The Rutland Learning Trust

Providing outstanding education for all pupils

First-class education and care that allows every child to achieve their potential, regardless of location, prior attainment or background.

By:

Working Together

Sustaining Excellence

Transforming Lives

Attendance Policy 2026-7

WHY IS THIS POLICY REQUIRED?
Statutory
WHAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE?
No changes
WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THIS POLICY?
Introduce as procedure for managing attendance at the school, and to follow RLT procedure.
DATE: Term 1 2026
REVIEW DATE: Term 1 2027

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Data will be processed to be in line with our requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- The Ofsted 2025 Framework Toolkit

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The local governing body (LGB)

The LGB is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues

- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 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
- Liaising with the LA on the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the LA including:
    - Notifying the LA when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.
    - Providing the LA with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days.
    - Providing the LA with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- 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

- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- 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 headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office by 9.00am.

3.6 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

3.7 Parents/carers

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

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

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school office to report their child's absence before 9am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence if appropriate 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance registers at the start of each school day and again at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not. (For pupils under compulsory school age any absence is authorised.)
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 and will be kept open until 9.00.

A late mark (L) is awarded if arrival is after 8.55am but before 9.10am whilst the register is still open. If the pupil arrives after 9.10am when the register has already closed, an unauthorised mark (U) is awarded. Children arriving late to school MUST be signed in by their parents/carers. They are not expected to arrive unattended.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation for the absence by 9.00am the School will contact the Parent/Carer by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

The guidelines to parents from NHS (England) regarding when you should keep your child away from school are as follows:

- Would I take a day off work if I had this condition?
- Is my child too ill to leave the house?
- Does my child have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff?
- Is my child's immune system compromised by a pre-existing medical condition or treatment being undertaken at the time eg chemotherapy.

The following conditions **would not** routinely be authorised by the Headteacher

1. Mild coughs and colds – children should not be kept at home and you should only visit your GP if they persist for more that 2 weeks or are accompanied by shivers, drowsiness and a high temperature.

2. Headaches or minor ailments – a child with a minor headache, sore throat or other 'aches' doesn't usually need to be kept off school unless they are more severe and/or accompanied by other symptoms. You should visit your GP or walk in centre if symptoms persist.

4.3 Planned absence

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

To request an authorised absence parents should fill in the form found at Appendix 2. Further details can be found in point 5.1 below.

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed, before 9.10, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed, after 9.10, will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- A lateness letter (Appendix 5) will be sent when a pupil arrives late to school on 5 or more occasions during a single 'term' (either L or U codes). There are a total of 6 'terms' in each academic year.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at parents' meetings and in annual reports.

4.7 Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this School, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour management
- Health and Safety

- Access to the curriculum
- Anti-bullying

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil, who is of compulsory school age, during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- Attending an interview/visit for admission to another school
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

For pupils under compulsory school age any absence is authorised (code X).

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off situations. Examples of exceptional circumstances could include:

1. Service personnel returning from deployment where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays;
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue;
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family;
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a close family member (limited to one day);
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Headteacher can consult with the Central Team at The Rutland Learning Trust prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Each school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The school would consider factors such as:

- The nature of the request and why it could not be taken in holiday time
- General welfare of the pupil and family circumstances
- Pupil's educational needs
- Proximity to national tests such as SATS
- Frequency of requests from pupil's parents

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 10 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form (Appendix 2), accessible via the school website or from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and

new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils)
- Year Six transition day (for pupils in year six)
- Year Six SATs week (for pupils in year six)
- At any time specified by the school (this will be communicated to parents by each school).

Exceptional circumstances will be regarded as one-off situations. Should a service family wish to apply for absence, a letter of authorisation must be sought from the Unit Welfare Officer or Commanding Officer in order for the absence to be considered.

The following will generally **not** be considered as 'exceptional':

- Relatives coming to visit
- Family holidays in UK or abroad
- Family day trips
- Taking holiday to coincide with family who have different term times or holidays

5.2 Legal sanctions

In the case of unauthorised term time holiday absence, schools are required to report to the Local Authority unauthorised term time absences, once the threshold for penalty notices is met. This is set at 10 sessions (5 days of unauthorised absence). These can be consecutive days or a number of absences over a 10 week period. The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Penalty notices can be issued by a local authority officer or the police.

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

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Failure to pay the penalty due after 28 days will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.

> Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
> Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

Parents may not be given a Penalty Notice if the Local Authority decides that it is appropriate to prosecute without first offering an alternative. For example if a child has taken other unauthorised absence in the same academic year and has previously been issued with a penalty notice or if the child has taken unauthorised absence when general attendance is poor.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will:

- Invite parents into school to discuss attendance concerns.
- Work closely with parents/carers to promote regular, punctual attendance.
- Work with the LA to support and improve attendance.
- Consider appropriate approaches for rewarding and improving attendance. For example, celebrating good attendance in assemblies or on displays.
- Provide a stimulating and creative environment and curriculum to promote attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data termly (6 times each year) and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. Letters (Appendix 3 and 4) are sent home to parents once attendance falls below 96%.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. This information is captured on the Headteachers Leadership Report to Governors.
- Persistent/Severe absence data is submitted termly to West Northamptonshire County Council.

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:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 7.4 below)
- Use regular attendance reports to class teacher 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
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Follow up on persistent and severe absence with letters and or meetings. See Appendices for sample letters.
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum each academic year. At every review, the policy will be approved by the local governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND Code of Conduct
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention

		• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Term time absence authorisation form

TERM TIME ABSENCE AUTHORISATION – PARENTAL REQUEST FORM

WARNING: Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school could result in:

- **A Penalty Notice issued to you by the Local Authority; or**
- **Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which may lead to a criminal record – Please note that this action will also be taken should you be issued with a Penalty Notice that you fail to pay**

Penalty Notice Details:
The first Penalty Notice issued to each parent/carer for unauthorised term-time absence will be charged at £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days, reducing to £80 (per parent/per child) if paid within 21 days.

If within 3 years of the first Penalty Notice, it is deemed appropriate to issue you with a second Penalty Notice in respect of your child's absence, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days. There will be no opportunity to pay it at the reduced rate.

If there is a third occasion of unauthorised absence in a 3 year period, a Penalty Notice cannot be issued, and the Local Authority may proceed directly to court with a prosecution under the Education Act 1996, where if you plead guilty or are found guilty will mean you will have a criminal record.

Where there are significant concerns about your child's attendance, prosecution action may be taken, and no Penalty Notice will be issued.

Important Regulations:
The regulations concerning authorised absences during term time have been significantly tightened by the DFE's statutory guidance on 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (effective from 19th August 2024). The purpose of this regulation is to clarify schools cannot grant leave of absence unless there are "exceptional circumstances" '.
In practice the changes mean that:

- Headteachers cannot authorise absences for family holidays during term time in any circumstances.
- Headteachers can only authorise term time absence for an exceptional, once in a lifetime events and any application must be received 10 days prior to the event.

I am requesting a leave of absence for my child/children.

Name of child/children: ……

Class(es): ……
For the following reasons:

Dates of absence from …….. / …….. / …….. to …….. / …….. / ……..

Total number of days or part days: ……..

I confirm that I have read the information above.

Signed: …… Date.....

Name of Parent/Carer *making the application (Please PRINT) .....

*This is defined as any adult with legal parental responsibility for a child. If another parent also has parental responsibility for your child, then it is your responsibility to ensure that they agree with this request.

For Office Use Only	
SCHOOL RESPONSE	
The school has authorised / not authorised this request. (reasons below if not authorised):	
Signed:	**Date:** / /

Appendix 3: Letter of Concern 1

<<Forename>> <<Surname>> (<<Yr>>)

From monitoring our registers, we find that <<Forename>>'s attendance has dropped to below 96% which is a concern to us because your child may not have had access to the curriculum and may not achieve along with <<his>> peers.

As you know it is important that pupils attend school regularly. An absence of 5% equates to one day off in every twenty.

Therefore, we will be monitoring <<Forename>>'s attendance this term and expect an immediate and sustained improvement.

If these absences were due to ongoing illnesses, of which the school are not already aware, please contact the school so that support can be put in place to help <<Forename>> to achieve to <<his>> full potential.

If any sessions of absence have not been authorised by the school, we must make you aware that the Local Authority will be contacted as unauthorised absences may lead to prosecution under The Education Act.

If there is anything we can do to support you in getting <<Forename>>'s attendance back to an acceptable level, please contact the school to discuss the matter further.

WARNING: Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school could result in:

- **A Penalty Notice issued to you by the Local Authority; or**
- **Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which may lead to a criminal record – Please note that this action will also be taken should you be issued with a Penalty Notice that you fail to pay**

Penalty Notice Details:

The first Penalty Notice issued to each parent/carer for unauthorised term-time absence will be charged at £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days, reducing to £80 (per parent/per child) if paid within 21 days.

If within 3 years of the first Penalty Notice, it is deemed appropriate to issue you with a second Penalty Notice in respect of your child's absence, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days. There will be no opportunity to pay it at the reduced rate.

If there is a third occasion of unauthorised absence in a 3 year period, a Penalty Notice cannot be issued, and the Local Authority may proceed directly to court with a prosecution under the Education Act 1996, where if you plead guilty or are found guilty will mean you will have a criminal record.

Where there are significant concerns about your child's attendance, prosecution action may be taken, and no Penalty Notice will be issued.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 4: Letter of Concern 2

<<Forename>> <<Surname>> (<<Yr>>)

Following previous correspondence, <<Forename>> has continued to be absent from school. As you know it is important that students attend school regularly. An absence of 5% equates to one day off in every twenty.

Therefore, we must make you aware that the Local Authority will now be contacted regarding <<Forename>>'s attendance level and this may lead to prosecution under The Education Act.

If any absences were due to ongoing illnesses, of which the school are not already aware, please contact the school so that support can be put in place to help <<Forename>> to achieve to <<his>> full potential.

If there is anything we can do to support you in getting <<Forename>>'s attendance back to an acceptable level, please contact the school to discuss the matter further.

WARNING: Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school could result in:

- **A Penalty Notice issued to you by the Local Authority; or**
- **Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which may lead to a criminal record – Please note that this action will also be taken should you be issued with a Penalty Notice that you fail to pay**

Penalty Notice Details:

The first Penalty Notice issued to each parent/carer for unauthorised term-time absence will be charged at £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days, reducing to £80 (per parent/per child) if paid within 21 days.

If within 3 years of the first Penalty Notice, it is deemed appropriate to issue you with a second Penalty Notice in respect of your child's absence, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days. There will be no opportunity to pay it at the reduced rate.

If there is a third occasion of unauthorised absence in a 3 year period, a Penalty Notice cannot be issued, and the Local Authority may proceed directly to court with a prosecution under the Education Act 1996, where if you plead guilty or are found guilty will mean you will have a criminal record.

Where there are significant concerns about your child's attendance, prosecution action may be taken, and no Penalty Notice will be issued.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 5: Lateness Letter

Poor punctuality

I'm writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

[He/she] arrived at school late on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]
- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

The school day begins promptly at 8.50am and registration closes at 8.55am

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child doesn't miss work, and that disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

Persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice. The school can request that the local authority issues a penalty notice related to lateness.

WARNING: Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school could result in:

- **A Penalty Notice issued to you by the Local Authority; or**
- **Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which may lead to a criminal record – Please note that this action will also be taken should you be issued with a Penalty Notice that you fail to pay**

Penalty Notice Details:

The first Penalty Notice issued to each parent/carer for unauthorised term-time absence will be charged at £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days, reducing to £80 (per parent/per child) if paid within 21 days.

If within 3 years of the first Penalty Notice, it is deemed appropriate to issue you with a second Penalty Notice in respect of your child's absence, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days. There will be no opportunity to pay it at the reduced rate.

If there is a third occasion of unauthorised absence in a 3 year period, a Penalty Notice cannot be issued, and the Local Authority may proceed directly to court with a prosecution under the Education Act 1996, where if you plead guilty or are found guilty will mean you will have a criminal record.

Where there are significant concerns about your child's attendance, prosecution action may be taken, and no Penalty Notice will be issued.

We're committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need. We would therefore like to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can work with you to help improve [name's] punctuality.

Please contact the school office on [number] to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 6: Letter accepting a request for term time absence.

Your request for a term time absence

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school between [date] and [date].

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application, I'm able to agree to your request.

I haven't come to this decision lightly. Our school is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

Each request for a term time absence is considered on its merits at the time. Please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not mean I'll be able to agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher

Appendix 7: Letter accepting a request for religious observance

Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion].

In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request, and it will be considered an authorised absence.

Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity. However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not necessarily mean I will agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher

Appendix 8: Letter declining a request for absence in term time

Your request for a term time absence

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school between [date] and [date].

In this case I regret I am unable to consent to your request.

Our school, while acknowledging that each family's circumstances are different, is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time and many variables are taken into consideration.

Because each request is unique, my decision in this instance can't be directly compared with decisions made by the school in the past, and nor does it set a precedent for the future.

Should you still decide to take your child out of school this absence will be marked in our registers as 'unauthorised'. This may be investigated by Rutland County Council and it will be their decision whether to instigate legal proceedings against you.

Penalty Notice Details:

The first Penalty Notice issued to each parent/carer for unauthorised term-time absence will be charged at £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days, reducing to £80 (per parent/per child) if paid within 21 days.

If within 3 years of the first Penalty Notice, it is deemed appropriate to issue you with a second Penalty Notice in respect of your child's absence, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days. There will be no opportunity to pay it at the reduced rate.

If there is a third occasion of unauthorised absence in a 3 year period, a Penalty Notice cannot be issued, and the Local Authority may proceed directly to court with a prosecution under the Education Act 1996, where if you plead guilty or are found guilty will mean you will have a criminal record.

Where there are significant concerns about your child's attendance, prosecution action may be taken, and no Penalty Notice will be issued.

WARNING: Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school could result in:

- **A Penalty Notice issued to you by the Local Authority; or**
- **Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which may lead to a criminal record – Please note that this action will also be taken should you be issued with a Penalty Notice that you fail to pay**

We are sorry for the disappointment this decision may cause but hope you will understand the reasons behind it.
Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher

Appendix 9: Return from unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence

I'm writing about your action in taking [name(s)] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].

We're treating this as an unauthorised holiday because [explain the evidence you have].

Our school works with parents to provide the best education for each child and believes that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We expect you to consult the school before booking holidays that mean your child will be absent, or before making any plans that will involve your child's absence from lessons or other commitments.

If this absence takes your child's combined absences beyond the LA absence threshold, the Local Authority will be informed of the above unauthorised absence, and they may decide to take legal proceedings against you.

Penalty Notice Details:

The first Penalty Notice issued to each parent/carer for unauthorised term-time absence will be charged at £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days, reducing to £80 (per parent/per child) if paid within 21 days.

If within 3 years of the first Penalty Notice, it is deemed appropriate to issue you with a second Penalty Notice in respect of your child's absence, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 (per parent/per child) if paid within 28 days. There will be no opportunity to pay it at the reduced rate.

If there is a third occasion of unauthorised absence in a 3 year period, a Penalty Notice cannot be issued, and the Local Authority may proceed directly to court with a prosecution under the Education Act 1996, where if you plead guilty or are found guilty will mean you will have a criminal record.

Where there are significant concerns about your child's attendance, prosecution action may be taken, and no Penalty Notice will be issued.

WARNING: Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school could result in:

- **A Penalty Notice issued to you by the Local Authority; or**
- **Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which may lead to a criminal record – Please note that this action will also be taken should you be issued with a Penalty Notice that you fail to pay**

Absences like these could have a detrimental effect on [name(s)] education.

We would like to arrange a meeting so that we can discuss this further. Please contact the school office urgently on [phone number].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher

Appendix 10: Letter for non-compulsory school age absence

Your request for a term time absence

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school between [date] and [date].

As name is under compulsory school age I confirm that I have authorised your request on this occasion.

Please note that once your child reaches compulsory school age I will no longer be able to authorise requests of this nature. At this point term time absences can only be authorised if I consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher