



Haynes Lower School & Nursery

Attendance Policy

Policy Review:

This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

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Rationale

Haynes Lower School & Nursery believe that regular attendance is vital for effective learning. Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise the importance of establishing strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

Research shows that excellent attendance is at the heart of good academic achievement preparing children for success as adults. Regular attendance also increases the chance of children developing solid friendships, sharing ideas as well as creating a sense of belonging and community. Children who regularly attend school are also less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour, commit or become victims of crime or abuse.

Poor attendance disrupts the education of all pupils; it reduces social cohesion and disturbs the continuity of the curriculum. Children who do not attend regularly miss out on vital learning as well as key events such as school trips and visitors.

We do however recognise that at times families and children may need additional support and that circumstances need to be considered individually. We always endeavour to work in a supportive partnership with families so that children are able to have excellent attendance at school.

At Haynes Lower School & Nursery we believe in celebrating excellent, improved and improving attendance as often as possible; equally, poor attendance will be addressed in collaboration with the Local Authority in a timely and fair manner.

What is good attendance?

The school target for attendance is **96%**. In discussions with the local authority attendance officer, we have introduced the following guide for parents.

100%	Outstanding
97-99%	Excellent
95-97%	Good
92-95%	Advise improvement
90 -92%	Cause for concern
Below 90%	Serious cause for concern

It should be remembered that 90% attendance is equivalent to one day absence every fortnight. Over an academic year this amounts to four weeks of absence.

Admissions and Attendance

The legal requirement is that children must be receiving full time education from the term after their 5th birthday. Haynes Lower School admits children into the Reception class the academic year they turn 5. Therefore, parents are requested to support the school in making the best provision for children's education by enabling them to be full time from the beginning of the Reception year.

Non-Compulsory School Age Attendance

Attendance is a vital foundation for a child's learning, but to get the most benefit a child must attend regularly and promptly. These also provide good habits for the future. Nevertheless, parents of non-compulsory school age (below the age of 5) children do not have a legal duty to ensure their children receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at a school (this includes home education).

However, if a child is registered at a school, parents do have a responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

The school census now collects absence data in relation to pupils who are aged 4. Hence the need to ensure good attendance habits with non-compulsory aged pupils is heightened for all schools. All non-compulsory age pupils will be treated exactly the same as compulsory age pupils and the same protocol should be followed in order to follow-up absence and to encourage regular attendance.

Roles and responsibilities

A 'parent' is defined in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as:

- All biological parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of what their relationship is).

Parents/carers can help support their children's attendance by:

- Encouraging children to attend regularly and on time
- Taking an interest in their children's education and life at school
- Talking to school about any emerging issues or problems
- Not arranging holidays during term time

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- i. Ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn, as outlined under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- ii. Ensuring that any absences are unavoidable and kept to a minimum
- iii. Ensuring the school always has an up-to-date contact number and home address
- iv. Reporting the reason for their child's absence by 9.30am on the first day of absence and again on each further day of absence, unless a return date has been agreed, using StudyBugs, by email, or the dedicated answerphone
- v. Working with the school to ensure that their child's education is maintained as far as is reasonable during any unavoidable long term absence
- vi. Seeking authorisation for children to be absent for any reason other than illness
- vii. Providing evidence of reasons for absence when required by the school, Education Welfare Service or other children's services
- viii. Attending meetings as required in relation to their child's attendance
- ix. To sign their child in or out of the InVentry console if they arrive after registers have closed or need to leave during the day

The school is responsible for:

- i. Monitoring the attendance of all children daily
- ii. Monitoring attendance and punctuality over time, on at least a monthly basis
- iii. On a daily basis, following up, by 10am, any absence that has not been reported by the parent/carer
- iv. Maintaining the attendance database for the children and updating it weekly
- v. Proactively seeking support and tuition for those children who are unable to attend school in the long term, for medical reasons or illness
- vi. Reporting attendance to the school's Governing Board, the Local Authority or to Central Government as required
- vii. Providing attendance information to other professionals to ensure children's welfare and safeguarding
- viii. Identifying any concerns/difficulties and seeking support to bring about an improvement
- ix. Inform appropriate agencies if there are safeguarding concerns, in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy

The Governing Board are responsible for:

- i. Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended
- ii. Adopt an Attendance Policy and review it regularly
- iii. Agree targets for attendance at School
- iv. Ensure that they receive reports from the Head Teacher regarding school attendance as part of the school monitoring or school profiling exercise
- v. Where the school is not meeting its attendance target, or when the Governors believe there is cause for concern, to require a review of the systems and procedures in place to promote good attendance
- vi. To promote the strong link between attendance and educational attainment to parents and pupils where appropriate and ensure that the school attendance policy and procedures are communicated effectively
- vii. Authorise the Head Teacher (or other designated person) to consider and make decisions regarding leave of absence requests
- viii. Work with the Head Teacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent

The Local Authority is responsible for:

- i. Monitoring school's attendance
- ii. Monitoring the education of pupils receiving Elective Home Education
- iii. Children missing from education
- iv. Children missing education and taking appropriate action through the legal system

Registration

Registers are treated as legal documents and they may be used as evidence in court cases. For this reason they are retained for a minimum of three years. The registers are held on our MIS (Management Information System)

Registers will be called promptly at 9.00am and 1.10pm. Pupils not attending are given an absence mark and the register must clearly differentiate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised by the school.

- Where a pupil arrives before 9.05am (i.e. while the register is still open), they will be marked 'L' - late but counted as present for the session.
- Where a pupil arrives after 9.05am (i.e. when the register has closed), a parent/carer must sign them in to school and they will be marked 'U' – late, but counted as unauthorised absent for the session.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and also to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness (U code) are unauthorised absences and maybe be subject to legal action. Parents/carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 12 school week period, the school may ask Central Bedfordshire Council to issue parents with a Penalty Notice. From 19th August 2024, the threshold for requesting a penalty notice changes to 10 unauthorised absences in a rolling 10 school week period.

Attendance Rewards

We look to encourage and reward efforts to ensure regular and prompt attendance at school. As such we implement the following:

Weekly Attendance Cup

The class with the highest attendance for any given week receives the 'Attendance Cup', which they will keep for the following week.

HERO token dress down days

For each morning a child is "Here Every day, Ready to learn and On time", they are awarded a coloured token. Each month these are counted and the House with the most tokens is awarded a dress down day.

Termly

Each child that achieves 100% attendance for the term receives a certificate.

Yearly

Each child that achieves 100% attendance for the year receives a Gold certificate and pin badge.

Each child that achieves 98% or more attendance for the year receives a certificate.

Improved Attendance

As well as celebrating excellent attendance, Haynes Lower School also recognises the importance of improved attendance. If attendance dips significantly below the target of 96% but subsequently rises above 95%, StudyBugs will issue a 'praise' email to the parents.

Understanding Types of Absence

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is absence with the permission of the Head Teacher, and includes absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health. Even when pupils are engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, they must not be marked as present, as good Health & Safety practice requires that the school needs to know who is on the premises in the case of a fire drill or real emergency.

The school *may* authorise absence in the following circumstances:

- Personal illness (excessive or extended absences will require medical evidence)
- Medical appointment (a copy of the appointment letter to be provided)
- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad
- Family bereavement
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to a child's health & safety
- Religious observance (limitations apply)
- A travelling child's absence
- Involvement in a public performance
- Approved sporting activity
- Entrance exams

For periods of extended absence due to illness, the school will seek advice from the school nurse and Health Protection Agency, and will only authorise the number of days that have been advised by the Health Authority for the illness.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is absence without the permission of the Head Teacher. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

The school is unlikely to authorise absence in the following circumstances:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The Head Teacher views the explanation offered as unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, refusing to attend) or the child tells us they have been on holiday
- If a pupil's attendance percentage is below 96% and no medical evidence has been supplied
- Leave of absence which is taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or in excess of the time agreed by the school
- Special occasions such as birthdays
- Minding siblings
- Parent/carer or sibling illness
- Treatment of head lice
- Family holidays in term time

Unauthorised absence from school is considered truancy. Unfortunately there may be occasions when truancy is condoned by parents. If such collusion occurs, it is the duty of the school to work with the pupil and family to change their attitudes towards school, thus encouraging full attendance.

If a pupil has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in any 12 school week period, the school may ask Central Bedfordshire Council to issue parents with a Penalty Notice. From 19th August 2024, the threshold for requesting a penalty notice changes to 10 unauthorised absences in a rolling 10 school week period.

Persistent Absenteeism

If your child misses 39 or more sessions of absence across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as a *persistent absentee*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child, by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows that these gaps at whatever level affects attainment. We monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

While discretion may be deployed (e.g. in cases of long term illness), the school will refer any individual child whose attendance is 90% or below to the School Attendance Improvement Officer. At this point, legal proceedings could follow.

No absence for a child with attendance below 90% will be authorised, except in extenuating circumstances, such as long term illness. All persistent absentees are monitored and reported to the Governing Board. The school is however mindful that absence may quickly fall below 90% in the autumn term for reasonable and authorised reasons.

Temporary School Closures

Where the school has to close due to severe weather conditions, problems with amenities such as water or heating, fire, structural damage or in-service training, no attendance registers are needed. This will be coded appropriately.

Reporting Absence

First Day Response

A child not arriving at school where the parents haven't informed the school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required.

On the first day of absence, parents/carers are expected to contact the school by 9.30am, by leaving a message on the absence answerphone, by email or through StudyBugs. The parent/carer reporting the absence should give the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. The reason for absence will be noted on the register. If the date of return is unknown, daily contact should be kept with the school.

If the school receives no contact, a member of the office team will telephone the parent/carer by 10am. If there is no answer, a message will be left and a follow up email sent.

Third Day of Unexplained Absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to consider implementing the *Child Missing in*

Education procedures as set down by Central Bedfordshire Council. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. If contact cannot be established, we will call 101 to ask the Police to make a welfare check on the child.

Ten days absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the Child is Missing in Education. Staff from the Access and Inclusion Service will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. It is a parent's responsibility to ensure we always have an up-to-date contact number and home address. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Request for leave of absence

External Appointments within School Hours

The school recognises that there are occasions when pupils need to leave school for an appointment (e.g. doctor, dentist, optician, etc.). If at all possible, all appointments should be made outside of school hours.

Where this is unavoidable, a request for absence to be authorised should be made at least 24 hours before the appointment to allow for authorisation to be considered. Parents/carers will be asked to provide a copy of appointment cards and/or letters to the school office.

If the pupil returns during the school day, they are required to sign back in using the InVentry console. We require all pupils leaving for an appointment to be collected by a parent/carer in person so they can be signed out.

All Other Requests

The latest amendments to education law (September 2013) make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and those circumstances are defined by the DfE (see below)

There is no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will **not** be authorised. However the school will consider every absence request individually. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to complete the form in Appendix 1 and the Head Teacher may wish to invite parents to a meeting.

Leave of absence can only be granted by the Head Teacher.

Special reasons or exceptional circumstances, as defined by the DfE, which the Head Teacher may use their discretion to agree to are:

- ✓ A dying *close* relative in a different country
- ✓ A family wedding or funeral of a *close* relative in another country/part of the country (2 travel days and the wedding day only)
- ✓ Holidays for fostering or adoption purposes
- ✓ Religious observance
- ✓ Holidays for armed forces personnel when meeting the criteria set out by the Ministry of Defence

- ✓ When it is deemed necessary as part of a child's, sibling's or parent's rehabilitation following a medical or emotional issue
- ✓ Where a family plans to emigrate and they plan an investigatory trip
- ✓ Where disability means it is difficult for the family to organise care at another time

Exceptional circumstances do not include:

- ✗ Holidays in term time due to SEND
- ✗ Shopping
- ✗ Birthdays
- ✗ Looking after siblings
- ✗ Being unable to take a family holiday during the 13 weeks holiday provided in the academic year
- ✗ The availability of cheap holidays
- ✗ Poor weather experienced during school holiday periods
- ✗ Overlap with the beginning or end of term
- ✗ Different holiday dates for siblings in different schools
- ✗ A surprise booked by another person/treat for the child
- ✗ A mistake in term dates when booking
- ✗ Spending a day at home with the children/tidy/catch up on jobs

The Head Teacher will not, **under any circumstances** (including those mentioned above) authorise absence from school at the following times:

- The first six weeks of any academic year (for all pupils)
- Transition day
- During the Year One Phonics screening period (for pupils in that year group)
- During the Year Two Phonics screening resit period (for pupils involved)
- During the Year Four Multiplication Timetable Check period (for pupils in that year group)
- Requests will only be considered for a pupil(s) where average attendance is at least 96%

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell, but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time. Holidays are not an entitlement to any family.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

A parent can seek leave of absence from a school for their child to take part in a performance. They must however contact the Head Teacher to discuss the nature and frequency of this, the impact that this may have on their child's education, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Head Teacher's discretion as to

whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Head Teacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching. The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Head teachers can authorise this absence. For further advice and guidance on Child Employment and Performance Licenses contact Central Bedfordshire Council on 0300 300 4953

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

The absence of a child from a Traveller family who has left the area can be authorised if the absence is for the parent's work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. A school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll whilst they are travelling. When the child is travelling the school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised by using the *T* code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school although may offer support to the pupil whilst they are away. Please note that pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12-month period to be able to use travelling for work purposes as a defence against prosecution. For further advice and guidance on attendance and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families, contact Central Bedfordshire Council on 0300 300 4953.

To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration at two schools is allowed.

For national guidance refer to:

1 *School attendance*, 2016, located at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance

Legal Measures requiring regular school attendance

Section 7 of The Education Act 1996 requires parents to secure the education of their children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school

or otherwise

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

The following legal measures may be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school and are not attending regularly:

Penalty Notices: Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

Magistrates Court Action under Sec 444 (1) and (1a) of the Education Act 1996

Penalty Notices

Central Bedfordshire Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices states that where a child has had 10 unauthorised absences in a rolling 12 school week period, the school may request a penalty notice be

issued. From 19th August 2024, the threshold for requesting a penalty notice changes to 10 unauthorised absences in a rolling 10 school week period. The code of conduct is a statutory document that ensures that the powers for this legal sanction are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

Penalty Notices can be issued when

- a pupil has taken holiday during term-time and the absence has not been authorised by the school, providing the school has taken into account DfE guidance to inform its decision-making
- where the school believes that the sanction will lead to an improvement in attendance, e.g. persistent late arrival at school; parents failure to attend/co-operate at a parenting contract meeting

The notes on the reverse of the Leave of Absence request form alerts parents and carers about the possibility of a penalty notice being requested for unauthorised absence.

If more than one parent has parental responsibility, both parents will receive a Penalty Notice. In situations where there is more than one pupil in a family with irregular school attendance, multiple penalty notices can be issued to the same parents during the year. However, this action must be subject to careful consideration and co-ordination.

From 19th August 2024, the number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child is 2 within a 3-year period. Further absences within 3 years of the first offence will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court for the same parent in respect of the same individual child.

Legal Action taken under Section 444 (1) and (1a) Education Act 1996

Where the school has tried to address a pupil's unauthorised absences but the measures taken have been unsuccessful, it can then refer on to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer. If there is either no improvement in the attendance nor satisfactory evidence provided for the absences following their intervention, then it is likely legal action at Magistrates Court will be initiated.

Sanctions available to the court are as follows;

- a fine of up to £2,500
- A conditional discharge – you will be given a set amount of time in which to improve your child's attendance. Should you fail the Council may bring a further prosecution against you and, if found guilty, you will be sentenced for both offences
- an absolute discharge – the case is proved but you will not be subject to a penalty, although you will receive a conviction
- a community order such as unpaid work, curfew or tagging imprisonment - for up to three months

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend then it is better not to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may also make things worse. Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend

school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school and transferring to another lower/primary school parents are asked to give the Head Teacher comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *Child Missing in Education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which may include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Amendments to the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Preservation of the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Haynes Lower School & Nursery

Appendix 1 Term Time Leave of Absence Request Form



Student Details					
Name		Date of Birth		Class	
Sibling Details (or other children living in the household of school age)					
Name		Date of Birth		School	
Name		Date of Birth		School	
Name		Date of Birth		School	
Name		Date of Birth		School	
I request permission for my child to be absent from school:					
First Day of Absence		Last Day of Absence		Total School Days Requested	
Reason for Request					
Parent's contractual conditions, including service personnel (a letter from employer must accompany this application)					
Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad (a letter from the Service Welfare Officer must accompany this application)					
Child, sibling's or parent's rehabilitation of medical/emotional issues (a letter from your GP/hospital must accompany this application)					
Religious Observance <i>(please specify occasion)</i>					
Emigration investigation					
Close family wedding or funeral out of the area / country					
Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances (please include, on a separate sheet , reasons for requesting a term time holiday under this provision.)					
Declaration					
I have read and understood the information overleaf on term time absence, unauthorised absences and penalty notices and agree to the terms and conditions.					
Signed (Parent/Carer)			Date		
For School Use Only					
The school has considered your request for leave of absence and your child's absences will be recorded as follows:					
Authorised		Unauthorised		Unauthorised absences to date	
Signed		Position		Date:	

Original signed and completed forms to be retained with pupil's record.

Copy returned to parent/carers of the pupil to confirm authorisation or refusal of the intended absence

Term Time Absence Information for Parents

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is, however, a discretionary power held by Head Teachers to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances. The Head Teacher will only authorise absence during term time in accordance with this policy and will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education.

Your request for your child's absence from school to be authorised must fall in to one of the following categories:

- Where you have to take holidays at a time specified by your employer
- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty
- Where a holiday is recommended at part of you, or your child's, rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- Where you are considering emigration and wish to visit the country as part of your consideration
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close family member that is taking place out of the area

Evidence would be required in each case.

The Head Teacher will not, **under any circumstances** (including those mentioned above) authorise absence from school at the follow times:

- The first six weeks of any academic year (for all pupils)
- Transition day
- During the Year one Phonics screening period (for pupils in that year group)
- **Requests will only be considered for a pupil(s) where average attendance is at least 96%**

If your request is approved, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete. Any unauthorised absence will be recorded as such on your child's record and this may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrate's Court.

Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003), the local authority has statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absence. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent or carer. A Penalty Notice may be requested once a child has accrued 10 unauthorised absences in a rolling 12 school week period. From 19th August 2024, the threshold for requesting a penalty notice changes to 10 unauthorised absences in a rolling 10 school week period. Also from 19th August 2024, the number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child is 2 within a 3-year period. Further absences within 3 years of the first offence will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court for the same parent in respect of the same individual child.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of a parent/carers after possibly just one warning. This includes pupils caught on the truancy sweeps, unauthorised family holidays and persistent late arrival after the close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable for prosecution or a penalty notice, it is important you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance.