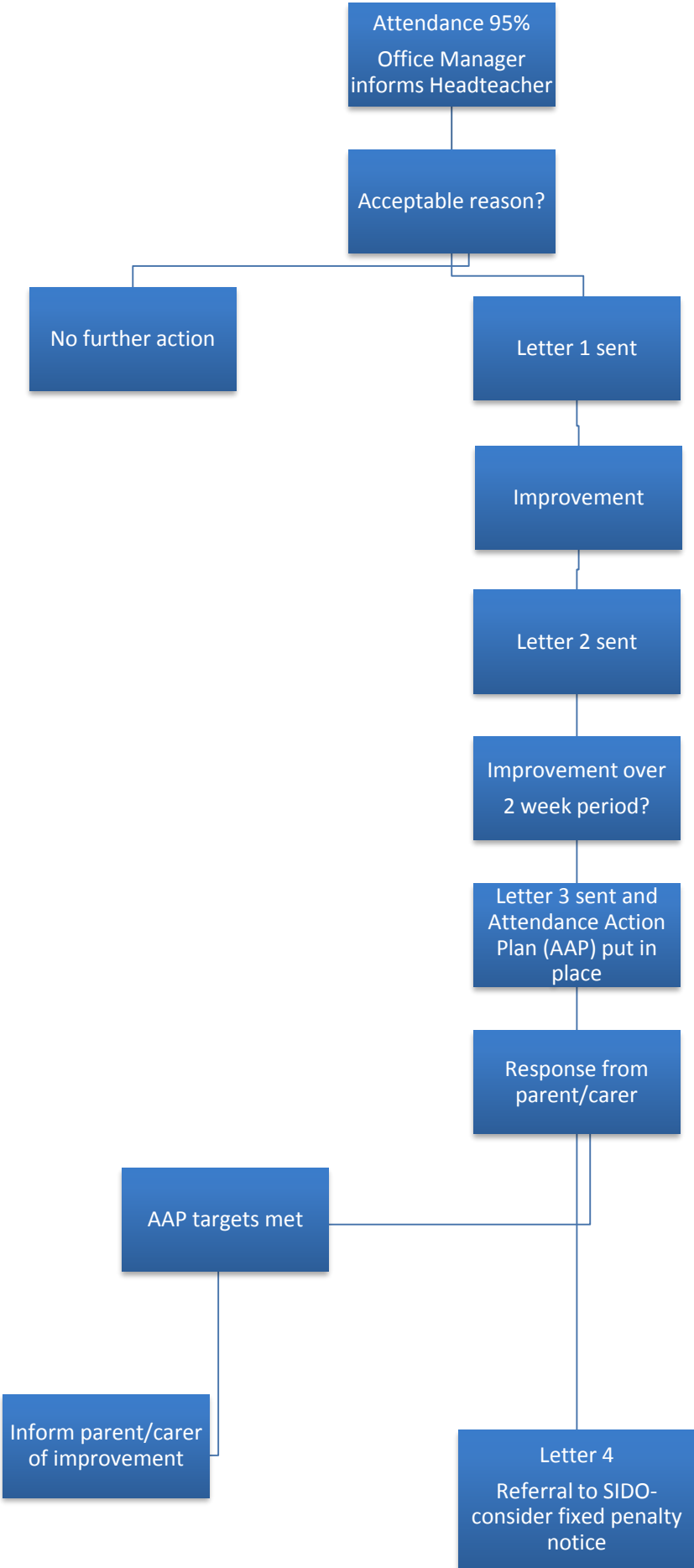
At Ryhall Church of England Academy:

- We will provide the very best education to ensure happiness and achievement for all; aiming for excellence in teaching and learning in order to achieve outstanding learning outcomes. We will celebrate success at every part of the learning journey, individually and collectively.
- We will work in partnership with parents, carers, schools, the church and other organisations to enable our pupils to become confident, responsible and lifelong learners, within their local environment, nationally and globally.
- We will continuously work towards keeping children safe by encouraging them to communicate effectively and through personal development, behaviour and welfare. We aim to prepare children for the excitement and challenges of the 21st Century.
- We are committed to the development of each individual child through a strong Christian ethos which encourages:
 - **endurance,**
 - **compassion,**
 - **friendship,**
 - **trust and**
 - **respect**

all within the context of Christian belief and practice. We aim for children to:

'Look back with pride and move forward with confidence.'

School Procedure for Addressing Attendance Concerns below 95%



Attendance Codes

Code B: Off-site educational activity:

Children that are present at an off-site, supervised educational activity, approved by the School. If the provider of the alternative activity notifies the School of any absences by individual children the School should record the child's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

A child is scheduled to attend another school at which they are registered.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

A child is spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

A child is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the School and supervised by someone authorised by the School.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

A child is on an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the School, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the School.

Absence Codes

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant leave of absence. The School may consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the child's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a child to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the School

The Headteacher may in exceptional circumstances only exercise their discretion to agree up to but not exceeding 10 school days leave of absence in a school year. The application must be made in advance and the Principal must be satisfied that the 'once in a life time, exceptional' circumstances warrant the leave.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Code L: Arrived at the School before registration closed

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Code R: Religious observance

The School will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the School will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Study leave should be used sparingly and only for year 11 children during mock and public examinations.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

Unauthorised Absence Codes

If the School does not authorise a leave of absence or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

All holidays taken during term time will be unauthorised unless the absence is deemed to be of an exceptional circumstance and prior agreement has been given by the Headteacher

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

The School will follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a child's absence. When the reason for the child's absence has been established the register should be amended.

Code O: Absent from the School without Authorisation

If the School is not satisfied with the reason given for absence it will record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived at the School after registration closed

Administrative Codes

Code X: Not required to be at the School

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a child is unable to attend because:

- The School site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the School is not available and where the child's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the child from attending the School.

Code Z: Child not on admission register

This code is available to enable the School to set up registers in advance of a child joining the School. The School will put a child on the admission register from the first day that the School has agreed, or been notified, that the child will attend the School.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Different Term Dates for Different Pupils

Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g. for 'staggered starts' or 'induction days'. Code # can be used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.

November 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

I thought it would be helpful to remind all parents and carers of our snow procedures.

IN CASE OF SNOW OR INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

The school sometimes has to close because there are insufficient staff to provide safe supervision or a sensible education on site. We will try to keep the school open and will only close if it is absolutely necessary.

In the event of inclement weather conditions and the possible closure of the school:

- Listen to **Heart FM** (102.7FM) or **Rutland Radio** (97.4-107.2FM). It is best to use the radio to find out if the school is open rather than try to telephone – our telephone lines are likely to be very busy.
- We will send a message via Parentmail to parents when possible.
- We will also place information about closure on our website www.ryhallprimary.org.uk, as well as updating our Twitter and Facebook accounts.

We would never normally close the school on the basis of weather forecasts unless the weather was so bad already that without significant improvement it would be impossible to open. Decisions about closure are made on **a daily basis**.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Yours faithfully

Ms K Walker
Headteacher

REQUEST FOR Term time LEAVE OF ABSENCE

This form is to be completed by the Parent*/Carer with legal responsibility for the child and ordinarily forwarded to the Headteacher **at least 10 school days** before the period of absence.



Parents no longer have the right to remove children from school for reasons other than illness. In accordance with legislation, absences can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Please refer to our Attendance and Absence Policy for further details.

Name of child/ren:	Class/es:
Dates (inclusive):	Length of absence (in days):
	Collection time for a pick-up during the school day:

Details of exceptional circumstances requiring absence during term time:

(Please give supporting evidence where necessary / additional information can be given on a separate sheet e.g. medical appt letter

<p>Parent/Carer Name:</p> <p><i>I understand that by taking my child(ren) out of school that learning/schoolwork will be missed.</i></p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>* Accompanying parental consent letter attached</p>	<p>School Child(ren)s current attendance:</p> <p>_____ %</p> <p>Authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Not authorised <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Reason:</p> <p>Signed: Ms K Walker, Headteacher</p> <p>Date:</p>
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Notes: Please refer to the school's Attendance and Punctuality Policy for further information.
 * Where parents are separated: Leave of absence cannot be granted unless both parents with parental responsibility agree to the request being made. Leave of absence request forms signed by one parent must be accompanied by a letter of consent from the other parent.
 For medical/dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside of the school day, the appointment card/letter/text must be shown to the Headteacher in advance of the appointment. Holidays in term time cannot be authorised.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS BOX – OFFICE USE ONLY

Received Date: _____ Signed: _____

Warning: A fixed penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority if you choose to take unauthorised term time holiday. Each parent may be liable to a penalty of £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 22-28 days per child on roll at the School.