

# Pilsley Primary School

## Attendance Policy

**Attendance Lead: Mr Snape**

**Day to day attendance monitoring: The Pastoral Manager and P4YP worker**

**Supported by the Clay Cross Multi Agency Team**

Pilsley Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her full potential.

“Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.” (School Attendance from DFE November 2016)

Regular school attendance is crucial if the children of this school are to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic success

The school will strive to provide a warm and welcoming environment, whereby each member of the school community feels confident and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping. We will also challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Pilsley Primary School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

### **Strategies for Improvement/Encouragement**

- Applying the Inspire, Respect and Achieve ethos throughout school at all times.
- To ensure all pupils with emotional and social needs are identified and support programmes put in place.
- To set good attendance as an ‘expectation’ as we do with other behaviour around school.
- To acknowledge and celebrate appropriately those pupils and/or parents who are improving their attendance.
- Weekly – Rewards for Class Attendance and celebration in assembly
- End of Year – Special Awards for 100% attendance and acknowledgement through certificates for those who were close.

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### Aims of this policy

1. To achieve and maintain an outstanding level of attendance for all pupils.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To implement a system of response to attendance issues
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Multi Agency Team and Education Welfare Service (EWS)
9. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

We will achieve these aims by:

- Applying whole school policy consistently
- Establishing and maintaining a high profile for attendance and punctuality
- Maintaining unambiguous procedures for statutory registration
- Endeavouring to make parental contact if reason for absence not reported by 9.20am
- Ensuring clearly defined late registration procedures.
- Having a dedicated attendance leader with appropriate time set aside for role.
- Early identification of developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness
- Carrying out intervention prior to referral to EWS
- Arranging multi-agency meetings
- Reviewing attendance regularly
- Using the LA procedures for recording absence
- Promoting expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents
- Actively promoting attendance and associated rewards
- Ensuring fair and consistent implementation
- Supporting pupils and families

### Roles and Responsibilities (inc reference to Leave of Absence)

#### **Parents**

Parents of a child of compulsory school age have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives sufficient and suitable full-time education, either at school or otherwise. If the child is registered at a school, parents must ensure regular attendance and punctuality.

We would like parents to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children and working with us when there are issues around your child's attendance.

Children may have to stay away for illness or other **exceptional** reasons, but they should only be absent when it is absolutely essential. When a child is absent, whenever possible, parents should notify school by 9.20am, giving the reason. Notifying the school about the absence is important so the school knows where the child is and then we can determine in the register whether it is an authorised or unauthorised absence from the reasons given.

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In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Regulation) (England) (Amended) Regulation 2013 came in to force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements made.

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

Therefore, there is no general entitlement to any time off for family holidays. If the circumstances are considered exceptional the head teacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Parents considering taking children should contact the school well in advance if they are considering taking their child out of school for a holiday. They will need to provide written evidence of 'exceptional circumstances'.

### **Governors**

Governors will set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance. They will also evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher will ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil, group and whole school attendance patterns. They will support the Pastoral Manager in their work. The Headteacher will also provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice. The Headteacher will follow the Children Missing in Education Guidance when alerted by the Pastoral/Office Team of a concern.

### **Pastoral Manager**

The Pastoral Manager in conjunction with P4YP Pastoral Support worker will monitor individual, group and whole school attendance and punctuality on a day-to-day basis. They will liaise with parents/carers regarding concerns about their child's attendance. Termly, they will identify cases where attendance falls below Local Authority guidelines and issue targeted letters to parents where appropriate. In conjunction with the office staff, they will chase up unexplained absences after 9.20am each morning. They will work with appropriate agencies as necessary when attendance or punctuality is an issue.

### **Class Teacher**

The class teachers will provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class, recording reasons for absence given to them in the register. Failure to complete the register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaints from parents and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place. Class Teachers will also organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

### **Office**

The office staff will prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the office management system with regard to records of attendance. They will also take messages from parents giving reasons for absence. Where there is declared intention for a child to move schools office staff will instigate completion of the appropriate form. Where no intention has been declared and absence is of

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concern as per the Children Missing from Education Guidance and/or raised by the Pastoral Team the Office Staff will inform the Headteacher.

### Authorised Absence

- Absence through illness is an authorised absence. Parents should send a note of explanation or contact the school verbally, where possible, by 9.20am on the first day.
- Absence for medical and dental reasons **will be** authorised. There may be some circumstances where we ask for evidence of attendance. Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- Absence due to religious observance by the religious body to which their parent belongs may be authorised.
- An absence will be authorised if suitable transport has not been provided and the school is not within walking distance.

### Unauthorised Absence

- Any absence without valid reason will be treated as unauthorised.
- Leave of absence for 'exceptional circumstances' will not be granted after the absence unless there is a valid reason for lack of notification (examples may be family illness, etc)

### Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

- The Education (Pupil Regulation) (England) (Amended) Regulation 2013 came in to force on 1 September 2013. Absence during term time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. There is no automatic right to take family holidays during term time.
- Parents should seek authorisation well in advance using the application form available from the school office and providing evidence of the exceptional circumstances that apply.
- Each case will be considered on its own merit. Parents may be contacted to clarify or provide further information to enable full consideration to the application to be made.
- When a leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation the school must by law inform the Local Authority, who may in turn impose a fine.
- The school will not authorise more than one 'leave of absence' in a school year for a holiday.

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### Lateness

- The register will remain open for **30 minutes** after the commencement of the school day at 8:50am; after which time a pupil will be recorded as being absent.
- Pupils who arrive after the start of the school day but before the register closes at 9:20 will be recorded as **late**.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. However, the school may use its judgement if a pupil has transport or other difficulties that make him/her late for school.

### Persistent Absentees

Where a child's attendance falls below 90% they are considered a persistent absentee. Support will be provided in the first instance by the Pastoral Team to help the attendance improve. Involvement of the representative from the Multi Agency Team responsible for attendance will be sought where necessary.

### Children Missing from Education

The school adheres to the CME guidance from 2016 and will follow the appropriate procedures when concerns are raised.

**Our target is to have an overall attendance rate of above 96%**



Mr N Snape Headteacher

Date: June 2017

### Appendices

Appendix 1 – DCC Guidance from September 2017 on the issue of penalty notices for unauthorised leave during term-time

Appendix 2 – Leave of Absence Request form

Appendix 3 – EWS Guidance for Requesting Penalty Notices

Appendix 4 – EWS Penalty Notice Request Form

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Appendix 1 – DCC Guidance from September 2017 on the issue of penalty notices for unauthorised leave during term-time

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Guidance for schools on the issue of penalty notices for unauthorised leave during term-time from September 2017**

#### **Background:**

A High Court ruling, following a prominent court case regarding penalty notices for unauthorised leave in term-time, resulted in the Local Authority (LA) introducing interim arrangements to take into account a child's 'wider school attendance'. Since May 2016, penalty notices have only been issued where a child's overall attendance is below 94%.

On 06 April 2017 a Supreme Court, judgement determined that, 'in section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, "regularly" means "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

#### **Resultant new arrangements from September 2017:**

The LA will issue penalty notices, at the request of Headteachers, for a period of unauthorised leave regardless of a child's 'wider school attendance'.

A caveat to this arrangement is that, if a parent requests leave during the academic year 2017/18 on the basis that it was booked prior to the release of these new arrangements, and evidence of the booking can be provided, the LA will consider the issue of a penalty notice under the previous 'below 94%' arrangements.

As a result of the Supreme Court definition of regular attendance being 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school' the LA recommends that Headteachers review their policy on unauthorised leave during term-time. In order for schools to use the penalty notice process they must have a policy statement which outlines the rules regarding taking leave in term time. This can be part of a wider attendance policy or a standalone document. This information should be available for all parents of children at the school to view. It should be prominently placed on the school website and parents should be regularly reminded of the school rules regarding attendance.

The 2013 Pupil Registration Regulations have not changed. Headteachers are still required to determine whether a request for absence is authorised on the grounds of exceptional circumstances or not. Each request should be taken on its own merits and based on the information provided by the parent.

Where a child is absent with no reason provided and the Headteacher has grounds to believe that the child is on holiday the Headteacher may wish to challenge this absence and apply for a penalty notice to be issued. Please note that this process must not be used to address other forms of unauthorised absence from school.

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As part of the decision making process Headteachers are required to consider the following:

- The information provided on the parental application, particularly who is taking the child on holiday
- Who should the penalty notice be issued against? (This should take into consideration parental responsibility in relation to education law balanced against the dynamics and makeup of the family).
- Is this decision consistent with the school's policy?
- Is this decision fair?

Once the LA receives a request for a penalty notice it will be issued unless there are material errors in the documents provided.

The LA will publish revised information on the Derbyshire County Council website in readiness for September 2017. In the meantime, a statement is attached which you may wish to display in school with immediate effect.

A full pack of updated template letters, including guidance notes and a request form in readiness for September 2017 accompanies this notice.

**Interim arrangements will continue until the end of this academic year.**

Please contact Diane Oxborough by email at [diane.oxborough@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:diane.oxborough@derbyshire.gov.uk) or telephone on: 01629 539320 should you require further advice or support.

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Appendix 2 – Leave of Absence Request form

**Example application form – we will adapt this.**

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

PLEASE NOTE - The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** state that Headteacher's should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Child(ren) ..... Year Group .....  
..... Year Group .....  
..... Year Group .....

Childs Address .....  
.....

Name of Applicant(s) and Address (if different).....  
.....  
.....

**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.

Continue over the page if necessary

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Appendix 3 – EWS Guidance for Requesting Penalty Notices

### Education Welfare Service

## Request for Penalty Notice(s) for Unauthorised Leave for the Purpose of a Family Holiday

### Guidance Notes

From September 2017, the Local Authority (LA) will consider the issue of penalty notices, at the request of Headteachers, for a period of unauthorised leave regardless of a child's 'wider school attendance'. A copy of the following information must be provided for each child before the LA can consider serving a penalty notice.

- The leave of absence request form completed by parent/carer
- Letter from school to **each** parent (to whom you want the penalty notice issuing) informing them that leave will not be authorised. This should have been sent prior to the holiday being taken or reflect the fact that the request was too late to do this.
- Or - A letter challenging unexplained absence to **each** parent (to whom you want the penalty notice issuing) stating that you believe the absence to be due to holiday or challenging parents who have provided spurious reasons for absence. This should be sent within 4 weeks of the child's return to school from leave.
- An attendance printout from the beginning of the academic year showing the unauthorised absence marked with code 'G'.
- A copy of the school policy statement in respect of unauthorised leave during term-time that supports the use of penalty notices; reflects the legislation appropriately and does not contain blanket policies. This should be the latest and dated published document (no more than 12 months old)
- A Penalty Notice request must be made within **6 weeks** of the last day of the child's absence.

**This information is required as, if the penalty notice is unpaid, it will be used as evidence in the event that the case proceeds to court.**

Please remember that, for legal processes, correspondence must be dated and addressed in full to the parent(s) to whom you want the penalty notice issuing and must be delivered by handing the document directly to parent or by post. Please do not deliver via the child e.g. in a book bag. Please note all correspondence should be signed by the Headteacher or Deputy with designated responsibility for the Penalty Notice process in your school.

Please forward the required documents, together with the completed request sheet to: *Penalty Notices, Education Welfare Service Central Team, Derbyshire County Council, Room 396, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG* or By email to [cayaewshq.admin@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:cayaewshq.admin@derbyshire.gov.uk)  
If you have any queries regarding Penalty Notices please do not hesitate to contact Education Welfare Service Central Team on 01629 535882 or email above address.

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## Appendix 4 - EWS Penalty Notice Request Form



**Request for Penalty Notice/s for Leave of Absence for the purpose of a Family Holiday taken that has not been agreed by school. (One request form per child)  
(This request must be received within 6 weeks of the last day of unauthorised leave)**

**The following information must be provided before the Education Welfare Team can consider serving a Penalty Notice. Should the Penalty Notice be unpaid and the case forwarded for prosecution this information will be used as evidence, in court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.**

**Name of School**

**Pupil information**

**Forename**  **Surname**  **DOB**

**Address including postcode**

**Dates that the pupil was absent from school**

(e.g. 16/05/2011 to 25/05/2011 inclusive.  
These will be marked with 'G' in the register)

**Parent 1\* for whom Penalty Notice is being requested**

**Title**  **Forename**  **Surname**

**Address including postcode, if different from pupil**

**Parent 2\* for whom Penalty Notice is being requested**

**Title**  **Forename**  **Surname**

**Address including postcode, if different from pupil**

**D.C.C. USE ONLY:**



Sch. code: \_\_\_\_\_

PRN: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1 ref: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 2 ref: \_\_\_\_\_

**A Penalty Notice will only be issued if there is evidence that the above named parent/s have each received a letter from the Head Teacher declining the Leave of Absence request or a challenge letter.**

**A copy is required of each of the following documents:**

Please tick appropriate box to indicate copy is attached to this form.

- Leave of Absence Request Form completed by parent/carer
- Letter from school to each parent indicating that leave would not be authorised:
- Attendance report (herringbone) for the current academic year showing the absence as 'G's'
- Copy of statement in school prospectus/newsletter warning of consequences of taking leave in term time that has not been authorised

**Head Teacher's signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Once the pupil has returned to school following the leave of absence please send all this information to:  
Penalty Notices, Education Welfare Service, Derbyshire County Council, Room 396, County Hall, Matlock,  
Derbyshire DE4 3AG

If you have any queries regarding Penalty Notices please do not hesitate to contact Education Welfare Services on 01629 538346 or email [ewshq.admin@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:ewshq.admin@derbyshire.gov.uk)