

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

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# Attendance

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**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

**Attendance Policy**

**Contents**

<b>Key Contacts</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>PART 1 Policy</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1. Strategy, aims and ethos.....	4
2. Why is Attending School Regularly so Important?.....	6
3. Safeguarding & Attendance.....	7
4. Legislation & Guidance.....	7
5. Using Data to Support Improvements in Attendance.....	7
6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance.....	8
7. Staff Training on Attendance.....	8
<b>PART 2 What the Law Says and Our School Procedure</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1. Contents of Attendance Register.....	9
2. Present at School (and Lateness).....	9
2.1 Effects of Lateness.....	10
3. Authorised Absence.....	11
3.1 Illness.....	11
3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments.....	12
3.3 Religious Observance.....	12
3.4 Traveller Absence.....	13
3.5 Suspensions (aka Exclusions).....	13
4. First Day of Absence Response.....	14
5. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance.....	14
6. Leave of Absence Requests - 'Exceptional Circumstances'.....	15
7. Unauthorised, Persistent and Severe Absence.....	15
8. Approved Educational Activity.....	16
9. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance).....	16
10. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)...	17
11. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables.....	17
12. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions.....	18
13. Children Missing Education (CME).....	18
14. Following up Unexplained Absences.....	19
15. Reporting to Parents.....	19
16. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence.....	19
17. Roles and Responsibilities.....	19
18. Policy Monitoring Arrangements.....	22
19. Links with other policies.....	22
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1: Absence Escalation Procedure.....	24
Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Guidance & Form.....	25

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

**PART 1 - POLICY**

**1 STRATEGY**

- 1.1 At Blakedown CE Primary School, children on roll are expected to attend school every day when it is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. This will enable them to **achieve** their best. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a **joyful** and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Our ambition is for all students to strive for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every session and every day that school is open. We consider this paramount to pupils achieving their full potential and enhancing lifelong outcomes.
- 1.3 Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and is an integral part of our school ethos.
- 1.4 Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and relevant partner agencies to remove any barriers and build strong and trusting relationships. Promoting and ensuring excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

**AIMS & ETHOS**

- 1.5 Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to a full-time and efficient education to which they are entitled. Blakedown CE Primary School acts early to address any patterns of irregular attendance aiming to create a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood, valued, and supported by all.
- 1.6 By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, all school staff, parents/carers, pupils, and partners can work together to remove any barriers affecting attendance.
- 1.7 This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents<sup>(1)</sup> must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

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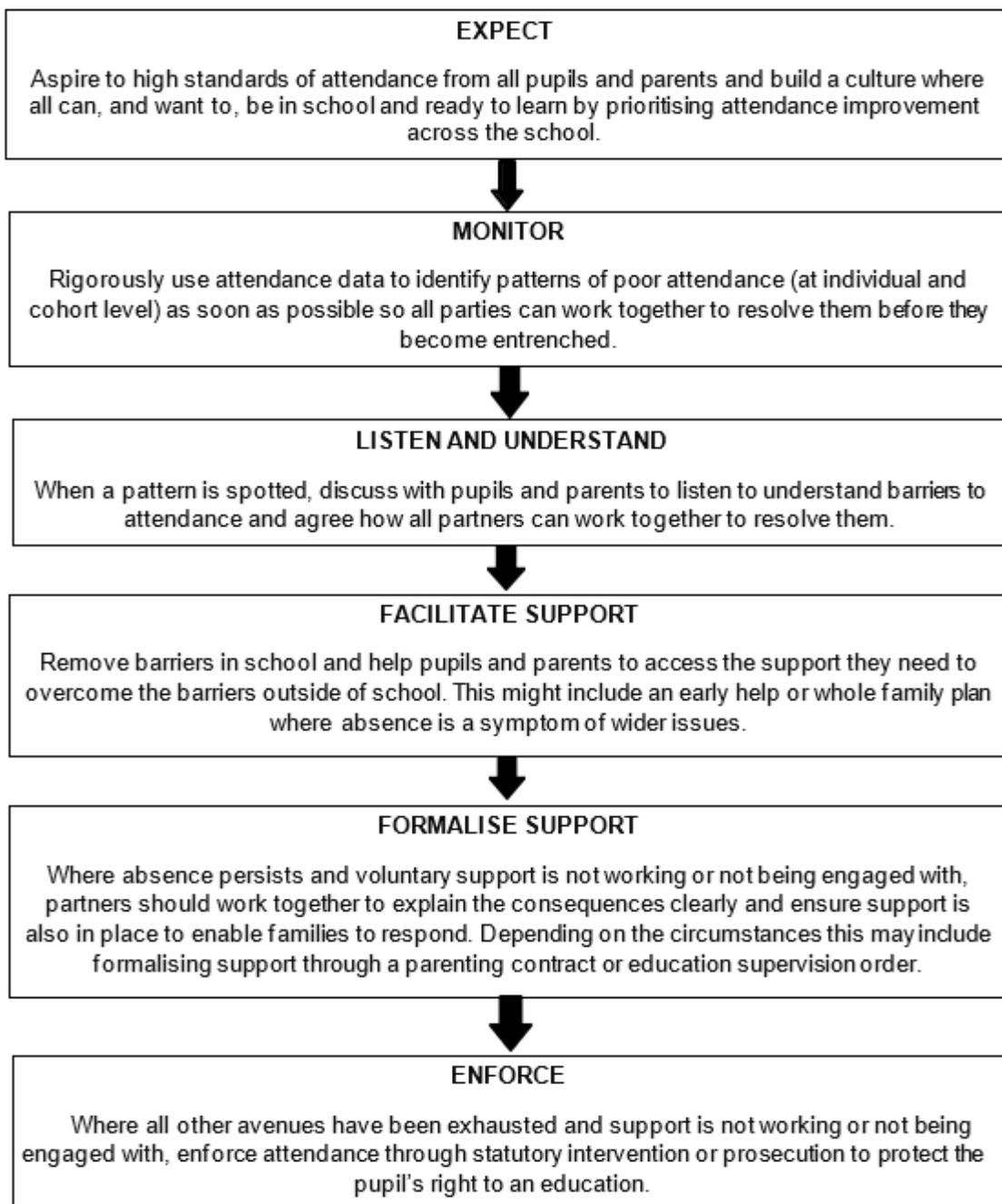
<sup>1</sup> Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has day to day care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

- 1.8 This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 1.9 At Blakedown CE Primary School we follow the DfE working Together to Improve School Attendance Approach:



**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

- 1.10 It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school encourages parents of nursery and reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age to send their children to every session that is available to them. Every child enrolled at our school is expected to attend every day they are required to, on time, so that they can achieve their full potential. We monitor and manage attendance and punctuality across all year groups and expect parents to notify the school of any absence.
- 1.11 At Blakedown CE Primary School we will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory(2) school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.
- 1.12 We want our pupils to attend school every day unless they are not well enough to do so. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school and grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential requirements in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the world.
- 1.13 In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.
- 1.14 We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any pupil who may experience any barriers preventing regular attendance.

**2 WHY IS ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY SO IMPORTANT?**

- 2.1 Evidence shows pupils with excellent school attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.
- 2.2 Pupils who attend regularly are more likely to achieve better results than their peers that do not, both at Key Stage 2 tests in the Primary phase, and in GCSE's at Secondary.
- 2.3 Excellent attendance enables pupils to be part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This further supports each pupil's development socially, morally, and ethically, enhancing personal well-being.

<b>If attendance over the school year is:</b>	<b>...a pupil will miss this many days:</b>	<b>...and this many lessons:</b>
100%	0	0
95%	10	50

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<sup>2</sup> A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

## Attendance

Policy Number 6.4

---

90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	39	195
75%	49	245
70%	58	290

### **3 SAFEGUARDING & ATTENDANCE**

**3.1** Blakedown CE Primary School will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school has made all reasonable enquiries and cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare and safety.

### **4 LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE**

**4.1** This policy meets the requirements of DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#). Documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

### **5 USING DATA TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS IN ATTENDANCE**

**5.1** Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

- 5.2** The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

**6. UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE**

- 6.1** In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing to enhance understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.
- 6.2** We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.
- 6.3** Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in conjunction with relevant partners.
- 6.4** Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers such pupils may face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.
- 6.5** In line with DfE expectations reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period, to support pupils to reintegrate back into education and access full time provision.
- 6.6** The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and external partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

**7. STAFF TRAINING ON ATTENDANCE**

- 7.1** Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:
- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
  - the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of pupil registers

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

- the school strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support for pupils who need it.

7.2 For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils experiencing attendance challenges.

**PART 2 – WHAT THE LAW SAYS AND OUR SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

**1 CONTENTS OF THE ADMISSIONS REGISTER**

- 1.1 The admission register must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.
- 1.2 A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as amended, applies.
- 1.3 It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

**CONTENTS OF ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

- 1.4 In addition to the admissions register the law makes it clear that schools must take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:
- Present;
  - Absent;
  - Attending an approved educational activity; or,
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5 Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management Information System to record attendance information.

**PRESENT AT SCHOOL (AND LATENESS)**

- 1.6 Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

- 1.7 It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.
- 1.8 The Headteacher will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.
- 1.9 Our pupils must arrive by 8.50 a.m. on each school day.
- 1.10 Our morning register is taken at 8.50 a.m. and will be kept open until 8.55 a.m.
- 1.11 Our afternoon register is taken at 1.00 p.m. (KS1) and 1.10 p.m. (KS2) and will be kept open for 10 minutes.
- 1.12 A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L), which counts as present.
- 1.13 If a pupil arrives after the register has closed 9.00 a.m. they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

**2. EFFECTS OF LATE ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL**

- 2.1 When a pupil arrives late to school, they miss important events such as assembly/worship, teacher instructions, phonics and introductions. Children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.
- 2.2 The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others:

<b>Minutes late per day...</b>	<b>Equates to days of teaching lost in one year...</b>	<b>Which means this number of lessons have been missed...</b>
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons
20 mins	12 days	60 Lessons
30 mins	18 days	90 Lessons

## Attendance

Policy Number 6.4

---

### **3. AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

**The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:**

#### **ILLNESS**

- 3.1 The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)
- 3.2 In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- 3.3 The school follows Department for Education guidance Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK '2024(3) which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.
- 3.4 We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.
- 3.5 If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- 3.6 Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.
- 3.7 The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.
- 3.8 The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.20 a.m. or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office, who can be contacted by calling 01562 700243, emailing [office@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:office@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk) or using the ParentMail absence service available to our parents.
- 3.9 Parents can choose the absence line of the telephone answering service, but should indicate the reason for absence and a possible return date. Parents can also come through to the main office to discuss the absence directly with the office staff.
- 3.10 We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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<sup>3</sup> Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

- 3.11** If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

**MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**

- 3.12** Our school supports pupil mental health and wellbeing following DfE guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools>
- 3.13** Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Mental Health First Aider within the school for further information on the support available.
- 3.14** Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: [Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS](#)
- 3.15** Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

**PUPILS TAKEN ILL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

- 3.16** If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff, this is usually a senior leader. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

**MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

- 3.17** Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.
- 3.18** If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.
- 3.19** Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter - only then will the absence be authorised.

**RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

- 3.20** Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

**TRAVELLER ABSENCE**

- 3.21** The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.
- 3.22** To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and this school will remain their 'main' school.
- 3.23** Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

**SUSPENSIONS**

- 3.24** If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).
- 3.25** Any exclusion must be agreed by the headteacher.
- 3.26** The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.
- 3.27** The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

**4. FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE RESPONSE**

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

- 4.1 The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an absence by 9.20 a.m. or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office, who can be contacted by calling 01562 700243 or emailing office@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk
- 4.2 Parents can choose the absence line of the telephone answering service, but should indicate the reason for absence and a possible return date. Parents can also come through to the main office to discuss the absence directly with the office staff.
- 4.3 The school will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, or where children have previously been reported missing.
- 4.4 Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- 4.5 If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.
- 4.6 For pupils who are in care; subject to a child Protection Plan, or open to Social Care as a Child in Need; or have previously been reported missing, these children will be prioritised for investigation for their absence if it is not reported by 9.20 a.m. School may need to contact the Family Front Door or a child's social worker or undertake a home visit to establish the safety of the child in person. If concerns are raised, the police may be needed to carry out a safe and well check.
- 4.7 For pupils who walk to school and are absent at registration, if a call from the parent/carer has not been received by 9.20 a.m., office staff will call home to establish the reasons for the absence and inform the parent that their child has not arrived at school.
- 4.8 School will insist upon holding emergency contact details of three contacts who can be contacted in an emergency and parents will be reminded to review these each term via parents' evenings and newsletters.

**5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS - 'EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES'**

**The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.**

- 5.1 In line with DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Attendance Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If any leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

- 5.2** Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.
- 5.3** Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least four weeks before the absence. Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing. Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information).
- 5.4** All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, in advance where possible, to be considered alongside social care staff and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact social care/ the Virtual School in relation to any requests made for term time absence for a child in care.

**6. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

- 6.1** Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.
- 6.2** Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.
- 6.3** Unauthorised absences may include:
- Absences which have never been properly explained
  - Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
  - Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
  - Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
  - Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
  - In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised
- 6.4** Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, use of penalty notices or prosecution.

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

**PERSISTENTLY & SEVERELY ABSENT PUPILS (PA & SA)**

- 6.5 A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.
- 6.6 A pupil is classed as 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of their school across the school year for whatever reason.
- 6.7 We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any pupil that is seen to have reached the PA or SA thresholds or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

**7. APPROVED EDUCATION ACTIVITY**

- 7.1 When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.
- 7.2 If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.
- 7.3 If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, with the alternative setting.
- 7.4 Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP setting.

**8. UNABLE TO ATTEND DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)**

- 8.1 In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):
- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
  - The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's ['Home to school travel and transport'](#) guidance document, or ask the school for a printed copy.)
  - A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
  - The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

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**9. SUPPORT FOR POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (other than unauthorised term time leave)**

- 9.1 Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.
- 9.2 When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal attendance action plan or parenting contract being drawn up.
- 9.3 If our school is unable to work in partnership with parents to overcome any barriers preventing regular attendance we may refer a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions. We will show all the steps we have taken to support parents and pupils and that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter and school records will be shared with the Local Authority.
- 9.4 We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic, early help approach to the issue and will involve other agencies if deemed necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or, fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice or other legal sanction.
- 9.5 If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

**10. PUPILS ON REDUCED (PART-TIME) TIMETABLES**

- 10.1 Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.
- 10.2 If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

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**11. PENALTY NOTICES AND PROSECUTIONS**

- 11.1 Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.
- 11.2 Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.
- 11.3 Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.
- 11.4 The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.
- 11.5 Penalty notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance, for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.
- 11.6 See DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information.
- 11.7 Penalty notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

**12. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)**

- 12.1 Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with Regulation 8 Education law. The school will use the Worcestershire children's services portal to report any children leaving our school, on part time timetables, attending irregularly, or joining the school outside of usual transition phases. If we have any CME related concerns we will contact [CME@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:CME@worcestershire.gov.uk)

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

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**13. FOLLOWING UP UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES**

**13.1** Where no contact has been made with the school regarding an absence, the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 5 school days, we will mark the absence as unauthorised, using the O code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts and safety - as above in section 4.

**14. REPORTING TO PARENTS**

**14.1** The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via a half termly email specifying which banding the child's attendance falls within and whether or not further discussions are necessary to see where support is required in the first instance.

**14.2** Where a child's attendance falls below 90% for whatever reason, the school will contact parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

**15. RECORDING INFORMATION ON ATTENDANCE AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

**15.1** When a child is absent, the reason for absence is recorded on the school's MIS system - Ed:Gen. Additionally, when a child is late the number of minutes is recorded on Ed:Gen to enable further discussions about time lost with parents if punctuality becomes an issue.

**15.2** Where attendance is linked to a safeguarding concern, the reasons and actions related to the absence(s) will also be recorded on the safeguarding system - CPOMs and monitored.

**16. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

**16.1 The Governing Body**

The governing body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

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- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following upon and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy  
The Learning & Development Team/Strategy Team are responsible for attendance, they monitor pupil attendance and pupil outcomes as part of their routines.

**16.2 The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level and analysing absence data, identifying groups of pupils who are at risk of low attendance 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 and authorising other senior leaders and the office staff responsible to be able to do so

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

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- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

**16.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance**

At Blakedown CE Primary School, the designated leader for attendance is the Headteacher and can be contacted via the school telephone and email address: 01562 700243, [office@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:office@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk). The following are additional responsibilities to the above:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitor and analyse attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents, carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

**16.4 School Office Staff**

The member of the office staff responsible for attendance is Mrs Carys Wheadon and can be contacted via the school office contacts: 01562 700243 and [office@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:office@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk). As the attendance officer, Mrs Wheadon is responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the head/staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Monitor attendance data day to day (see section 8)
- Providing regular attendance reports to the Headteacher and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Working with the education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

---

- Advising other senior leaders when to issue fixed-penalty notices in the absence of the Headteacher

**16.5 Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information the school office. This is done twice a day, on entry to school at 8.50 a.m. and at the start of the afternoon at 1.00 p.m./1.10 p.m.

**16.6 Parents**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day between 8.50 a.m. and 3.20 p.m. and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.20 a.m. on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise the reason for absence and when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs Wheadon in the office as she is responsible for receiving day to day attendance issues, contactable on 01562 700243 and [office@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:office@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk)

**16.7 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

**17. POLICY MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

**18. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

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- Inclusion Policy
- Supporting Families Offer
- SEND Graduated Response
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

Appendix 1

**ABSENCE ESCALATION PROCEDURE**

0 days missed = Best chance of success	100% <b>OUTSTANDING</b>	<b>ON TRACK</b>
Equates to 4 school days off each year	98% <b>IMPRESSIVE</b>	
Equates to 7 school days off each year	96% <b>GOOD</b>	
Equates to 9 school days off each year	95% <b>ALMOST THERE</b>	<b>AT RISK</b>  School monitoring, parents informed.
Equates to 11 school days off each year	94% <b>IMPROVEMENT NEEDED</b>	
Equates to 18 school days off each year	91-94% <b>CONCERNED</b>	<b>OFF TRACK</b> Pupil classed as PA Action plan for support and escalation with parents
Equates to 29 school days off each year	90% & below <b>SERIOUS</b>	
Equates to 2 months off school each year	80% <b>VERY CONCERNED</b>	

**For every day you are absent from school, 5 hours of learning is lost**

Attendance

Policy Number 6.4

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Appendix 2

Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send to the Headteacher the request form **overleaf**. **The form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered well** before the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any holiday booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision on their request. In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the departure date to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.
2. The granting of leave of absence in school term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the school. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) policy is that family holidays should not be taken in school term time. Where such requests are made, for the leave to be granted, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances**.
3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school will take account of:
  - The exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
  - The age of the child;
  - The stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
  - The overall attendance pattern of the child;
  - The nature of the absence.
  - Students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATs will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
4. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. It is possible that because of these factors different decisions may be made. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any other requests.
5. Where request for a grant of leave of absence are received from only one parent the response letter - agreeing or refusing - will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all 'parents' are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent will receive a penalty notice.
6. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence but, the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, **his/her place at the school could be lost**.

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

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7. Should the School decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £80 per parent per child. This fine will increase to £160 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £160 fine within the period 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.

**Attendance**

Policy Number 6.4

**Appendix 3**

**Request for Leave during Term Time**

To: The Headteacher of Blakedown C.E. Primary School. Date:.....

I request consideration for leave of absence from school during term time for:

My child (full name).....

First date of absence:.....Last day of Absence:.....

Please state reason for leave (include any **exceptional** circumstances you wish to be considered):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows:

Child(ren) (full name(s)).....School(s) attended:.....

.....  
.....

Signature of 1<sup>st</sup> Parent/Carer.....Print Name.....

Address:.....

Signature of 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/Carer.....Print Name.....

Address:.....

**Please return completed form to the school office. After consideration, the Headteacher will write to you to confirm whether the absence will be authorised or not.**

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Number of school days applied for:.....

Current Attendance.....%

Last Year's Attendance .....%

Absence request: **agreed/not agreed**

Reason.....

Signed.....Date.....

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent.....