

# Vaughan Primary School

## Primary Attendance and Absence Policy

Signed by:

K Jones

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Headteacher

Date: 18.07.2023

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N Anthony

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Chair of governors

Date: 18.07.2023

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### 1. Statement of Intent

Vaughan Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

There is a minimum standard of 96% attendance set out by the government. Therefore any student that has attendance below this is deemed as having poor attendance. Research shows that students with less than 90% attendance will perform significantly less well in their assessments and formal qualifications due to missed learning.

Our school, while acknowledging that each family's circumstances are different, is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every pupil's success and fulfilment. We know that absence hampers pupil's learning, and so we actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils, and discourage all unnecessary absences, including those taken for holidays during school time.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

### 2. Aims

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

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

- › We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

### **3. Legislation and guidance**

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

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for:

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

There is a designated Governor who has responsibility for monitoring attendance.

### **4.2 The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

### **4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Safeguarding and Inclusion and can be contacted via 020 8427 7222 or [Inclusion@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:Inclusion@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk).

#### **4.4 The Attendance Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Safeguarding and Inclusion, and the Headteacher
- Working with the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Safeguarding and Inclusion when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The Attendance Officer is Mrs Scott and can be contacted via 020 8427 7222 opt 6 or [attendance@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk).

#### **4.5 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 by 9.00 am every morning.

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated. This includes communicating with the school office about any inconsistencies in reported absence.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

#### **4.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls and open emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Safeguarding and Inclusion in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

#### **4.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00 am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

#### **4.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.
- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually at the start of each school day.

## 5. Recording attendance

### 5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep supporting evidence for every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school on time each school day.

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.

### 5.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00 am or as soon as practically possible.

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](mailto: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.**

### **5.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school **in advance of the appointment**.

Parents/carers should email the attendance email address – [attendance@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk) **at least 24 hours before an appointment**.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **5.4 Lateness and punctuality**

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.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Safeguarding and Inclusion to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## 5.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Text and email the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may escalate to DSL if unable to contact parents/carers.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained.
- Text/email the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Local Authority.

## 5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via reports twice a year and attendance letters where attendance has become a concern.

From September 2023 parents/carers will be able to view their child's attendance on the Arbor Parent Portal.

# 6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

## 6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. **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.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

These requests should be made via email to [attendance@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@vaughan.harrow.sch.uk)

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail)
- 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 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

- Other valid reasons for authorized absence can be found in the School Attendance Guidance [School attendance guidance May 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/104422/school-attendance-guidance-may-2022.pdf)

## 6.2 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 (forms available from the school office or the school website). 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.

## 6.3 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

## 6.4 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices will be issued by the local authority, when requested by the Headteacher.

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

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority will proceed to prosecution.

Information regarding penalty notices can be found on Harrow Council's website [Education Penalty Notices – Harrow Council](#)

## 7. 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:

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

- Award children termly certificates for improved attendance and punctuality. When issuing attendance certificates, the school will take into consideration those pupils who have authorised 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.
- 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.
- If attendance does not improve sufficiently, families will be invited into school by letter 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, following the Harrow Attendance Intervention Model (A.I.M.) which outlines the procedures that may be followed (see page 23 of the A.I.M. [Harrow Council A.I.M. Policy](#))
- 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.

## **8. Attendance monitoring**

The school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. The Attendance Officer meets weekly with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Safeguarding and Inclusion to discuss any pupils where attendance is a concern.

### **8.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Weekly attendance meeting to review those pupils who are persistent absentees, severely persistent absentees, and look at any punctuality issues.
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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

### **8.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **8.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

<b>AIM - Attendance Intervention Model for irregular attendance</b>				
<b>Phase</b>	<b>School Actions</b>		<b>LA Children's Services</b>	<b>LA Education Services</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>  Week 1-3 minimum	First day response – log of texts / calls  1 <sup>st</sup> School Warning letter including offer of support if difficulty  2 <sup>nd</sup> School Warning letter, offering opportunity to discuss in school if required  Home visit – if school based worker			
<b>Phase 2</b>  Week 4 -5	Meeting / School Attendance Panel with parents  Consider options: 1. Consider PSP / Parenting Contract 2. Complete CAF with parental agreement for Early Support or referral to other services 3. Refer to LA School Attendance Liaison (SAL) Officer 4. Consider issuing an Education Penalty Notice 5. Refer to Pre Court Panel (if complex / long standing) If parents do not attend meeting, consider options 3 – 5		2.MASH team receive CAF & consider for Early Support, worker allocated;	3.SAL officer contacts family, agree support plan / identify options / support;  Up to 6 weeks intervention, no progress, refer to school to follow options 3-5
<b>Phase 3</b>  Week 5-8	<b>4. Education Penalty Notice</b>  Send Penalty Warning letter & specify monitoring period	<b>5. Pre Court Panel</b>  Send School Warning letter re possible referral to LA pre court panel & specify monitoring period		
<b>Phase 4</b>  Wk 9-12	If no progress & further unauthorised absences, send Request to LA to issue EPN	If no progress & further unauthorised absences, send Chronology for Pre Court Panel to LA		LA determines to issue EPN / arrange PCP
<b>Phase 5</b>  Wk13-16	EPN payment period	Attend Pre Court Panel meeting with LA		EPN issued or PCP meeting arranged
<b>Phase 6</b>  Wk 17+	If unpaid, LA may withdraw EPN  Complete witness statement if required and if parent pleads not guilty, may need to attend court.	If no progress or engagement at PCP, LA to pursue court action		Monitor EPN payment, review PCP and actions, refer to legal if court action, attend court as lead

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed if guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Safeguarding and Inclusion. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

Absence procedural documentation toolkit

- Absence request form
- Model communications templates

## Appendix 1: Attendance Communication Toolkit

### Absence Request Absence request form

#### REQUEST FOR LEAVE FROM SCHOOL

Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 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.

If you are applying for leave for exceptional circumstances, 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.*

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. Education 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
- Travel details (outbound and return) including booking date and pupil's name
- Proof of event – e.g. wedding
- Proof of reason – e.g. illness – medical certificate
- Other relevant documentation

**In making the decision, the Headteacher 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 request meets definition of 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.

**Permission for leave from school must be requested using this Leave Form.**

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE FORM 2023/24**  
(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 submit this paperwork to the Headteacher to seek permission for a child's absence)</i>			
Parent's Name:			
Signature of Parent:			
Date requested:			

<b>For office use only</b>	
<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:				

**Model communications templates – 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**

**Model communications templates – 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**

**Model communications templates – Third Attendance Reminder 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: .....

**Model communications templates – Fourth Attendance Reminder 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**

**Model communications templates – 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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**Model communications templates – 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:.....

## Model communications templates – 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**

## Model communications templates – 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**

**Model communications templates – Intention to issue Penalty Notice Letter**

**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**

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## Appendix 2: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

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

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