



Attendance Policy for **PARTNERSHIP OF DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS (PODS)**

Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Ethos

At Unstone Schools Federation want our pupils to:

- Be resilient, reflective and to take responsibility for what they do.
- Be motivated and enjoy learning
- Develop a range of skills to equip them for a successful adult life, such as independence and ambition
- Be confident, happy and feel safe
- Be friendly, respectful, caring and polite
- Develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

In a school that:

- Fosters individual talents and abilities in every child
- Has the highest expectations for itself, its staff and students
- Celebrates success and achievement in all its forms
- Values the role parents and carers play
- Is continually striving to improve
- Actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.
- Establish a culture and climate, which will:
 - Enable all students to feel we are a safe and a happy place to learn.
 - Endeavour for 100% attendance and punctuality by all students.
 - Actively promote excellent attendance and discourage unjustified absence.
 - Recognise and celebrate excellent attendance and punctuality

- Prepare students for the demands and disciplines of adult working life.

The School Day

Registration periods

The 'AM' mark is recorded when students arrive in the morning.

Unstone St Mary's Nursery & Infant School.

The school day starts at 8.40 am and the morning register is completed by 9.10am.

The afternoon register is completed by 1.05pm.

Unstone Junior School.

The school day starts at 8.30am and the morning register is completed by 8.50am.

The afternoon register is completed by 1.05pm

If a pupil arrives late, after the close of the register, without good reason they will receive a 'U' mark. This will be classed as an unauthorised absence from school. Students who arrive before the close of the register will receive an 'L'

Types of Absence

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

- **The Senior Attendance Champion (key person) within school who is responsible for the attendance of pupils is Rachael Fowlds**

Parents/carers:

- Ensure their child attends daily, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn – "smart students, ready to learn and "on time, all the time".
- If late in the morning, sign in at the school office.

- If need to leave early sign out at the school office.
- Tell a member of staff if there are problems attending school for any reason, e.g. being bullied, feeling unhappy, problems at home.
- Telephone and speak to the school office on the first day of absence ideally before 8.30am. If a student continues to be absent school will contact daily until they return to school.
- Where possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours or not in term time.
- Bring a copy of any medical appointment cards/texts to school if requiring time off from school.
- Do not book any holidays or take children out of school during term time.
- Notify school as soon as problems arise with your child's attendance.
- Encourage children to report any issues that are concerning them, including bullying, immediately to school staff.

Students:

- Arrive in school by times listed above.
- Attend every timetabled session on time.
- Be "On time, all the time".
- If late remind your parents/carers to sign you in.

Headteacher/Senior Teacher

- Share attendance weekly with pupils through assemblies
- Strategically lead and develop the school roles outlined previously.
- Work on strategic action plans and school policy that bring about improvements in student attendance
- Lead on School Attendance Panels and ensure targets and future intervention is administered.
- Monitor and evaluate the systems in school designed to support students in their academic progress and their health and well-being.
- Monitor and evaluate school systems and interventions designed to promote exceptional attendance and behaviour.
- Implementation of the policy at the school
- Monitoring school level absence data and report it to governors
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

School Business Officer

- Keep accurate records of responses from parents/carers when their child is absent.
- Amend the electronic register accordingly.
- Make contact with parent/carer if no contact has been received in the morning of the first day of a child's absence (by text or telephone call).
- Authorise or unauthorise a student's absence according to the school's attendance and punctuality policy and procedures.
- Prepare weekly certificates for the Mentor Group Attendance Award.
- Monitor students for truancy and lateness.
- Report concerns about behaviour, attendance or punctuality promptly to parents/carers and other school colleagues.
- Monitor students with poor attendance.

- Issue attendance awareness and warning letters to parents/carers where appropriate.
- Contact Social Services immediately on the first day of absence of a student with a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need or a Child in Care.

Class Teacher

- Be a good role model for students by arriving on time and being ready for the school day
- Be responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, promptly and accurately, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.
- Give attendance and punctuality the highest profile, sharing attendance figures with students.
- Praise students for arriving on time.
- Share any concerns about the attendance, punctuality or welfare of students promptly with SLT and parents/carers.

School Staff

- Be a good role model for students by arriving on time and being ready for the school day

The Governing Board:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil the expectations and statutory duties.
- Review and challenge 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.
- To support staff in school in high level intervention strategies, namely School Attendance Panel.

Procedures

Registration

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using Arbor. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Parents will be required to inform school of the reason for the lateness of arrival
- Late arrivals will come into via the main office door.

Unstone St Mary's Nursery & Infant School.

Any pupil who comes into school after 8:50am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9:10am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Unstone Junior School.

Any pupil who comes into school after 8:40am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9:00am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school late will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.

Illness (Unplanned Absence)

The student's parent/carer must notify school on the first day of an unplanned absence by (9:15am) or as soon as practically possible.

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

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.

Parents are required to inform school each day of absence, with an update an expected return to school date.

Planned absence (Medical)

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.

However, we 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.

Medical Evidence

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or the school considers a student's absence to be high or following an unusual pattern, then parents/carers may be asked to provide additional medical evidence to help explain any illness absence.

Additional medical evidence may include a doctor's appointment card/text or a photocopy of a pharmacy prescription. The purpose of parents/carers providing additional medical evidence is to help school make fair and objective decisions over which absences are genuine and which are non-genuine illness.

School will not pay any charges incurred by the writing of a doctor's note. If the school has previously written to parents/carers requesting additional medical evidence and none is provided, then the absence will be classified as unauthorised.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

Where medical evidence is requested, but not provided, an 'O' code will be used to indicate unauthorised.

Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a PODS Request of Absence from the school office and handed in 4 school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

See Appendix A for Pods Absence form and Attendance flyer to be included with the form.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G). Absence deemed for the reason of unauthorised leave in term time will be marked in the register with the Attendance code G.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

See Appendix B DCC Term Time Absence Flowchart

Granting Leave of Absence

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so.

National Framework for Penalty Notices (Fixed Penalty Notices)

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

Schools are open for 380 sessions or 190 school days each year.

The school expects attendance of at least 96%. This equates to not more than 15 lost sessions over a school year.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

From August 19th 2024 the Working Together to Improve School Attendance suggests that absence is reported in terms of 'sessions absent' to make the data easier to access.

The Process for Supporting Attendance.

The school follows PODS (supported by Derbyshire) systematic process of support for students whose attendance falls below expected levels (96%). We will consider intervention with parents/carers if a student's attendance is less than 96% terms 1-6.

See Appendix D PODS Process for supporting Attendance

See Appendix C PODS Letters re: Attendance

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices (Appendix E)

We will take into account the time of the academic year and student's circumstances before this academic year

Contact with Social Services – If a student with a Child Protection Plan is absent from school for any reason, the named social worker should be contacted immediately.

Support Available for Students and Families

A range of support is available in and outside of school to support students and their families to achieve excellent attendance.

They include:

- Positive Support – Nurture room for staff to work with students on emotional and behavioural difficulties including providing a “quiet space” for when students are coming to terms with bereavement or family breakdown
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) – referral to CAMHS has to be through school health or the family's own GP
- Schools will also share the NHS resource ‘Is my Child Too Ill for School? To help support families. This can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>
- School Health – referral to the school nurse or referral to the school paediatrician (school doctor) will help students and parents/carers who will work alongside family GPs
- Referral to P4YP
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) – referral to CAMHS has to be through school health or the family's own GP
- Schools will also share the NHS resource ‘Is my Child Too Ill for School? To help support families. This can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Appendix A Pods Absence form and Attendance flyer to be included with the form.



Unstone Junior School

Main Road, Unstone, Derbyshire, S18 4AB
info@unstone.derbyshire.sch.uk (01246) 413109

Headteacher: Mrs Rachael Fowlds

Learning today...Leading tomorrow

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

PLEASE NOTE - The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** state that head teachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If children are absent from school without authorisation, parents may be subject to a fine from Derbyshire County Council. Please see our Attendance Policy, found on our website <https://www.unstone.derbyshire.sch.uk/attendance-2/> or at the request of the school office, for further information on holidays taken during term time.

Names of pupil(s):	Year Group:
Pupil Address:	
Name of Parent(s):	Name of Parent(s):
Parent Address (if different)	
Does your child have any siblings that attend a Partnership of Dronfield School (PODS) Yes / No If yes, please add the name of siblings and school attended.	
Names of sibling(s):	School Attending:

I / We wish to apply for our child(ren) to be absent from school for **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES** on the following dates:

From:	To:
Total number of days our child(ren) will be absent from school:	
Please supply in as much detail as possible the reason for your request and why you feel it is exceptional circumstances. Please include the names of the adult(s) who will be with your child(ren) during their absence from school.	

Signed (both parents if applicable)

Parent 1

Parent 2 Date.....

PLEASE SUBMIT ONE MONTH BEFORE THE DATE OF THE REQUEST

EVERY SCHOOL DAY MATTERS

Penalty Notices for Fines Have Changed!

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes have come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

For example; 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

5 Days of Term Time Leave (Code G) Holiday

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more days in an academic year. (These days do not need to be consecutive.)

First Offence

The first time a Penalty notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance, the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Unsatisfactory Attendance 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period (Code O and U)

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

Second Offence

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

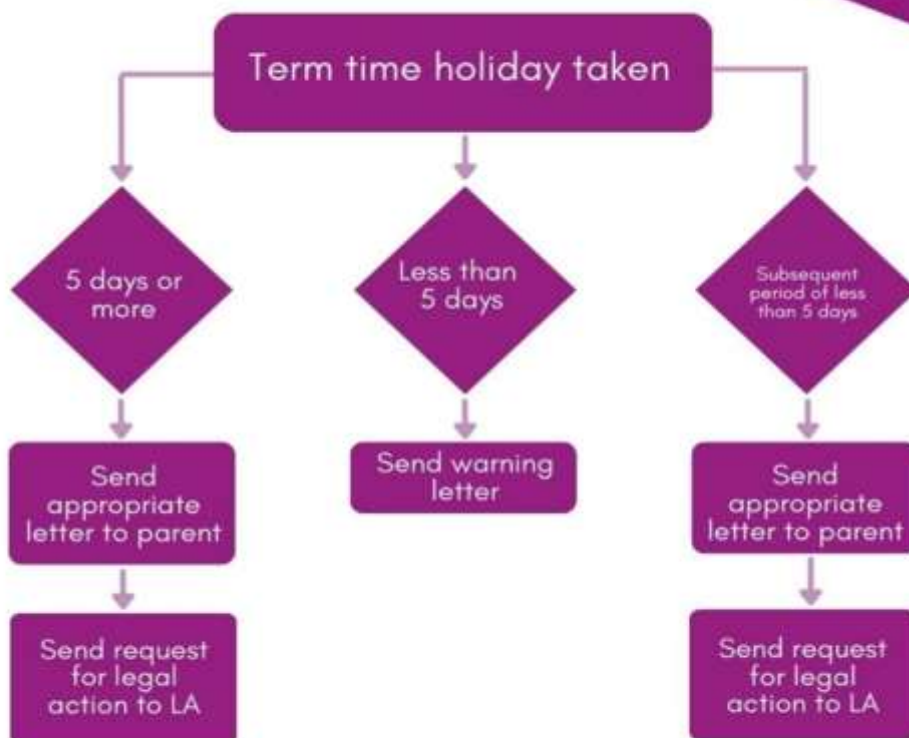
Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.'



Send with the request form.

Appendix B Term Time Absence



Appendix C– PODS Absence Letters

Termly Attendance Update Letter

INSERT SCHOOL HEADER

Termly Attendance Update

Dear

For your Information here is your child's attendance data:

Student(S) First Name (legal) _____ attendance for this year is currently _____
Lesson Attendance (Present) this academic year
Lesson Attendance (Authorised Absence) this academic year
Lesson Attendance (Unauthorised Absence) this academic year
Lesson Attendance (Late) this academic year

I am writing to you, as I will each half term, to update you on *Student(S) First Name* attendance and to inform you of key information pertaining to attendance, up to and including *current date*.

We are aware that students may suffer from illness and require time off school. We thank you for informing us of this absence. Our pastoral staff are aware of the reasons for absence provided and if your child has had a single period of absence due to illness, no intervention will need to be put in place. We are more concerned if patterns are emerging and students are having frequent standalone days off school, or have long periods of unexplained absence. In most cases, students are able to regain an excellent attendance by regularly attending school.

As you are aware, it is the role of the school to ensure we promote attendance, but parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a full-time education. Regular attendance and good punctuality directly correlate to a child's achievement at school and subsequent future success. At *Name of School* we are driven by the desire to prepare students for the demands and disciplines of adult working life, and the best way to achieve this is through excellent attendance. We always aim to work in partnership with parents/carers to achieve the best outcomes for all our students, therefore please contact your child's mentor if you have any queries or concerns.

We have taken steps to assist students and families with improving attendance, including the

training of pastoral staff in supporting children to have better resilience. All evidence shows that children with 95% or higher attendance consistently make the most progress.

A Reminder of our Attendance Procedures

Authorised Absence - Planned

Any planned unavoidable absence should be requested through the submission of a 'Term Time Leave of Absence Form', which can *insert where the form can be accessed*. They must be returned to the school office. The school is only permitted to authorise planned absence for:

- Family Funeral (up to 2 days)
- Immediate Family Wedding (1-3 days)
- Elite Sporting Events
- Pupil Local Authority License (up to 3 days)
- Pantomime Rehearsals – Local authority License Required
- Child/Parent Rehabilitation (GP letter must be provided)
- Religious Observance

The Department for Education has made it clear that schools are not to authorise absence for any holidays during term time.

Please note: Whilst the above absences are authorised, this will still count against your child's overall attendance. The authorisation ensures we know the reason for absence and we appreciate your support with this.

Unplanned Absence

It is the duty of the parent/carer to inform school of any absence. Parents/carers may leave a message on our dedicated absence line by dialing *School number* and selecting *option ?* or emailing *school email address*,

We will only authorise absence in the following instances (this will still count against your child's overall attendance; we class this absence as 'authorised' as we understand the reason for the absence:

- For sickness or ill health
- For medical or dental appointments which fall during school hours
- For a family emergency

Any parent/carer who has not reported their child as absent will be *put in your school procedure*.

Punctuality

Punctuality at school is extremely important. Any pupil who comes into school after *start time* will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than *close of register time* will be marked as late after close

of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Thank you for your continued support with our high aspirations for your child. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher if you have any questions.

Yours Sincerely

Stage 1 letter

INSERT SCHOOL HEADER

Stage 1 Letter

0/00/0000

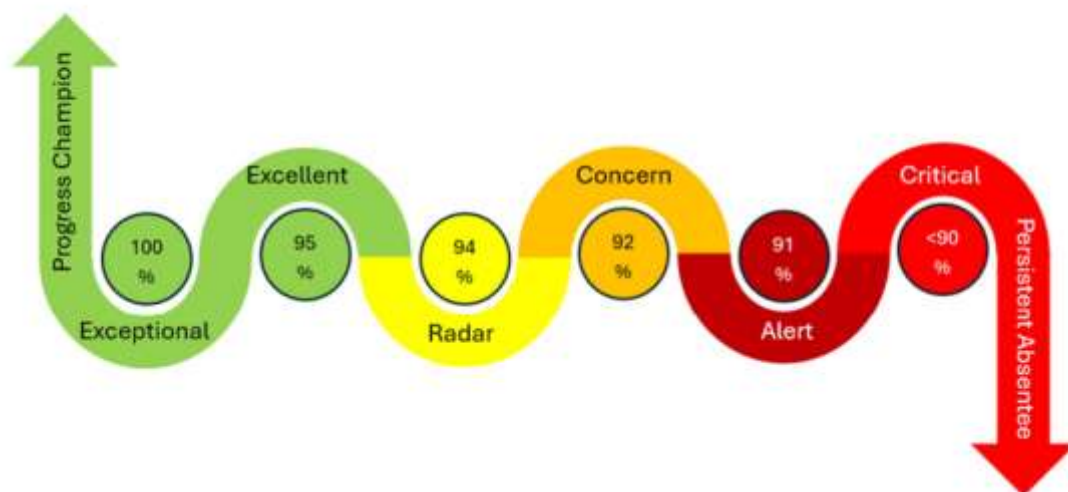
Student Name:

Initial Concern Letter

Dear

As you are aware *school's name* monitors the attendance of students. As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we formally monitor attendance to identify any student whose attendance causes concern.

The diagram below shows the school's classification of attendance.



During our routine monitoring, we have noticed that *pupil's name* attendance is currently *?%*, this is the equivalent to *?* days absent. This is below our expected levels of attendance. This letter is our first letter to register our concern regarding *pupil's name* attendance. Over the next 6 school weeks *pupil's name* attendance will be monitored closely, with further absences in this period resulting in escalation to our next stage of monitoring.

At *name of school* we value and reward good attendance as research shows that your child is more likely to achieve their academic attainment if they have a good attendance record. The information below illustrates the impact that poor attendance can have on your child's educational success.

- Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year

Students in this group will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Students will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

- 95%: 10 days absence a year

Students in this group are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Students who take a 10-day holiday during term time every year can only ever achieve 95% attendance.

- 92%: 15 days absence a year

Students in this group are missing three weeks of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best. The school may consider referring students with this level of attendance to the Local Authority.

- 90%: 19 days absence a year

The Government classes students in this group as 'Persistent Absentees' and it will be almost impossible for them to keep up with work. Parents of students in this group could also face the possibility of fixed penalty notices being requested by the school, to the Local Authority.

Please ensure that over the coming weeks your child's attendance improves to meet the minimum expected level of 95%.

We can support you and your child around any attendance issues you may have, therefore please do not hesitate to contact *add contact details and contact number* should you wish to discuss this further.

Thank you for your cooperation and support with this matter.

Yours Sincerely

Stage 2 Letter

INSERT SCHOOL HEADER

Stage 2 Letter

00/00/0000

Pupil's Name:

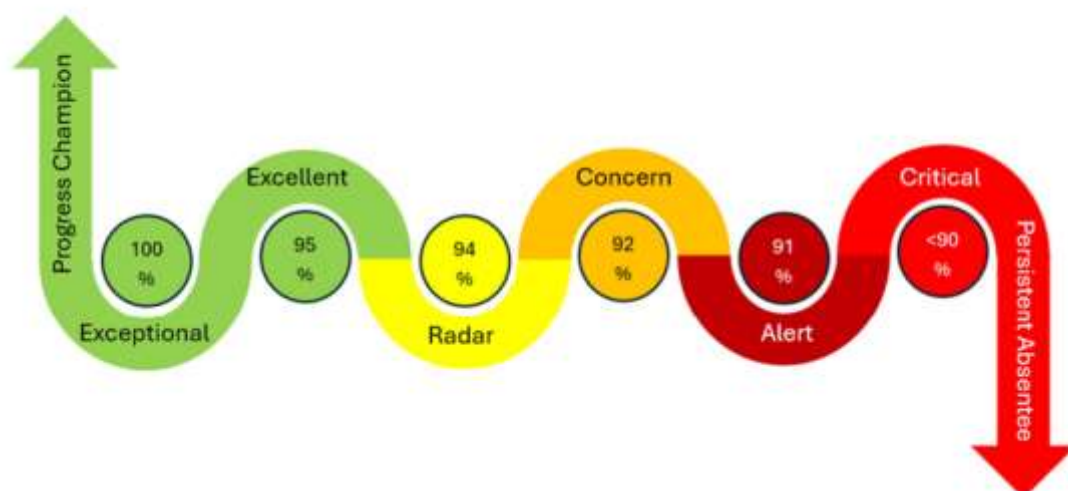
DOB: 00/00/0000

Escalation of Attendance Concerns

Dear

Since we wrote to you, *pupil's name* attendance has failed to improve significantly and is now *%*, (which is the equivalent of *?* days absent). This is below our expected levels of attendance and is having an impact on *pupil's name* education. To put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year.

The diagram below shows the school's classification of attendance.



Some examples of evidence that could be used are Prescriptions, Appointment Cards, Doctor's Notes etc. If this evidence is not supplied, your child's absence will be recorded as an 'Unauthorised' absence. Over the next 10 school days Jonathan's attendance will be monitored closely, with any unauthorised absences in this period resulting in escalation to our next stage of monitoring.

Authorised absence means that school has given approval for a student to be away from school or that the explanation offered by a parent/carer has been accepted. Decisions regarding the authorisation of absences are ultimately the responsibility of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences on your child's attendance record may mean that you are liable to incur a Fixed Penalty Notice or could face prosecution.

Only in exceptional circumstances will low attending students not get monitored. These would be children with medical conditions requiring repeat treatment or who have had a stay in hospital.

We would appreciate your support to make sure *pupil's name* attendance improves. We will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch to arrange a meeting in school where an action plan for attendance will be created. If attendance continues to decline, this may lead to a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Thank you for your cooperation and support with this matter.

Yours sincerely

Stage 3 Letter

INSERT SCHOOL HEADER

Stage 3 Letter

00/00/0000

Pupil's Name: DOB: 00/00/0000

Parental Responsibility Letter

Dear

As a parent/carer you have a legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly. As you will be able to see from *name your system for sharing attendance data, pupil's name* has an unsatisfactory level of attendance, which is ?% (equivalent of ? days absent) and there have been 5 sessions of unauthorised absence to date, your child's attendance will be monitored from *00/00/0000 to 00/00/0000*.

During this monitoring period attendance and punctuality will be recorded daily. Your child will be expected to have 100% attendance unless medical evidence is provided.

All children of compulsory school age who are registered students at a school must attend regularly and punctually. It is your responsibility as a parent/carer to ensure this. Should *pupil's name* fail to attend regularly and punctually, the school may consider referral to the Local Authority.

I am required to make you aware of your legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance. Under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996 a parent is guilty of an offence if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school.

If *pupil's name* attendance continues to be unsatisfactory and his absences marked as unauthorised, then I will have no option but to refer your case to Derbyshire County Council for consideration of legal action. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine per child.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £1000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £2500 and/or a community order or imprisonment.

We will continue to monitor the situation, but if *pupil's name* attendance does not improve over the next 20 school

days, then legal action may follow. If you wish to talk to school regarding this issue or you require any support please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Stage 4 Letter

INSERT SCHOOL HEADER

Stage 4 Letter

00/00/0000

Pupil's Name: DOB: 00/00/0000

Dear

RE: REFERRAL TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ATTENDANCE TEAM

As you are aware under the 1996 Education Act, all parents/carers are required to ensure that a child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. It is with extreme disappointment that I must contact you once again about *pupil's name* attendance. We have for some time tried to support you to improve *pupil's name* attendance in accordance with our school policy by way of letters, telephone contact and meetings.

Unfortunately, *pupil's name* school attendance is still causing great concern. At the date of writing *pupil's name* attendance is ?% (equivalent to ? days absent) and has attended school on ? occasions out of a possible ? when the school was open for instruction under the Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2006; 5 of these absences were considered to be unauthorised. As we have explained to you in the past a parent/carer can offer an explanation for their child's absence, but the law clearly states it is the Headteacher's decision as to whether it is felt the explanation offered by a parent/carer for an absence is justified. Our attendance policy outlines the procedures for dealing with a student's absence and is available to parents/carers via the school website.

As *pupil's name* attendance has not improved following a variety of interventions, I have no other alternative but to refer this matter to the Local Authority's Attendance Team. This team has a statutory duty to investigate matters of ongoing poor school attendance and to consider formal statutory action.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a criminal offence is committed if a registered student does not attend school regularly. The Attendance Service can issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers if a child has missed 10 or more sessions without permission from the school, the Local Authority Attendance Team can also instigate criminal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

I would strongly recommend you cooperate and work with the Local Authority Attendance Service to prevent the need for legal action. If you wish to discuss the content of this letter further, please contact school.

Yours sincerely

Stage 2 Action Plan

Stage 2 Attendance Action Plan

1. Attendance Overview		
Student Name		
Year Group/House		
Date of Meeting		
Attendees		
Current Attendance Rate (%)		
Number of Unauthorised Absences (sessions)		

2. Identified Barriers to Attendance	
Please tick and elaborate on any relevant barriers:	
☐ Health/Medical	
☐ Mental Health/Wellbeing	
☐ Family Circumstances	
☐ Transport Issues	
☐ School Engagement	
☐ Peer Relationships	
☐ Other (please specify)	

3. Student Voice

What is working well?

What is stopping you from coming to school regularly?

What would help you attend more consistently?

4. Parent/Carer Perspective

What challenges are you facing in supporting attendance? (pupil may leave room)

What is stopping you from coming to school regularly?

What support do you feel would help?

5. Actions/Interventions and Support Plan			
Action/Intervention	Who is Responsible?	Deadline	Review
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6. Monitoring and Review			
Next Review Date (within 2 weeks)			
Attendance target for that period (%)			
Support Services Involved (if any)			
Signatures		Student: Parent/Carer: SchoolStaff:	

Stage 3 Attendance Contract

Stage 3 Attendance Contract

This Attendance Contract is issued as part of the school's graduated response to ongoing attendance concerns. It is intended for students whose attendance has continued to decline after an initial Action Planning meeting (less than 90% attendance) and those who are at risk of 'severe' absence (less than 50% attendance) from school. The purpose of this contract is to clearly outline expectations, support available, and consequences of continued poor attendance.

Pupil Information	
Pupil Name	
Year Group	
Date of Contract	
Attendees	
Current Attendance Rate	
Number of Unauthorised Absences (sessions)	

Expectations
1. The pupil will attend school every day and arrive on time
2. Any absences must be reported by the parent/carer with a valid reason
3. The pupil will engage positively with staff and support offered

Support Offered
The school will provide the following support to help improve attendance: - Implementation of the Attendance Action Plan - Regular check-ins with a designated staff member - Access to pastoral or wellbeing support - Adjustments to timetable or learning environment if needed - Referral to external support services if appropriate

Consequences of Continued Poor Attendance
Failure to improve attendance may result in: - Further formal meetings with school leadership and Governors - Involvement of the ISAT (Inclusion Support Advisory Team) - Legal action or penalty notices issued to parents/carers

Agreement		
We agree to the terms outlined in this Attendance Contract and will work together to improve attendance.		
Student Signature		Date
Parent/Carer Signature		Date
School Staff Signature		Date

3. Student Voice
What is working well?
What is stopping you from coming to school regularly?
What would help you attend more consistently?
4. Parent/Carer Perspective
What challenges are you facing in supporting attendance? (pupil may leave room)
What is stopping you from coming to school regularly?
What support do you feel would help?

1. Action and Support Plan			
Action/Intervention	Who is Responsible?	Deadline	Review
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

2. Monitoring and Review	
Next Review Date (within 2 weeks)	
Attendance target for that period (%)	
Support Services Involved (if any)	
Signatures	Student: Parent/Carer: SchoolStaff:

Appendix D – PODS attendance Flow Chart (Needs adapting to each school)



Appendix E - Fixed Penalty Notice Information

National Framework for Penalty Notices

Purpose of Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended and can only be issued by a headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Local Codes of Conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each local authority.

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term)

When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

- Is support appropriate in this case?

If yes, schools are expected to continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a Notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked.

If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.

- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?
- (For local authorities only) Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice in this case given the local authority would be responsible for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment?

If the answer to those questions is yes, then a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

Support is defined as any activity intended to improve the pupil's attendance, not including issuing a penalty notice or prosecution. As part of this consideration, schools and local authorities should consider what suitable forms of support are currently available in school and where necessary from other services and agencies in the area. They should then decide whether any of those things are appropriate in the individual cases and for those that are appropriate, whether they have been provided previously or could be provided now instead of taking legal action. The local authority's decision on whether sufficient support has been provided before issuing a penalty notice should be treated as final.

Whatever action is taken after the national threshold has been met, schools, and local authorities where appropriate, should monitor the impact of the action, and if it does not lead to attendance improvement review the case and consider alternative actions.

The National Framework does not prevent a penalty notice from being used in other cases where an offence has been committed but before doing so authorised officers are expected to make the same considerations as set out above. If in an individual case the local authority (or other authorised officer) believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events. If local authorities wish to exercise this discretion to issue a penalty notice earlier in such circumstances, they should make this clear in their Local Code of Conduct. Local authorities who conduct, or may wish to, conduct truancy sweeps will also want to make provision for this within their Code.

Notices to improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. A Notice to Improve does not

need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

Where a Notice to Improve is used, it should be issued in line with processes set out in the Local Code of Conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

The Notice to Improve is expected to include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

What sufficient improvement looks like can be decided on a case-by-case basis taking the individual family's circumstances into account. For some families, no further unauthorised absences will be appropriate, for others some absence may be tolerable if considerable improvement is seen. Details of what sufficient improvement for each case should be made clear in the Notice to Improve.

Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended. For example, a Notice to Improve stated there should be no further unauthorised absences in a 6-week period but the pupil is absent for unauthorised reasons in the first week. The parent should be informed before a penalty notice is issued if it is before the end of the improvement period.

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases, it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.

In cases where a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil. Where the pupil's previous school was in the same local authority area this check will be simple. If the pupil has moved between local authorities in the previous 3 years and the previous local authority(ies) is known they should be contacted to check whether a penalty notice has been issued to that parent for that pupil in the previous 3 years. These checks can be made by the school and/or local authority depending on the agreed local process. In cases where the previous local authority is not known or the information cannot be, or is not, provided by the previous local authority, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case.