

Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England VC Primary School

Life in all its fullness (John 10:10)

Attendance Policy

The *Attendance Policy* was reviewed during the Summer of 2024.
This document is the result of that review.

DATE AGREED BY FULL GOVERNING BODY:	25.09.24
REVIEW DATE:	September 2025
REVIEW CYCLE:	Annual
PLACED ON WEBSITE:	27.09.24
AUTHOR:	Mrs Justine Watkins
FGB/COMMITTEE:	FGB
NOMINATED GOVERNOR:	Mrs Emma Cash
HEADTEACHER:	Mrs Justine Watkins
TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:	Working together to improve school attendance applies from 19 August 2024 .pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk) <i>Admissions Policy.</i> <i>Aims of the School</i> <i>Behaviour for Life and Learning Policy</i> <i>Child Protection Policy</i> <i>Safeguarding Policy</i> <i>Wiltshire Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct</i>

Contact...

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Attendance Policy

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Introduction:

In February 2024 the DfE published new guidance “Working Together to Improve School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities”. The guidance is statutory and effective from 19 August 2024.

The guidance is clear that improving attendance is everybody’s business. It provides a framework that local authorities, schools, governing bodies and trusts must have regard to in order to support and maintain high levels of school attendance.

“Recognise that absence is a symptom and that improving pupil’s attendance is part of improving the pupil’s overall welfare.” Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE February 2024

Excellent education is vital to the lives of all children and to our society as a whole. Whilst it is known that the life chances of children may not be equal from the outset of their lives for various reasons, education can help to redress this imbalance and help to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential.

Regular attendance is an essential foundation of raising pupil attainment. Absence from school can seriously disrupt pupils’ continuity of learning. Not only do they miss out on taught lessons, but many children find it difficult to catch up academically and socially when they return to school.



95% attendance equates to half a day off every two weeks for a whole year

90% attendance equates to a day off every two weeks for a whole year

85% attendance equates to one and a half days off every two weeks for a whole year

80% attendance equates to one whole day off every week for a whole year

Punctuality and lateness

- At Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School, children are expected to be in school on time. Gates open at 8:40am and the registers are submitted to the office by 8:50am.
- If a child arrives after 8:50am they must sign into the main school office. They will be recorded as late.
- If a child arrives after 9:10am they must sign into the main school office. This will be recorded as an unauthorised

absence.

- If a child arrives late for school on a regular basis, learning really can suffer. This is for a number of reason but just on a time basis:

5 minutes every day	3 days
10 minutes every day	6.5 days
15 minutes every day	10 days
20 minutes every day	13 days
19 minutes every day	19 days

Poor or irregular attendance places children at risk, can contribute to contextual safeguarding and welfare concerns and in some cases can result in them being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour and exposure to exploitation.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and that the best outcomes for pupils will be achieved when all parties work together to secure excellent attendance.

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to support our pupils to aspire to, achieve and celebrate the best possible attendance. At Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School we constantly work towards our goal of 100% attendance for all children.

This document sets out how the school works to maintain, improve and celebrate attendance. It provides guidance for our particular context, within the legal framework, so that that procedures can be consistently applied, to all pupils.

Statement of Aims:

We aim:

- to ensure that all our pupils make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning
- to ensure that everyone within the school community understands the issues and procedures for attendance
- to fulfil our statutory duties in relation to school attendance
- to encourage, recognise and celebrate good attendance
- to raise parental awareness of unauthorised absence
- to improve overall attendance rates.

Implementation:

The Governing Body and the Headteacher have overall responsibility for the implementation of this Attendance Policy. *Attendance* is regarded as a *whole school issue*. We recognise that while parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly, we also have an important role to play and believe in a partnership approach to the issue.

Expectations:

We are committed to helping our pupils understand that:

- learning is important
- regular attending, being punctual and arriving in a state of readiness for learning is valued
- they are missed, when they are not here
- hard work, commitment and perseverance is recognised and celebrated
- problems leading to non-attendance are taken seriously- we listen
- excellent attendance and punctuality is something to aspire to.

Responsibilities and Procedures

The Local Governing Body sets Attendance Targets for the School Year and requires reports on levels of absence and Persistent Absence. The Headteacher is responsible for achieving and maintaining high levels of attendance to meet Governor agreed targets and for ensuring sufficient resources are made available to do so.

Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School is a local authority, maintained school and as such, must open for at least 380 sessions (190 days) during a school year. **Term dates** are determined by the local authority and are published on the school-website.

Start of Day: The school gates open at **08:40** and children can be dropped off until school starts at **08:50**. Any children come in after this time must report to the school office.

End of Day: The school day ends at **15:20**.

If a child fails to attend school regularly an offence is being committed. A Penalty Notice could be issued to parents or they could be prosecuted, which could result in a fine or imprisonment for failing to ensure a regularly attends school. Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which would mean the attendance of parenting classes. The Local Authority can also apply for an Education Supervision Order.

ATTENDANCE REGISTERS (See Appendix 1)

Attendance registers are legal documents which may be required as evidence in court. Stratford-sub-Castle Primary school follows **The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** which stipulate that schools should maintain an attendance register for each class containing the names of all pupils in the class.

ABSENCE

What to do if your child cannot attend school.

We expect parents to contact the school office by telephone every day that a child is away. There is a special line where you can leave messages about attendance and the messages will be picked up before 09.10am every day.

Failure to provide a reason for absence on each day will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.

It is always best to give honest reasons for why a child is not in school. If a child has a physical or mental health need and they are absent for reasons associated with this, it is best to explain this to staff. This can help the school to monitor patterns of illness and identify the support that the child and family may need to help them attend school regularly.

Authorised absence includes late arrivals (before 09.10), illness, interviews, sporting activities, examinations all of which should be supported (where possible) by a written explanation for the absence (e-mail is acceptable).

Headteachers may authorise an absence from school during term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances may include

- the death or terminal illness of a person in the immediate family
- service personnel and other employees who cannot take leave outside term time at any point in the academic year.

Unauthorised Absences

Please be aware that there is no entitlement to time off during term time. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Term-time holidays.
- Absence following or prior to a school closure or authorised leave (this will be coded as an unauthorised holiday until satisfactory medical evidence has been provided).
- Because it's a child's birthday
- Frequent unsubstantiated claims of illness
- Parent/carer's illness (other than in an emergency)
- School drop or collection times unsuitable to parents work or shift patterns.

- Other family commitments or leisure activities

Where there is no explanation for an absence or the school considers the reason given for the absence as unsatisfactory.

Holidays

If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening. Absence claimed for unexpected delays will require documentary evidence together with proof of original return dates.

For example where illness prevents travel, a doctor's certificates must be provided (these should be in English) and must be accompanied by a travel ticket with dates that would have indicated a timely return. If a child remains abroad at the beginning of a school term parents will be advised that their child's school place may be at risk.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the students should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents are to call the school to inform of any scheduled medical appointments.

Alternative Provision

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. This will be the expectation in Alternative Provision; however, timings of the day will be different to mainstream. In exceptional circumstances, a student can be placed on a temporary part-time timetable, for example, where a medical condition prevents full-time attendance. This would not be a long-term measure and it will be made clear when the part-time timetable ends. A personalised plan for intervention setting clear objectives linked to other relevant information or activities such as 'Education, Health and Care Plans' for children with SEN will be put in place and the absences from school as part of the part-time timetable will be treated as authorised.

The legal framework

ATTENDANCE

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers must ensure that their children are educated. For most parents this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. Failure to do so can result in prosecution. The Government has issued clear guidelines with regard to attendance, which came into effect on 19th August 2024.

It is an offence 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 parent is guilty of an offence."

If you take your child out of school without authorisation the school has the power to issue Fixed-Penalty Notices of £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days and it should be noted that penalties may be issued to each parent for each child."

If a child who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly then the parent(s) is committing an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). Parents who condone absence without good reason should recognise that this is an offence in law and may result in legal action.

A 'Leave of Absence Request Form' is available from the school office should parents need it. It should be completed prior to any withdrawal of a child during term time.

By law schools are required:

- to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon
- to report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than two weeks- unauthorised

- to show in the register whether a pupil absence is authorised or unauthorised
- to support and promote good attendance and take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

Roles and responsibilities:

Parents and carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs which they may have. Most parents choose to fulfil this responsibility by registering children at a school.

Parents have a crucial role and legal responsibility to play in ensuring that their child maintains good attendance. **A child will infer how much a parent values education from their attitude to attendance issues. Parents invest in their child's future by:**

- ensuring that their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and in a "condition to learn" (i.e. not too tired or too hungry)
- working in partnership with us to help their child gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- working in partnership with us by taking an active interest in their child's attendance and education
- working in partnership with us and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which have a negative impact on their child's attendance
- avoiding arranging medical or dental appointments during school hours unless there is an emergency (if at all possible)
- receiving, reading and supporting the school's Attendance Policy

Parents MUST:

- notify the school if their child is absent. Contact with the school needs to be made on every day of absence, ideally first thing in the morning and before the school register closes. Parents should provide an explanation for the absence
- seek permission from the head teacher (or authorised representative) by submitting a written application in advance of any request for leave of absence. Requests should be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested absence.

The school

The school is responsible for and committed to:

- supporting the attendance of our pupils and for managing concerns or issues which may lead to non-attendance
- maximising attendance rates of all pupils
- supporting parents to ensure regular and punctual attendance
- identifying and addressing promptly any issue which may lead to non-attendance or irregular attendance
- ensuring parents understand the school's **graduated response to non-attendance** by clearly communicating the school's policy and the school's intention to work with parents to resolve issues before they become problematic

We recognise our important role to play in ensuring that expectations regarding *attendance issues* are consistent and that the school's legal responsibilities are fulfilled. **Pupils and parents will infer how much the school values education by our handling of attendance issues.**

Staff invest in their pupils' futures by:

- following precise registration procedures
- maintaining accurate records
- monitoring attendance on a daily, weekly and half-termly basis
- liaising effectively with parents, Education Welfare Officers and other agencies
- employing strategies to improve, maintain and celebrate good attendance.

The role of pupils.

Pupils have a responsibility to make sure that they follow school procedures. Pupils are expected to:

- maintain silence and remain stationary while the register is being called
- answer the register in a polite and clear manner when their name is called (i.e. Yes Miss X)
- apologise to their teacher if they arrive in the classroom late- (by walking over to a teacher and talking to them discretely, not shouting across the classroom! Apologies are accepted and children are not reprimanded when their lateness is beyond their control)
- report to the school office if they arrive after 8:50 am
- give the teacher any absence notes written by their parents

The Local Authority

The Local Authority discharges its statutory duty to ensure regular school attendance through Education Welfare Officers within the Education Welfare Service. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

The primary responsibility of the Education Welfare Service is to promote the excellent attendance of all pupils in Wiltshire, thereby contributing to raising pupil attainment.

The Education Welfare Service works in close partnership with all maintained schools and Academies (*subject to specific agreements*) in Wiltshire and other statutory and voluntary agencies to promote regular school attendance and support schools to discharge their responsibilities to ensure regular attendance. Whilst each school has access to a link Education Welfare Officer, the allocation of that resource is targeted according to identified need.

The Education Welfare Service wishes to work closely with schools to provide the following services:

Education Welfare Officer Consultation Visits

The link Education Welfare Officer offers consultation visits to meet with the designated member of staff in order to:

1. Identify pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties by reviewing the attendance data of individual pupils or groups.
2. Agree on actions that need to be taken either by the school and/or the Education Welfare Service.
3. Feedback and exchange information in relation to work which has been undertaken by the Education Welfare Officer and/or the school and recording this in writing, a copy of which is given to the school.
4. Identify areas of concern and of good practice in relation to attendance matters.
5. Offer advice on strategies for improving attendance.

Intervention

On receipt of a referral the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) considers the most appropriate action to be taken. In the first instance this may involve arranging, by letter, a formal meeting to explain the actions that may be taken. It is good practice to make sure parents understand the consequences of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance, in particular that the case could result in a penalty notice and/or court proceedings. Intervention is based on an assessment of needs and is made in conjunction with schools. This may include:

1. Holding formal Local Authority Attendance meetings and reviews between the school, parents and pupil in school or elsewhere
2. Offering specific support to parents and individual pupils, either at school or elsewhere.
3. Visiting the parent or pupil at home (where this is deemed appropriate or necessary).
4. Helping the pupil and parents to access appropriate support from other services and agencies

The Education Welfare Officer may also signpost how pupils and families may receive additional support dependent upon need.

Procedures:

The following procedures are used to record attendance and identify and follow up all absence.

In-school Procedures

It is the head teacher's decision to register an absence as either authorised or unauthorised.

Registration: Class teacher

- morning register open 08:50 -09:10
- register completed according to agreed codes on SIMS (see appendix 1)
- codes must not be entered by the class teacher if there is any doubt over the precise code to be entered
- number present indicated on board in classroom
- children arriving at school after the bell has gone to report to school office

School Office: Administrative Assistant/Headteacher.

- recording phone calls from parents on first day of absence, by phone- record name, date and reason for absence in book
- late-book, in the office recording reasons for late arrivals- i.e. any child arriving after the bell has rung (08:50)
- phone call to parent of any child who has not arrived at school, if no phone call or note on first day of absence has been received (this is a safeguarding issue)
- record any child arriving after 09:10 when the registration closes
- the Headteacher formally monitors registers every week. Absences, which remain unaccounted for are followed up by a standard letter home (see appendix 2) and reasons for absences, sought.
- pupils whose attendance is poor and not improving or who have a pattern of absences, are referred to the Education Welfare Service (see appendix 3)
- any child truanting after registration-i.e. leaving the school premises during the school day will be reported to their parents.

Home/ In-school Procedures

- any day of absence parent to contact school by phone, in person or in writing (letter/e-mail) giving reasons for absence

Child Missing from Education

Where a student has been absent and the school has not been able to make contact to explain the absence within a 10 day period (5 days for a vulnerable student), the Missing Children Procedures will be actioned.

https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/wiltshire/p_ch_missing_educ.html#Protection

Strategies:

Strategies for encouraging good attendance are targeted at both pupils and parents. They include:

Pupils.

- pupil involvement on attendance issues through the School's Council
- assemblies
- use of happy book and Head Teachers certificates for improved attendance

Parents.

- attendance issues and procedures discussed during Induction of new Reception children
- attendance issues and procedures published in the School Prospectus
- regular newsletters reinforcing procedures and the importance of regular attendance
- their child's attendance rate is published with the Annual School Report
- data and information published in the Governors' Report to Parents.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of procedures and strategies, this policy is monitored on a regular basis. While the Headteacher has an overall view of school attendance issues and patterns, class teachers monitor their registers on a daily basis.

Class teachers:

- report any concerns or emerging patterns to the Headteacher as soon as they become aware of them
- share issues at weekly staff meetings
- monitor absence communication/lack of absence communication - report concerns to Headteacher
- send absence notes/e-mails to school office to be filed

Headteacher:

- monitors registers/ attendance every week. Absences which remain unaccounted for are followed up by a standard letter home (see appendix 2) and reasons for absences sought and patterns of non-attendance are identified for individuals and groups of pupils
- provides verbal and or written feedback to staff, following any monitoring exercise undertaken by the Headteacher (agenda item at the weekly staff meeting)
- identifies pupils whose attendance is poor or who have a pattern of absences and supports the pupil and their family using the school's '**graduated response to non-attendance**' (see appendix 3); ultimately involving legal action through the Education Welfare Service.
- meets with the school's Education Welfare Officer to discuss concerns and if necessary organise meetings with parents
- collates information and data to contribute towards any legal action the LA may wish to bring against a parent
- works towards attendance targets, set annually in the School Development Plan and evaluates and reviews as part of the Annual School Review
- includes attendance issues as part of the Headteacher's Report to Governors

Governing Body:

- monitors attendance data and sets targets as part of the school Annual School Review cycle
- evaluates the success of the school's Attendance Policy

Graduated Response to Non-attendance.

Expect

At Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School we expect every pupil to attend school every day unless they have a legitimate reason for not being at school. (There are a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school).



Monitor

Attendance is monitored on a daily basis and any concerns are acted upon immediately. Concerns include:

- absent pupils whose parents have not contacted the school by 09:10
- pupils absent on the same day over a period of weeks
- attendance dipping below 95%



Listen and Understand

Pupils and their parents are consulted in order to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. At the outset parents are contacted by the headteacher (in person or by phone) and an informal discussion regarding attendance takes place.



Facilitated Support

Any adaptations which are necessary for the school to make are implemented. Where out of school barriers are identified, signposting to support or help to access to any required services is given in the first instance. A partnership approach to improving attendance is adopted. This may include early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

If improvements are not immediately evident or attendance slips towards or falls below 90% a more formal meeting is called by the Headteacher which may result in a referral to the Education Welfare service (EWO).



Formalised Support

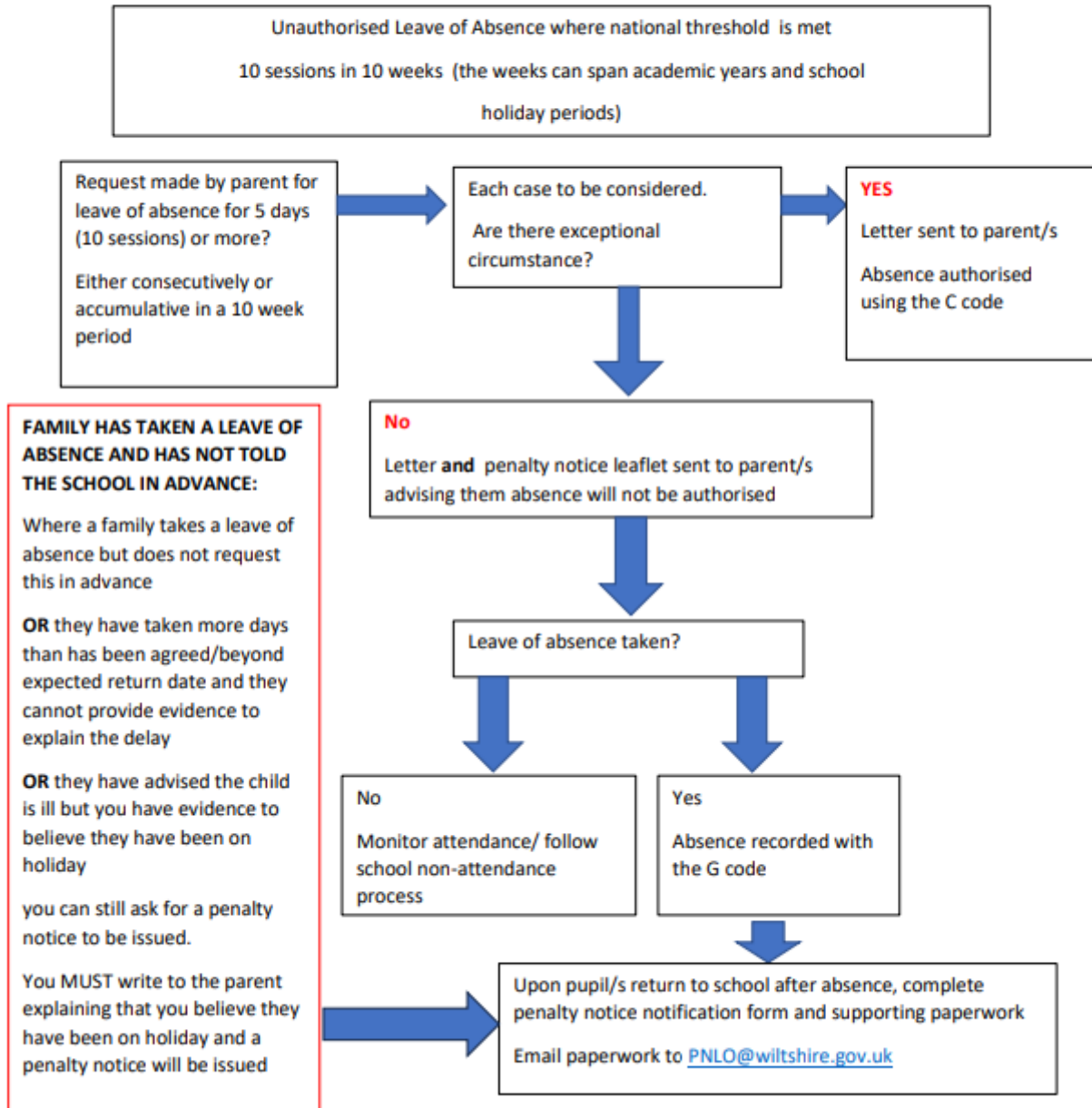
Where absence persists and voluntary support does not work, or is not being engaged with, the school and partners will explain the consequences clearly (providing written advice when necessary) and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. This may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



Enforce

Where all avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with, attendance is enforced through statutory intervention or prosecution in order to protect the pupil's right to an education. (See Appendix 2)

PROCEDURE FOR UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE (Holiday)



Wiltshire Council



PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Important notice to all parents and carers

With effect from 19 August 2024 Wiltshire Council may issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school. This includes unauthorised absence as a result of a holiday taken in term-time. If a pupil accumulates 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10 week period the school may issue you with a Notice to Improve School Attendance*. If your child's attendance does not improve the school must notify the local authority and a penalty notice will be issued to each parent for each child where that applies.

A penalty notice of £160 will apply to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. *(a parent will receive a penalty notice for each of their children)*

If a further penalty notice should be issued in relation to the same child within 3 years of the first penalty notice this will be in the sum of £160 to be paid within 28 days. *(a parent will receive a penalty notice for each of their children)*

If after 28 days the penalty has not been paid, legal proceedings will be taken through the magistrates' court for the unauthorised absence.

***NB: A Notice to Improve School Attendance will not be issued where the unauthorised absence is due to a holiday in term-time**

Appendix 4

Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire Education Welfare Service

SCHOOL NOTIFICATION OF UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE (10 sessions of holiday in term-time)

FULL NAME OF PARENT (1):	FULL NAME OF PARENT (2):
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ADDRESS (1):	ADDRESS (2):
POSTCODE:	POSTCODE:

NAME OF PUPIL (1):	DOB:
NAME OF PUPIL (2):	DOB:

ADDRESS OF PUPIL(S):

POSTCODE:

WHO DOES THE PUPIL/S LIVE WITH?

WHICH PARENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE (*Who took the pupil out of school?*)

IN THE CASE OF SEPARATED PARENTS ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY ORDERS IN PLACE PREVENTING PARENTS/CARERS RECEIVING INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN?

SCHOOL:

PERIOD OF UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

FROM: TO:

HEADTEACHER:	
SIGNED: DATE:	

PLEASE ATTACH COPIES OF:

1. Attendance certificate showing unauthorised absence
2. Leave of Absence Request Form.
3. Letter to parent stating that the absence has not been authorised OR
4. Where parents have not applied for Leave of Absence in advance a letter to the parent stating that the absence has not been authorised as it is believed that the child was on holiday.

PLEASE NOTE – NOTIFICATIONS CANNOT BE PROCESSED WITHOUT THESE

ALL DOCUMENTS TO BE SENT TO PNLO@Wiltshire.gov.uk

