

VAUGHAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Date of Policy: Summer 2021

Next Review: To be reviewed following updated Government Guidance

Policy Review Dates

Review Date	Changes made	Shared with staff
Summer 2021	Reviewed and updated to reflect procedures in relation to religious observance – page 5.	Summer 2021

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy, Accessibility Policy, Equality Policy, Data Protection Policy, Records Management Policy, COVID Home School Agreement, COVID Risk Assessment, Pupil Remote Learning Policy and "Restricting attendance during the national lockdown": schools Guidance for all schools in England January 2021 and any additional DFE attendance guidance.

Vaughan Primary School

Attendance Policy (During regular operation)

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Why regular attendance is so important

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and also that of other pupils. This is because teachers need to help those children who have been absent catch up with work they have missed, which reduces the time available to give to the remaining children in the class. There is also clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and Maths. However, 73% of pupils who attend 95% of school achieve this level. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Why attendance matters:

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

The register for the **morning session** will be taken at the following times:

- Morning Nursery – 8:40 am
- Reception to Year 6 – 8:50 am

The register will be kept open for 10 minutes. Anyone who comes in after the wooden gate has closed will have to provide a reason for lateness to the school office.

The register for the **afternoon session** will be taken at the following times:

- Afternoon Nursery – 12:40 pm
- Reception to Year 2 – 1:00 pm
- Year 3 to Year 6 – 1:30 pm

The register will be kept open for 10 minutes.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00 am or as soon as practically possible.

Absence procedure

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us **before 9:00 am** on the first day of absence and every day of absence thereafter. Please call 0208 427 7222 option 1 and leave a clear and detailed message
- Or, you can come into school and explain to the staff in the office why your child is absent
- Or, you can email the office at attendance@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk.

If your child is absent, we will telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you, the message received is inaudible, or is lacking information.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If a child has repeated absence we will require medical evidence. This evidence could include a prescription, appointment card which has been stamped by the GP surgery, photograph of antibiotics being taken, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

If your child is absent due to illness for 5 consecutive days or more medical proof is always required.

If your child is unwell for 3 or more consecutive days immediately before or after a school holiday medical proof will be required.

If sufficient medical proof is not received then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences, along with proof of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents 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 the appointment is in the morning we would expect a child to return afterwards. If the appointment is in the afternoon we would expect a child to be in school beforehand.

3.4 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

The school day starts at the following times:

- Reception to Year 6 – 8:50 am
- Morning Nursery – 8:40 am
- Afternoon Nursery – 12:40 pm

We expect your child to be in class at that time. Children can arrive from 8:40 am when the Infant classroom doors and the Junior external doors open for Soft Start. Registers are marked by 9:00 am and your child will receive a late mark if they arrive after that time. At 9:20 am the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any unexplained absences to ascertain the reason and identify the correct attendance code to use (see Appendix 6).

3.6 Harrow Education Services (Attendance)

Parents 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 seek advice from the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Local Authority can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices (see Appendices) or prosecutions.

Parents may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. A link to their website is here: <https://www.harrow.gov.uk/>

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Requests for term-time absence

Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking leave during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school. **No requests for holidays will be authorised during term time.** Any leave requested for holiday at the start or end of the school term will automatically be classed as unauthorised and will not be granted. Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body and the Local Authority to confirm whether the day is set apart. A pupil can have up to 3 days leave for religious purposes during the academic year, but they cannot be consecutive.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

These requests should be made via email to attendance@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk.

4.2 Requests for exceptional leave

Headteachers may NOT grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Requests for exceptional leave must be made at least 2 weeks before the first day of intended absence. All requests for leave should be made using the school's 'Request for Leave' form and addressed to the Headteacher. If these procedures are not followed we will seek advice from the Local Authority. A decision will be made solely at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents will be informed of this decision in writing.

Vaughan Primary School understands that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance. Leave which is taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

Pupils on reduced timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to full-time education and at Vaughan Primary School, we are committed to all children's entitlement to a full-time education offer.

However, in exceptional circumstances, where parents/carers have given consent, a short-fixed term period of part time education may, in very rare circumstances, be judged to be in the best interests of children who are finding full time education very challenging. This must, however, be for a short, agreed period that has a planned progression back to full-time. These timings are reviewed at regular intervals until the child is attending school full-time.

A part-time timetable is not a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

When considering a reduced timetable for children, the following will be considered:

- Why we believe this is the best course of action
- What extra support the pupil will receive while at school
- Expectations for the pupil when they're not at school
- What they'll be doing when they're at home during school time – including how they'll be expected to complete any work set
- Who the designated adult responsible for their care will be – e.g. will an adult be available when the pupil's meant to be at home?
- How they'll access free school meals if they're entitled to them

Legal sanctions

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality, Harrow Local Authority will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

The Harrow Council website provides a clear outline of the process for escalating cases for legal action, which is called the Attendance Intervention Model (AIM). This can be found at the following website:

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/23603/school-attendance-and-intervention-model-policy>

This was updated in Autumn 2018 and is also available on the school website.

Education Penalty Notices

The issuing of Penalty Notices may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Absence from school.
 - At least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost to unauthorised absence within a period of no more than 12 weeks (term time).
 - A leave of absence of at least 10 consecutive sessions (5 school days) not approved by Headteacher as exceptional.
- Lateness.
 - In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after the register has closed and has received at least 8 unauthorised late marks within a period of 10 weeks (term time).
- Following a Truancy Patrol.
 - Penalty Notices will not be issued during a truancy patrol but enquiries will be undertaken with the school of any pupil stopped. In cases where the school has recorded an unauthorised absence and where the pupil has been stopped on a previous truancy patrol within the past twelve months, a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- Where the Harrow Council's Education Services believes that a Penalty Notice is the most appropriate way to deal with irregular school attendance as the child has attendance below 90% and at least 5% absences are unauthorised.
- Excluded children
 - Where a child has been excluded from school and is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification within the first five days of the exclusion period. Reasonable justification will be assessed on the individual circumstances of each case but may include the medical emergency of the parent or child or a pre-arranged medical appointment.

See Appendix 10 for an example of a letter for which leave has not been authorised and which will lead to a Penalty Notice or Court Prosecution.

Parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. In cases where there is more than one poorly-attending pupil in a family, a penalty notice may be issued to each parent in respect of each child. Up to three penalty notices may be issued per child during each academic school year if appropriate.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help everyone to focus on this, we will:

- We celebrate good attendance through our newsletters.
- Reward good attendance through class competitions.
- Report to you twice yearly on how your child is performing in school, including your child's attendance using the attendance bands below:

Descriptor	Attendance thresholds
Excellent	100% to 98%
Good	97.99% to 96%
Satisfactory	95.99% to 95%
Needs attention	below 95%

- Award children termly certificates for excellent attendance and improved attendance. When issuing attendance certificates, the school will take into consideration those pupils who have authorized medical appointments and where evidence is provided.
- The school will monitor all attendance daily. Families with low attendance will be informed by a reminder letter (see Appendix 1).
- We continue to check attendance at regular intervals and if attendance is still a concern after our next attendance check, a further reminder letter will be sent out (see Appendix 2).
- If attendance does not improve sufficiently, families will be invited into school by letter (see Appendix 3) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve attendance and agree to an Attendance Contract.
- If there is no improvement in attendance despite support, the school may have to escalate their concerns to the Local Authority. See Appendices 4 & 5 for further letters which may be sent to parents. The Harrow Attendance Intervention Model (A.I.M.) outlines the procedures that may be followed (see page 23 of the A.I.M.)
- A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (P.A.) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. P.A. pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. All our P.A. pupils may be subject to an Attendance Contract and the Contract may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. P.A. cases may also be referred to the School Attendance Liaison and Elective Home Education Officer or Children's Services. We will maintain a record of all absences and all interventions taking place to support the family including any Attendance Contract. This log will be used as evidence to ensure parents are complying with the school and local government policies.

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body, including the Governor with responsibility for attendance, on the attendance of all children and vulnerable groups to ensure that this policy is being followed and is being used effectively.

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality, Harrow Local Authority will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where it becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply, to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Exclusions

If a child is behaving in a way that is likely to lead to exclusion and affect their attendance, the school will seek the support and guidance of the Local Authority. If a child is to be excluded, the Local Authority and appropriate professionals will be informed.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. There is a designated Governor who has responsibility for monitoring attendance.

6.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this Policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

6.3 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level on a daily basis
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with the Assistant Headteacher and the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence
- Corresponds with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Liaises with the Local Authority when advice is needed.

6.4 The Assistant Headteacher

The Assistant Headteacher:

- Works closely with the Attendance Officer.
- Meets parents to discuss support for persistence absence
- Makes referrals to the Local Authority for children who are deemed missing in education
- To co-ordinate and liaise with external agencies to support the children and their families

6.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

6.6 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Attendance Officer and Assistant Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

Appendix 1: First Attendance Reminder letter

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]
FIRST ATTENDANCE REMINDER LETTER

I am writing to you because I am aware [CHILD NAME]'s attendance has become a concern. It now stands at ____% which is below what is expected. Our school attendance target is 96.5%.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

If children do not attend school regularly, they may not be able to keep up with their school work. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help your child later on.

It is vital that you contact the school on the first day of absence and keep us updated if any absence is to continue for more than one day. We recognise that when a child is ill, it is often best for them to stay at home. Sometimes parents are unsure whether their child should be in school or not, depending on their ailment. Please speak to our welfare department if you are unsure and they will give advice to parents.

We will continue to monitor [CHILD NAME]'s attendance.

If you would like any support or to discuss this further, please contact the Attendance Officer.

Yours sincerely

MRS KAREN JONES
Headteacher

Appendix 2: Second Attendance Reminder letter

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]
SECOND ATTENDANCE REMINDER LETTER

I am writing to you because, despite the letter sent to you on [DATE OF FIRST LETTER], [CHILD NAME]'s attendance is still a concern. It now stands at ____% which is below what is expected. Our school attendance target is 96.5%.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

If children do not attend school regularly, they may not be able to keep up with their school work and tend to perform less well at examinations. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help your child later on.

By law, all children of compulsory school age should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or through other arrangements. If a child is registered at school, parents have a primary legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

It is vital that you contact the school on the first day of absence and keep us updated if any absence is to continue for more than one day. We recognise that when a child is ill, it is often best for them to stay at home. Sometimes parents are unsure whether their child should be in school or not, depending on their ailment. Please speak to our welfare department if you are unsure and they will give advice to parents.

We will continue to monitor [CHILD NAME]'s attendance, and if it does not improve it may be necessary to take further action.

If you would like any support or to discuss this further, please contact the Attendance Officer.

Yours sincerely

MRS KAREN JONES
Headteacher

Appendix 3: Third Attendance letter

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]
THIRD ATTENDANCE LETTER

I notice that despite my letters dated [DATE OF FIRST LETTER] and [DATE OF SECOND LETTER], [CHILD NAME]'s attendance continues to be of concern.

[CHILD NAME]'s attendance is currently ____%.

Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue and something we take very seriously. I would like to invite you into school to discuss the current situation on [DATE/TIME OF MEETING].

Regular school attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers. There is a risk that if [CHILD NAME]'s attendance remains at the current level a referral may be made by the school to Harrow's Education Services who may need to start legal proceedings.

I hope that we see [CHILD NAME]'s attendance improve dramatically. Please return the slip below to confirm you will be attending the meeting. If you are unable to attend but would like to re-arrange for an alternative date/time, please contact Mrs Scott in the school office.

Yours sincerely

MRS KAREN JONES
Headteacher

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Slip to be returned to Mrs Scott – school office by [return date]

VAUGHAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]
THIRD ATTENDANCE LETTER

Name of child: Class:

I/We **will** be attending the meeting regarding my child's attendance on
[date and time for meeting].

I/We **will not** be attending the meeting regarding my child's attendance on
[date and time for meeting].

Signature of Parent/Guardian:..... Date:

Appendix 4: Fourth Attendance letter

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]
FOURTH ATTENDANCE WARNING LETTER

Despite my previous formal warning dated [DATE OF LAST LETTER], your child, [CHILD NAME], is still not attending regularly and further unauthorised absences have been recorded.

[CHILD NAME]'s attendance is currently ____%. A record of his/her attendance accompanies this letter.

I must warn you that Harrow Local Authority will initiate legal proceedings against you if there is no improvement in your child's attendance and punctuality. This will involve a Pre Court Panel Meeting held at the Civic Centre where you will be formally cautioned. If the case progresses to magistrates court, conviction of an offence under section 444 (1) may result in a fine of up to £1,000 and under section 444 (1A) may result in a fine of up to £2,500 or imprisonment.

There will be no further notification should school need to escalate this matter for the Local Authority's attention.

I trust that this notification will ensure that any attendance and punctuality issues are rectified without delay.

Please contact me with any queries regarding this letter.

Yours sincerely

MRS KAREN JONES
Headteacher

Appendix 5: Intention to issue an Education Penalty Notice

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]
NOTICE OF INTENTION TO ISSUE AN EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICE

I am writing to advise you that [CHILD NAME]'s attendance remains unsatisfactory.

Currently [CHILD NAME]'s attendance stands at ___%, out of a possible ___ sessions (___%), which includes ___ unauthorised sessions. [There are also ___ occasions when he/she arrived late after registration.]

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 states, "...if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence". Section 444A of the Education Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to each parent of the child where it has reason to believe that an offence under section 444(1) has been committed.

The fine is £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per child per parent if not paid within 28 days. Payment of the notice will discharge your liability for the non-attendance of your child(ren) for this period. Non-payment will lead to a court hearing for the original unauthorised absences.

This letter is a FORMAL WARNING that you are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice because of your child's unauthorised absence at school. Please note that a separate Education Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent of the child. This will come directly from Harrow Council.

Further unauthorised absence within the following 15 day monitoring period will result in Harrow Local Authority issuing you with a Penalty Notice.

A leaflet accompanies this letter providing further information about Education Penalty Notices. Please contact me with any queries.

Yours sincerely

MRS KAREN JONES
Headteacher

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Appendix 6: Unexplained absence

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]

The School Attendance Officer and I have been monitoring the school's registers and records. We have found that you have not given us a reason for your child's absence on the dates indicated below.

The school is legally obliged to notify the Department for Education (DFE) of the numbers of parents/carers who do not inform the school of the reason for their child's absence.

The school can receive reasons for absence by a message left on the answer machine, phone call, email or letter.

Please complete and return the tear-off slip below to the school office as soon as possible.
Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

MRS KAREN JONES
Headteacher

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Class Teacher: _____ Pupil: _____

Dates and sessions of absence(s): _____

Reason(s)

Signature of Parent/Guardian:.....

Date:.....

Appendix 7: Leave Request Form

REQUEST FOR LEAVE FROM SCHOOL

From September 2013 amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removes reference to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. The amendments make clear 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. We understand that there may be *exceptional* circumstances which may necessitate a longer absence for an agreed period, but this is also discretionary.

If you wish to take your child away during term time, please make your request to the Headteacher by completing the form overleaf **at least 2 weeks in advance** so that this can be considered.

Leave taken without permission will be recorded as unauthorised. **Please do not make any arrangements before a decision is taken.**

In order to ensure we meet our legal responsibilities, we must make every effort to make it clear to parents and carers that children must attend school on a regular basis. Any time away from school can have a significant impact on educational attainment. Any activity, holiday or event should be arranged during the 13 weeks of school closure (the school holidays). If leave of absence without permission is taken during term-time parent/carers could receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking a child out of school without the school's permission. From 1st September 2013 Penalty Notices cost £60 per child per parent, if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per child per parent, if paid between 22 and 28 days.

The Headteacher will require documentation to support any request for leave. This will include:

- Contacts details of someone remaining in the UK
- Contact details when abroad or away
- Flight details including booking date
- Proof of event e.g. wedding
- Proof of reason e.g. illness – medical certificate
- Other documentation

In making her decision Mrs Jones will take into consideration Government guidelines and the following points:

1. The child's previous attendance history.
2. The age of the child.
3. The child's stage of education.
4. Whether other leave has been requested
5. The time of year - The Headteacher will not authorise leave during Year 2 and Year 6 SATS, and optional SATS for other year groups
6. The nature of the trip (exceptional circumstances).

Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Where the parents keep a child away for longer than agreed, the extra time will also be marked as unauthorised and the Local Authority will be contacted.

Our school will therefore no longer be able to authorise absence from learning (Leave Requests) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Permission for leave from school must be requested using the Leave Form available from the office or on our website (as shown on the reverse of this letter).

VAUGHAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

REQUEST FOR LEAVE FORM 2020/21
(one form per child)

I/We request permission for my child to be absent from school.

Name of Child:		
Class:		
Dates of Absence	From :	To :
Reasons for Absence:		
<i>(Parents must make an appointment with the Headteacher to seek permission for a child's absence, prior to making travel arrangements.)</i>		
Parent's Name:		
Signature of Parent:		
Date requested:		

For office use only

<input type="checkbox"/> Authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised	
Comments:	
Headteacher's signature:	
Date:	
Seen by Headteacher:	
Refer to EWO: (Education Welfare Officer)	
Periods of extended leave in the past 4 years:	

Child's Attendance Record:

Year:				
Attendance:				

Appendix 8: Accepting a leave request

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]

Thank you for requesting time off for exceptional leave for [CHILD NAME] from [DATE OF LEAVE], returning to school on [DATE OF RETURN].

Parents may request permission to take their children out of school for exceptional circumstances. Permission is given at the discretion of your child's Headteacher.

Whilst we try to discourage parents from taking children out of school during term time, we recognise that exceptional circumstances sometimes make it necessary.

The school's attendance target is 96.5%. Your child's absence will have a negative impact on the school's attendance levels and overall performance as a school.

I am willing to authorise this request, and consider it to be exceptional circumstances. We also expect [CHILD NAME] to return to school on [DATE OF RETURN]. At this stage we will not be referring this to the Local Authority, but please provide:

- a contact telephone number for someone remaining in the UK
- contact details when abroad or away
- full flight details and travel documents
- evidence of the event (GIVE DETAILS).

Please submit this information at least two weeks prior to departure to ensure that this is not referred to the Local Authority. If we are not satisfied with the information we are given, we may seek advice from the Local Authority.

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

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

I must make you aware that NAME will be missing NUMBER hours of teaching. This will inevitably impact on his/her learning.

Yours sincerely

MRS KAREN JONES
Headteacher

Appendix 9: Declining a leave request

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]

Thank you for requesting time off for exceptional leave for [CHILD NAME] from [DATE OF LEAVE], returning to school on [DATE OF RETURN].

Parents may request permission to take their children out of school for exceptional circumstances. Permission is given at the discretion of your child's Headteacher.

Whilst we try to discourage parents from taking children out of school during term time, we recognise that exceptional circumstances sometimes make it necessary.

The school's attendance target is 96.5%. Your child's absence will have a negative impact on the school's attendance levels and overall performance as a school.

In line with the school's Attendance Policy, I am unwilling to authorise this request as I do not consider it to be exceptional circumstances. Any absence you choose to take will be recorded as unauthorised. We also expect [CHILD NAME] to return to school on [DATE OF RETURN]. This may be referred to the Local Authority. Please provide:

- a contact telephone number for someone remaining in the UK
- contact details when abroad or away
- full flight details and travel documents
- evidence of the event (GIVE DETAILS).

Please submit this information at least two weeks prior to departure.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for leave is considered on its merits at the time and many variables are taken into consideration. Our school, while acknowledging that each family's circumstances are different, is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance through the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

Because each request is unique, my decision in this instance cannot be directly compared with decisions made by the school in the past, and does not set a precedent. It does not mean I will not agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

I must make you aware that NAME will be missing NUMBER hours of teaching. This will inevitably impact on his/her learning.

I am sorry to disappoint you.

Yours sincerely

MRS KAREN JONES
Headteacher

Appendix 10: Intention to issue Penalty Notice letter – leave request

Re: [CHILD NAME] – [CLASS]
NOTICE OF INTENTION TO ISSUE AN EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICE

I am writing to advise that as you have taken unauthorised leave of absence for [LEAVE OF ABSENCE DATES], I am referring this to the Local Authority who will issue an Education Penalty Notice.

Section 444A of the Education Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to each parent of the child where it has reason to believe that an offence under section 444(1) has been committed.

The fine is £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per child per parent if not paid within 28 days. Payment of the notice will discharge your liability for the non-attendance of your child(ren) for this period. Non-payment will lead to a court hearing for the unauthorised absences.

I expect to see [CHILD NAME] back in school on [RETURN DATE]. Failure to return to school on this expected date will result in further communication which may lead to [CHILD NAME] being taken off school roll.

A leaflet accompanies this letter providing further information on Education Penalty Notices. Please contact me with any queries.

Yours sincerely

MRS KAREN JONES
Headteacher

Enc

Addendum of Vaughan Primary Attendance Policy

Interim COVID-19 school attendance arrangements at Vaughan Primary School

Context:

This addendum supports our school's Attendance Policy in clearly outlining the processes that will be followed in recording attendance, in line with the Government's guidance, as well as ensuring school attendance is maximised for those groups expected to be in school.

This addendum will be in operation until further notice and will be reviewed in line with the Government's reviews of legislation and guidance.

During the period of national lockdown, as directed by the Government, Vaughan Primary School will allow only vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers to attend. All other pupils will not attend and should learn remotely until directed by the Government.

Critical Workers:

Critical workers are defined as parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors.

Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school if required. This includes parents who may be working from home. We will request evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip. However parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.

Vulnerable children:

Vulnerable children include children who have a social worker, an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) or who may be vulnerable for another reason at local discretion ("otherwise vulnerable"). We will encourage vulnerable children to attend.

Parents/carers of vulnerable children and young people are strongly encouraged to take up the place. If vulnerable children and young people do not attend, we will:

- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing their concerns using supporting guidance considering the child's circumstances and their best interests
- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) and other relevant partners to encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate

- Where we grant a leave of absence to a vulnerable child we will still speak to parents and carers, and social workers (where applicable) to explore the reasons for this and any concerns raised. The discussions should focus on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home.

All other pupils will receive remote education. Pupils who are self-isolating should not attend school. Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils are also advised not to attend school. We will continue to record attendance in the register. We will follow up on absences of the pupils who are expected to be in school but where a parent wishes for their child to be absent, we will authorise the absence during this national lockdown period. Absence will not be penalised.

By limiting attendance, the Government and other Health Bodies believe that this will support the reduction of the overall number of social contacts in our communities due to the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS.

There may be circumstances where it is necessary for the school to close to some or all groups of pupils – i.e., where we are instructed to close by the Local Authority or Public Health in the event of a localised Coronavirus outbreak. In the event of this happening, the provisions of this addendum will be suspended in part or whole for the duration of the school closure.

Recording attendance – Pupils attending school:

- Attendance registers will be taken daily at the start of each morning session and afternoon session.
- Each year group has staggered start and finish times. The morning registers will close at 9:00am. If a child arrives to class after this time, they will be recorded as L (Late). In line with government guidance we will mark children as ‘U’ (unauthorised late) if they arrive half an hour after the register has closed.
- We have adapted our school registers to enable staff to record attendance accurately and efficiently. Staff will complete an EXCEL spreadsheet for the morning and afternoon session. This information will then be transferred to SIMS to enable school leaders to accurately track and monitor the attendance and absence of pupils.
- All pupils who are not eligible to be in school should be marked as Code X. They are not attending because they are following public health advice.
- As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If they are not attending, this will be recorded as C.
- If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent should let the school know.
- If children are in quarantine, this is to be recorded as Code X. Therefore, if they go on holiday in term time, this is recorded as unauthorised however their quarantine on return is authorised,
- The Department of Education expects schools to grant applications for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Pupils on reduced timetables:

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to full-time education and at Vaughan Primary School, we are committed to all children's entitlement to a full-time education offer.

However, in exceptional circumstances, where parents/carers have given consent, a short-fixed term period of part time education may, in very rare circumstances, be judged to be in the best interests of children who are finding full time education very challenging. This must, however, be for a short, agreed period that has a planned progression back to full-time. These timings are reviewed at regular intervals until the child is attending school full-time.

A part-time timetable is not a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

When considering a reduced timetable for children, the following will be considered:

- Why we believe this is the best course of action
- What extra support the pupil will receive while at school
- Expectations for the pupil when they're not at school
- What they'll be doing when they're at home during school time – including how they'll be expected to complete any work set
- Who the designated adult responsible for their care will be – e.g. will an adult be available when the pupil's meant to be at home?
- How they'll access free school meals if they're entitled to them

Remote learning provision:

If a pupil is not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill, the school will provide the pupil access to remote education.

Our approach and expectations regarding remote education are set out in our remote learning policy.

Pupils will be present for remote learning by 9:00am and cease their remote learning at 3:25pm from Monday to Friday, in line with the class timetable provided.

As per DFE guidance, remote education provided will be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and will include but not be exclusive to, recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. The amount of remote education provided should be, as a minimum:

- Reception pupils: up to 3 hours a day
- Key Stage 1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort
- Key Stage 2: 4 hours a day

Pupils should have regular breaks from the screen and an extended break for their lunch which could replicate the traditional 'lunch time' at school

Pupils with SEND or additional medical conditions who require more regular breaks, e.g. sensory breaks, are not expected to do schoolwork during their breaks.

Pupils at home who are absent from home learning:

Pupils who are unwell are not expected to be present for remote working until they are well enough to do so.

If pupils have appointments during the school day, for example a medical appointment, parents are to inform the school. Parents will be required to provide evidence of any medical appointments. This can be emailed to the attendance email below.

Absence Procedures where pupils are absent from school or home learning due to illness or appointments:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the Attendance Officer **before 9:00 am** on the first day of absence and every day of absence thereafter. Please call 0208 427 7222 option 1 and leave a clear and detailed message
- Or, you can email the office at attendance@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk.

If your child is absent from school, we will text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you, the message received is inaudible, or is lacking information.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

The school will monitor absence in line with procedures as laid out in the schools Attendance Policy.

We will keep a record of, and monitor, pupil engagement with remote learning. If pupils are not engaging with remote learning, this will be explored further.

Following up absence:

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by texting and emailing. If there is no contact, parents will be phoned and a letter sent home.
- Where appropriate, a home visit will be carried out by staff and/or a police welfare check requested.
- Notify their social worker, where they have one.
- If a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus, we will speak to the parent/carer to explain the protective measures the school is taking to keep pupils safe.