



Kent County Council Inclusion and Attendance Service

East Stour Attendance Policy



Revised in November 2023

Statement of Intent

East Stour Primary is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at East Stour Primary School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents'/Carers' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent by 9.30am. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.50am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent/carer to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

At East Stour Primary School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

Mrs Law has strategic responsibility for monitoring attendance. Mrs Lund is the schools attendance officer and has responsibility for monitoring the day to day attendance and liaising with key staff.

Class teachers or form tutors complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher or person in charge of the class notifies Mrs Lund of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Mrs Lund (Attendance Officer) to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Where there has been no communication, emails are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed termly of the child's attendance figure
- Meetings are arranged with key personnel once attendance drops below the expected standard.
- To track attendance and highlight concerns to FLOs and BSW
- To liaise with external agencies such as PIAS

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- Below 95% a letter to go home to highlight concerns
- 90 - 100% attendance – the Attendance Office or FLO to investigate and notify of concerns. Mrs Lund/FLO to contact parents/carers if appropriate.
- Below 90% attendance - Highlighted at BSW meetings, recorded on CPOMS, school intervention letters/meeting with parents if requested at BSW
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.

- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Lateness

At East Stour the register is taken at 9am and between 1pm and 1.30pm (depending on lunchtimes). Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.20 am and 20 minutes after registration in the afternoon. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions may lead to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)
- Headlice

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of close family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

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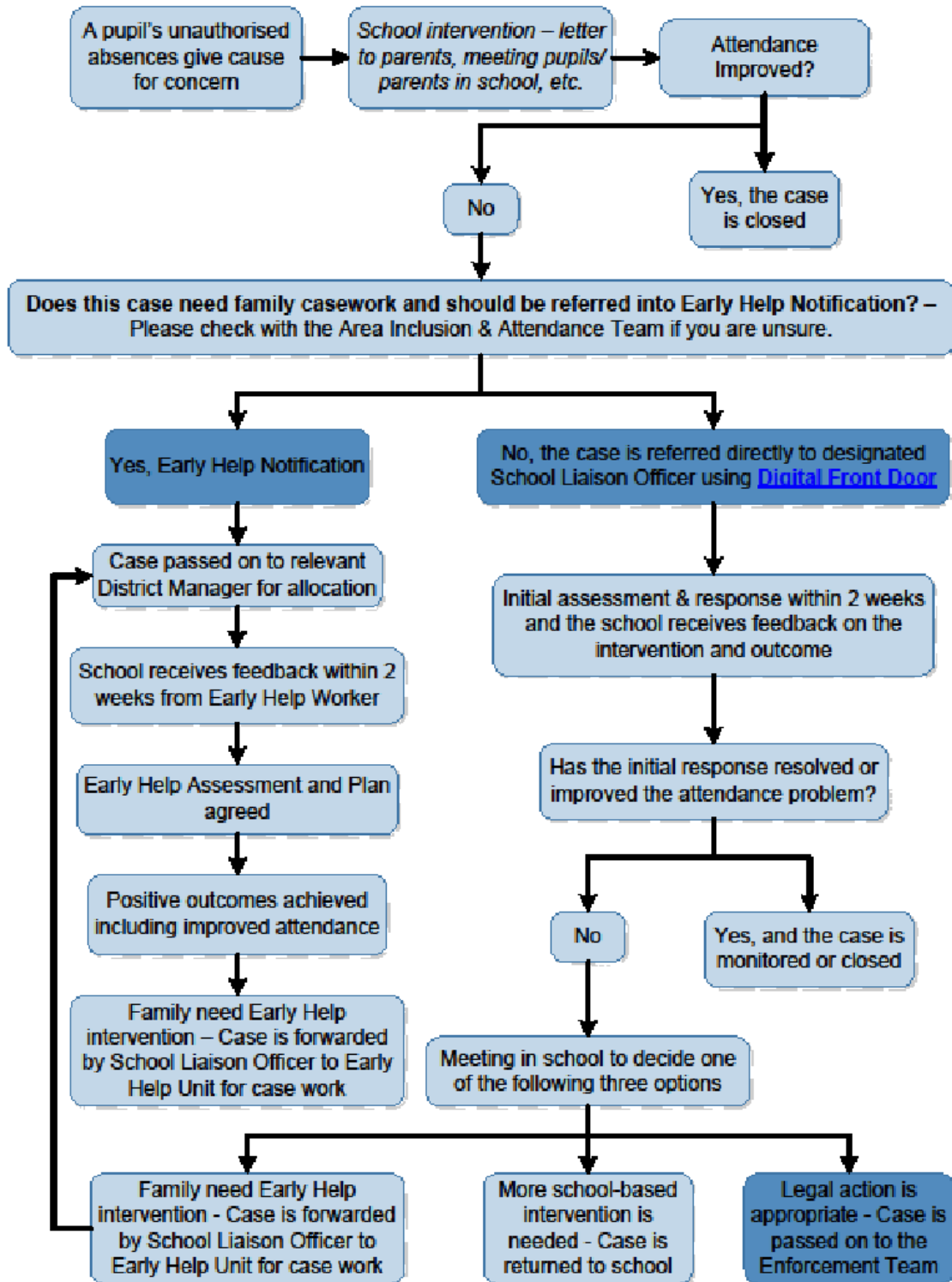
Appendix 1

Attendance Monitoring

Child name:		Year Group		
School referral pathway	Kent School Referral Pathway			
Category		Template	Copy of letter sent	Sent(date)
Lateness	5 lates	Late Letter (L)		
	10 lates	Late Letter (L)		
	3 after registration closes	Late Letter (U)		
Absence	95% - Absence Letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attach every session missed leaflet 	1st Absence Letter Leaflet		
	90% - School attendance meeting (FLO and Attendance Officer) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> home school agreement 	Attendance Meeting 1st Letter		
	85% - School attendance meeting with SLT and FLO. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> personalised attendance plan drawn up and agreed 	Attendance Meeting 2nd letter 85% Insert plan proforma here		
	80% - Further meeting with SLY and FLO confirming PIAS involvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalised attendance plan reviewed/adapted 	Attendance Meeting 3rd Letter 80% Insert plan proforma here		
	Warning Penalty Notice letter	Attendance - Warning PN		
	Penalty Notice Requested	Absence PN Requested		
Holiday	Removed from school without permission may PN	holiday without permission, may PN		
	Removed from school without permission PN will be requested	holiday without permission PN requested		
	Unauthorised holiday and PN requested	Unauthorised holiday PN requested		
	PN requested letter	Holiday PN requested		
	Unauthorised holiday and no PN requested	Leave without PN		

Appendix 2

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance



Appendix 3

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

dates_of_lates_before»

Total lates before registration closed: «total_lates_before» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at ?? am and at ?? pm. A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 4

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

dates_of_lates_before»

Total lates before registration closed: «total_lates_before» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at ?? am and at ?? pm. A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 5

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code U):

«dates_of_lates_after»

Total lates after registration closed: «total_lates_after» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at ?? am and is closed at ?? am for the morning session and taken again at ?? pm and closed at ?? pm for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 6

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return. Research has shown that those children with poor attendance perform less well at school and in their exams

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «forename»'s attendance. If we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact your Family Liaison Officer.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 7

Dear (Parent)

Re: (child name)

Despite previous correspondence/conversations, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. (child)'s attendance at school is currently %%% which means he has missed %% half day sessions for authorised absence and %% half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve (child)'s attendance. I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for **(date and time)**. It is important that you attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

- **Family Liaison Officer**
- **Attendance Officer**

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and (child)'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 8

Dear (Parent)

Re: (child name)

Further to our meeting held on (date) regarding (child)'s attendance, I note with concern that your child's attendance has continued to deteriorate at school. (child)'s attendance at school is currently %%% which means he has missed %% half day sessions for authorised absence and %% half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve (child)'s attendance. I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for **(date and time)**. It is important that you attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

- **Attendance Officer**
- **Family Liaison Officer**
- **Senior Leadership Team**

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and (child)'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 9

Dear (Parent)

Re: (child name)

Further to our meeting held on (date) regarding (child)'s attendance, I note with concern that your child's attendance has continued to deteriorate at school. (child)'s attendance at school is currently %%% which means he has missed %% half day sessions for authorised absence and %% half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

Unfortunately due to this, the school has made a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution. As a school we wish to work with you to improve (child)'s attendance as we do not want (child) to fall behind in school. An Attendance meeting has been arranged for (date and time) to explore the issues around poor attendance further. The meeting will be attended by:

- **Local Authority Liaison Officer**
- **Senior Leadership Team**
- **Family Liaison Officer**
- **Attendance Officer**

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged. If you do not attend this meeting and (child)'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made for further action and possible prosecution.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 10

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

At our school we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that «forename» has been absent from school for a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

‘As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.’ A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

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

If further unauthorised absence occurs you will be contacted and invited in for a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 11

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

With reference to our letter dated ??, «forename» has now reached a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result we will now be requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 12

Dear (Parent),

Name: **DOB:**

You have notified us that you have taken your child out of school for a holiday. As you didn't apply in advance for permission for (child) to be absent from school from **date** and because the Department for Education, from September 2013 has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances, this absence cannot be authorised.

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school session a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Unfortunately as of date, (child)'s attendance is %% and there have been %% unauthorised sessions within 100 school sessions, not including the current unauthorised absence. When including the absence for this week, this will be a total of %% unauthorised sessions.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of the Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay the penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

I will be in contact once (child) has returned to school and will confirm if a penalty notice has been requested. If a request is made, Kent County Council will contact you directly.

Kind regards

Mrs E. Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 13

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time
For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and a request for a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 14

Dear

**Request for leave during Term-Time
For the attention of the parents of**

I have received your request to take out of school for a family holiday between XXXXXXXX and XXXXXX, a total of XXX school days.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs Law
Head Teacher**

Appendix 15

Dear

Name: (name) **DOB:**

With reference to our letter dated XXXXXXXX, the leave of absence taken between XXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXX has now been recorded as Unauthorised Absence and as a result a Penalty Notice has been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Law
Head Teacher

Appendix 16

Dear «Name»

**Request for leave during Term-Time
«Child's Name»**

I have received your request to take «Name» out of school between «Date» and «Date», a total of «Number» school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances.

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave can not be authorised. However, due to the nature of the request in this instance we will not be seeking a penalty notice.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Law
Head Teacher