Westmorland & Furness Council

Askam Village School Attendance Policy

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Position:	Headteacher
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1. Introduction

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

1.2 Askam Village School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 Askam Village School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school and identify the reasons for poor attendance.

1.4 Askam Village School recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on admissions, safeguarding, anti-bullying, child protection, safeguarding and behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

1.5 This policy aims to:

- promote good attendance;
- reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- promote early identification to address patterns of absence;
- promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legal framework

2.1 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)

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

2.2 Legal proceedings are a statutory intervention used by the local authority against the parents of registered pupils who fail to attend regularly at school. Parents whose children are on a school register and fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child(ren), may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 and the authority may take enforcement action through the courts to secure regular attendance.

2.3 Legal proceedings are not used as a punishment to parents for their pupil's absence from school; they are a supportive measure intended to make parents realise the importance of attendance and to avoid further absence from school.

2.4 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A prosecution can take place against any person who has parental responsibility for the child's education or who has care of the child. Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children are properly educated. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. If you allow your child to be absent from school without good reason, the school will not authorise the absence, you may be committing an offence, and you could be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted.

2.5 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

2.6 Under the Education Act 1996, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

2.7 The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

2.8 The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. Safeguarding

3.1 Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

3.2 Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Safeguarding is about offering early help and support to children and families and difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may be considered a safeguarding matter if this places a child at risk of harm.

3.3. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety, access to the curriculum and anti- bullying, protecting children from abuse and neglect, online safety, radicalisation and extremism, FGM and CSE.

3.4 More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

3.5 In order to allow us to safeguard the children in our care it is important that parents and carers provide the school with their current contact details and provide at least three other contact numbers in case of emergency.

3.6 It is also important for parents inform the school of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances.

4. Categorising absence

4.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

4.2 Absence can only be authorised by the headteacher/principal and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

4.3 Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate.

4.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

4.4.1 <u>Illness</u>
Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the headteacher to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription, etc.

4.4.2 <u>Medical/dental appointments</u>
Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils must attend school for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card to school.

4.4.3 Other authorised circumstances
This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances.

4.4.4 Suspended or permanently excluded (no alternative provision made)
Suspension or permanent exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher/form tutor/head of year will make arrangements for work to be sent home. Alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive school day of any suspension or permanent exclusion and the appropriate attendance code should be used to record this.

4.4.5 Religious Observance
Askam Village School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration, by written request by the parent, of authorised absence.

4.4.6 Study leave
Study leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

4.4.7 Traveller absence
It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1996, section 444(6), states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (ie 200 half days) in the year preceding the absence. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England it is expected that the pupil should attend a mainstream school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered.

Askam Village School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Askam Village School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Askam Village School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

Askam Village School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling for work or trade purposes and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- the child is on roll and attending another visited school;
- the child is undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another local authority's Traveller Education Service;

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

4.4.8 Late arrival

Registration begins at 8.50am; pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.15am *(no more than thirty minutes after the opening of the register)*; pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (code U). This is not authorised and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

4.4.9 Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the headteacher.

4.5 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of leave granted.

A leave of absence form shuld be requested from the school office and submitted at least 2 weeks before the date of the first requested day of absence.

4.5.1 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. This means that the child will lose their school place.

4.5.2 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be unauthorised. In cases where the national threshold is met schools must consider a penalty notice. In these circumstances the school will refer to the local authority. Fixed penalty notices will be issued in accordance with Westmorland and Furness Council's code of conduct.

5. Deletions from the register

5.1 In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority.
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
- Death of a pupil.
- Transfer between schools.
- Parent notifies the school in writing they are withdrawing the child to be educated otherwise than at school.
- Failure to return from a period of leave after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- Where a pupil has been detained under a sentence of detention and here are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will not return to the school after the period of detention. This will be agreed in discussion with the Youth Justice Service.
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil and agree to deletion from the register.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

5.2 Askam Village School will follow Westmorland and Furness Council's Children Missing Education Procedures when a pupil's whereabouts are unknown.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The governing board

The governing board 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 The designated senior leader responsible for school 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.
- Working with the named LA Attendance Support Officer to agree actions for pupils whose attendance is a concern and support strategies are not working.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs. Fiona Newton and can be contacted via telephone on 01229 462814 or via email head@askam.cumbria.sch.uk.

6.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7).
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher.
- Working with LA Attendance Support Officers to tackle persistent absence.

The attendance officer is Mrs. Fiona Newton and can be contacted via telephone on 01229 462814 or via email head@askam.cumbria.sch.uk.

6.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day as the absence, as early as possible. Wherever possible, this information will be sent directly to the school office.

6.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.

- Transfer calls from parents to the classteacher/Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

6.7 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 9am 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 one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

6.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Primary schools attend school every day on time.

7. Using attendance data

7.1 The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether there are 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.

7.2 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.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other 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.

7.4 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.

Examples of letters the school will send can be found in the appendices along with proformas for meetings outlined.

8. Support systems

8.1 Schools recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with school to identify the anxiety-based school avoidance resources most appropriate for support and to accept the support that is offered or advised.

8.2 Askam Village School also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

8.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance for all pupils. Strategies used will include:

Celebrating good attendance in assemblies and in newsletters.

8.4 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Askam Village School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

9. Legal interventions

9.1 Prosecution

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be considered however; **i**nitiating prosecution proceedings is a serious step that is normally taken by an Attendance Support Officer or other relevant officer at the LA.

All alternatives to prosecution will be considered and discounted ahead of considering prosecution. These include Attendance Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

9.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

9.1.2 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2,500 and/or be imprisoned for a period of up to three months.

9.1.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Attendance Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

9.2 Attendance contracts

An attendance contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

9.2.1 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

9.2.2 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

9.3 Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence without reasons provided and/or accepted as exceptional by the headteacher/principal.

9.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £160 fine is paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.

9.3.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

9.3.3 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Westmorland and Furness Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Pro forma 1 – nursery concern letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: name of child

Regular and punctual attendance is essential if children are to make sustained progress, reach their full potential, and feel part of their class and whole school community. Regular attendance at nursery establishes good habits from an early age and contributes to the development of a positive approach to school and education.

As part of our Attendance policy, we are required to monitor attendance and punctuality of all our pupils, including those at nursery. We have concerns about your child's attendance, and we would like to invite you to a meeting to give you an opportunity to discuss any reasons for your child's absences, and to establish how we can support you.

The meeting will be held at **school** on **date** at **time**.

If this date or time is inconvenient, please contact school to arrange another appointment.

It is important that you attend the meeting so that we can work in partnership to improve your child's attendance. If you would prefer the meeting to be held at an alternative venue, the please contact school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 2 – initial concern letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

Your child's attendance is currently XX%, which is below our school's expectations as outlined in our Attendance policy.

As a result, we will continue to monitor your child's attendance. If you or your child are experiencing any barriers to accessing their education, please contact XX to discuss how we may support you and your child to attend school every day.

It is important that you support us by ensuring that your child attends school on time, every day. If your child is unable to attend, then you should contact school on the first day of any absence or if there is any problem which may be causing your child to miss school.

Please be reminded that, under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly, and failure to do so could ultimately result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty fine and/or a summons to appear at Magistrates' Court.

There is a strong link between poor attendance and low academic attainment and as a school we are committed to supporting you and your child to enable them to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 3 – ongoing concern letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

I have contacted you previously regarding your child's attendance at school. Unfortunately, we have not seen the necessary improvement in the three weeks following my letter.

I am writing to you again as your child's attendance is now an ongoing concern. Currently, your child's attendance is …… %. Please find enclosed their attendance record for you to look at.

If you or your child is experiencing any barriers to attending school then please contact ……to discuss how we may support you and your child to attend school every day.

If we do not see any improvement in your child's attendance in the next three week period then we will take further action.

It is important that you support us by ensuring that your child attends school on time, every day. If your child is unable to attend then you should contact school on the first day of any absence or if there is any problem which may be causing your child to miss school.

Please be reminded that, under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly, and failure to do so could ultimately result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty fine and/or a summons to appear at Magistrates' Court.

There is a strong link between poor attendance and low academic attainment and as a school we are committed to supporting you and your child to enable them to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 4 – invite to meeting letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

Further to our previous communications, your child's school attendance continues to be a cause for concern.

Currently, your child's attendance is …… %. Please find enclosed their attendance record for you to look at. Out of a possible XX sessions, XX sessions have been missed due to absence, XX of which are recorded as unauthorised.

The government expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance and to work with pupils and their families if attendance dips below expectations.

There is a strong link between poor attendance and low academic attainment and as a school we are committed to supporting you and your child to enable them to reach their full potential.

We are now inviting you (and your child if appropriate) to a School Attendance meeting. The meeting will be held at **school** on **date** at **time**.

If this date or time is inconvenient, please contact school to arrange another appointment.

Please be reminded that, under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly, and failure to do so could ultimately result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty fine and/or a summons to appear at Magistrates' Court.

It is important that you attend the meeting so that we can work in partnership to improve your child's attendance.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 5 – non-engagement letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

Further to my previous letter inviting you to a meeting to discuss your child's attendance, I have arranged a second meeting which I hope will be more convenient for you.

The meeting will be held at **school** on **date** at **time**.

If this date or time is inconvenient, please contact school to arrange another appointment or if you would prefer the meeting to take place in your home.

I would appreciate this opportunity to discuss the barriers to your child's positive attendance and to discuss any support we may be able to offer.

Please be reminded that, under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly, and failure to do so could ultimately result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty fine and/or a summons to appear at Magistrates' Court.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 6 – meeting follow-up letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

Thank you for meeting with school on XX to discuss your child's attendance. Please find enclosed a copy of the meeting record outlining the agreed actions.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance. The meeting to review progress and discuss any further actions will take place on date at time in school.

If you have any matters that you wish to discuss, then please contact XX.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 7 – invite to attendance contract meeting

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

Your child's school attendance record continues to give cause for concern.

We would like to meet with you to formalise the support we as a school can offer, and create a contract of agreement between us.

This is known as an attendance contract, which is a formal written agreement between parent(s) and the school to address irregular attendance. A contract is not legally binding, however it allows a more formal route to support families where previous plans have not worked.

We are inviting you (and your child if appropriate) to a School Attendance meeting to agree the attendance contract. The meeting will be held at **school** on **date** at **time**.

If this arrangement is inconvenient, please contact me as soon as possible so that an alternative time and date can be arranged.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 8 – Year 11 letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

I am writing to you regarding concerns over your child's attendance at school. I enclose a copy of the attendance record for you to look at. If you were unaware of the scale of these absences, or if there are any problems which may be preventing your child attending school regularly, then please contact …….

All Year 11 pupils remain on the school roll until the end of June and must continue to attend school as usual, unless there is official study leave or your child is attending work/college placements.

This is an important year in which students need to complete coursework and can benefit greatly from the help and support from staff in school. There is ongoing careers advice and support, which is important to support young people to make the right choices and to received practical support in securing college places or other training provision.

Please be reminded that, under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school regularly, and failure to do so could ultimately result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty fine and/or a summons to appear at Magistrates' Court.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 9 – punctuality initial concern letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

It has been brought to my attention that your child has arrived late to school on XX occasions this academic year. XX of these absences have been after the register has closed, resulting in an unauthorised late mark (U) in accordance with our School Policy. Please find a copy of your child's attendance record enclosed for you to look at.

We expect all our pupils to attend school on time. If no improvement is seen, you may be invited into school for a meeting to discuss the issues affecting your child arriving at school on time. Continued lateness may lead to a penalty notice being issued.

The school doors are open from XX am with school starting at XX am, after this time your child will receive a late mark.

There is a strong link between poor attendance and low academic attainment and as a school we are committed to supporting you and your child to enable them to reach their full potential.

If you are facing issues that are impacting on you getting your child to school on time, please speak with XX in the first instance.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 10 – request for medical information letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

Further to my previous contact with you regarding your child's attendance, we now request that you provide medical evidence from a GP, or other medical professional, to support any future absences.

The evidence should state the child's name and the period that the child is unable to attend school. Failure to supply this evidence will result in your child's absences being unauthorised and could lead to further action.

Medical evidence can take the form of:

- Medical appointment card with pupil's name, date, and **one** appointment detailed.
- Print screen of AskMyGP website showing their response to your contact.
- Evidence of a consultation with NHS 111.
- Medication prescribed by a GP, with the dispensing label attached.
- Copy of prescription.
- Screen print of medical notes.
- Letters concerning hospital appointments.
- Slip with date, pupil's name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist.
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital Consultant or Psychologist.
- Stamped copy of the enclosed medical card.

Please note that Doctors 'sick' notes are not required. Please do not request them from your GP.

We do appreciate that there are times when medical difficulties and illness impact on attendance. If you have an ongoing concern that this is not being addressed, we may be able to support you by contacting health services on your behalf.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 11 – letter to GP

Date

Dear GP

Re: Name of child, DOB, a registered pupil at XXXX School

I am writing to you as we have significant concerns regarding XXX's school attendance and the serious impact this is having on their education. XXX's attendance meets the government's definition for persistently/severely absent.

The child's parent/s / carer/s report that the majority of absences are due to XXXXX illness. However, due to the frequency of absences, future absences will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.

High levels of absence put the parents at risk of prosecution. Therefore, I ask for your professional opinion as to whether the absences are medically justified to the level shown. Please note that I respect your patient's confidentiality and am not requesting details of any medical conditions. XXX has given me written consent to contact you and to provide the attendance record, documents enclosed.

I would appreciate it if you would complete the check box below/on the sheet enclosed and return to us via email XXXXXXX

GP's response:

It is my opinion that XXX's absences are medically justified. **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Enc: Attendance record
Parental consent

Pro forma 11A – Parental Consent Form

Medical Consent Form

I hereby give permission for the disclosure of information to the Head Teacher of XXX School, regarding my child's medical fitness to attend school.

Child's name

Date of birth

Child's address

School name

Current level of attendance (%)

Name of parent/carer

Name of Doctor

Address of Doctor

Signed: ..... **Date:** .....
(Parent/Carer)

Pro forma 12 – Medical Card

MEDICAL CARD

To Whom It May Concern

The child named below needs proof of attendance of a doctor's appointment. Please would you date, sign or stamp the card.

Child's name

Date of birth

Doctor's name

Doctor's address

Doctor's telephone number

Thank you for your support.

Head Teacher

Date	**Surgery stamp/Doctor's signature**
Description of illness/medical issue	

Date	**Surgery stamp/Doctor's signature**
Description of illness/medical issue	

Pro forma 13 – example leave of absence request form

Notification of a pupil's leave of absence

Pupil name	
Form/Class	
Date of first day of absence	AM or PM
Date of return to school	AM or PM
Number of school days that your child will be absent from school	

Time lost by children and young people due leave in term time can be disruptive to their education. Wherever possible, absence from school should be avoided as it can have a serious effect on your child's educational progress and can create difficulties for them on their return to school.

From September 2024 new guidance came into place which removes the ability for parents to take their child out of school for an authorised term time holiday. There are new codes for the school register which make it clearer as to the reason for the absence. The registers are legal documents and school must use the codes correctly.

Please select:

☐ G – Term Time Holiday

☐ C – Leave of absence for Exceptional circumstance

☐ C1 – Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance, eg show, modelling

☐ J1 – Leave of absence for attending an interview, employment, or an education establishment

☐ P – Approved sporting activity

☐ R – Religious observance

Please detail the reason for requesting a leave of absence

I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised, the Local Authority may be notified and a penalty notice may be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days. I also understand that failure to pay a penalty notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.

Name(s) of Parent/Carer(s) making application

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/…..	First name	Surname
Signed		Date
Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/…..	First name	Surname
Signed		Date

Please ensure you are giving at least 14 days' notice of the proposed absence; retrospective applications cannot be authorised.

NB The maximum number of fixed penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of a child is two within a rolling three year period. Should a further offence be committed in this time the LA will be required to consider alternative legal measures, including prosecution.

For school to complete:

AUTHORISED

UNAUTHORISED

Pro forma 14 – response to leave of absence request

Example letter with options

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Name of pupil, DOB

Application for leave of absence

Thank you for your request for XXXX to take time off school during term time. XXXXX's current school attendance is **%.

At ***** School, we have always endeavoured to be as reasonable as possible where occasional, one-off term time absences are concerned but, as you may be aware from the media coverage, there has been a change in the government's position on such absences during term time for those in statutory education and this has affected our ability to authorise them. The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time, only in 'exceptional circumstances'. The reason you have given for the absence does not constitute an exceptional circumstance, therefore we are unable to authorise the absence.

Failing to ensure regular school attendance by taking your child out of school in term time for a holiday is an offence under section 444 (1) or section 444 (1A) of the 1996 Education act. The maximum penalty for these offences is a fine of £2,500, three months' imprisonment, or both. Alternatively, the local authority/school may choose to impose a Section 444A Penalty Notice in the order of a fine instead of prosecuting for the offences given above. The amount of the penalty notice is £160 (per parent, per child). There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.

- As the holiday brings your child's overall attendance to below 90%, we will be forwarding the matter to the local authority.
- This is the second time you have removed your child from school for a term time holiday, therefore we will be referring the matter to the local authority.
- Last year you also took your child out of school for a term time holiday, therefore we will refer the matter to the local authority.
- However, please be reassured that on this occasion no further action will be taken beyond this, as fines are only issued by the LA if more than five days' holiday are taken in any academic year, this is not the case here. If, however, ****'s attendance drops below 90% we will need to review this.
- This unauthorised term time holiday brings XXXX attendance to below 90%, so I wish to invite you to an attendance action plan meeting.

Absence due to holidays in term time impact on student's attendance records and much of the work students miss when they are absent is never completely made up and can leave them at a considerable disadvantage. As a school, we expect parents will ensure that work that is missed will be collected from school and completed.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 15 – leave of absence no request

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Leave of absence (no request) – BUT CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY (remove before sending)

Name of pupil, DOB

I write with regard to the above named child who was absent from school **(insert dates)** a total of --- days. I have tried to contact you with regard to this period of absence and have been unsuccessful.

I am satisfied, however, that you have been on a family holiday – which is deemed to be an unauthorised leave of absence.

You should be aware that, as from 1 September 2013, Head Teachers ***shall not*** grant a request for a leave of absence ***unless*** an application has been made in advance to the school, when such a request is made any leave can only be authorised if there are exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

In this case, no such request for a leave of absence has been made, so there were no exceptional circumstances to consider. As a result, the period of absence referred to above has been recorded as an unauthorised family holiday on the register.

Failing to ensure regular school attendance by taking your child out of school in term time for a holiday is an offence under section 444 (1) or section 444 (1A) of the 1996 Education act. The maximum penalty for these offences is a fine of £2,500, three months' imprisonment, or both. Alternatively, the local authority/school may choose to impose a Section 444A Penalty Notice in the order of a fine instead of prosecuting for the offences given above. The amount of the penalty notice is £160 (per parent, per child). There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pro forma 16

Attendance Meeting Minutes

Name of Student:
School:

Date of meeting:	**Time and place**:
Present at meeting:	**Apologies received**:
Invited but no apologies received:	
Purpose of meeting: To address attendance concerns.	

What's working well?
What are we worried about?

Date of next meeting:

Signed (Chairperson)

Pro forma 17 – attendance contract

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CONTRACT

SCHOOL NAME

Student		**Date of birth**	**Date of action plan** to run for six weeks from
Attendance is **%	**Target of X in next six weeks**		**Aim: to increase attendance**
Agreement	**Action**	**Timescale**	**Outcome**
Pupil			
Parent/Carer			
School			
Other			
LA Attendance Officer	To follow Local Authority process on ensuring school attendance		

I confirm that this Attendance Contract was agreed by all present.

Signed

..... Parent/Carer ..... School representative

..... Pupil ..... Other agency