

Amble Links First School
Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Date Written: May 2023
By: Paul Heeley
Adopted by Governors: May 2023
Date for Review: May 2024

Introduction

All children of statutory school age who are registered at school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Any absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have detrimental effect on their future progress. This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Policy Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance and punctuality, including:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the education to which they are entitled to for their age
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

School Attendance Targets

The performance indicator by which we judge the success of our efforts is set each year by our average attendance figure and by comparing this with national attendance figures. We seek to improve our attendance figures annually and always be above national figures. **Our school target for attendance is 97%.**

Whilst 100% attendance is clearly the ideal, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Such attendance, where it occurs is clearly excellent. On the other hand, attendance which falls below 90% is poor and should give cause for concern (this is known as 'persistent absence'). In order to ascertain the levels of individual attendance, we ensure that a complete register check is undertaken twice every day, and where there is cause for concern, appropriate action is taken, initially by speaking with parents, followed by a letter. We send out termly attendance reports to parents of all children and make a point of highlighting particular aspects of attendance and/or punctuality that is of concern.

Attendance Registers

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils on this register. See next section for more details.

Punctuality

The school doors are opened daily between 8.40am and 8.50am. Teachers are required to complete the register electronically through the School360 system at the beginning of each session (morning and afternoon) every day and submit these to the school office by 9am. Any child arriving after the doors are closed at 8.50am must enter school via the main entrance; this lateness is logged by office staff and these pupils are recorded in the register as being 'late before the register is closed' using an 'L' code in SIMS. The time children arrive (and reasons for lateness where possible) are recorded against each child's name in the school CPOMS system by admin staff. School registers formally close at 9.15am. Any child arriving at school after this time is recorded as 'Arrived in school after registration closed' using a 'U' code – this is an unauthorised absence. The school may request referral to the Education Welfare Officer where persistent lateness continues. The afternoon register is taken at 1.00pm.

Where an absence is recorded, teachers or the school admin staff enter the appropriate reason symbol into the register. (See Appendix 1 for DfE attendance codes. A sickness absence may be authorised by the teacher or admin staff only if they have received a message (written or verbal). Any notes from parents received by teachers must be sent to the school office; likewise verbal messages from parents must be recorded (using the CPOMS system).

Where there is a definite pattern of non-attendance or where the explanation for absence is unsatisfactory, absence may not be authorised even with a message from a parent. Parents will be informed in writing if the headteacher has decided that no further absences will be authorised without medical evidence. When there is good reason to believe that a reason given for absence is not correct, the headteacher will instruct that the code recorded in the register is accurate – reason for this change will be recorded on the CPOMS system.

School admin staff enter all attendance information into the School Information Management System (Arbor). Any attendance information required can be drawn from SIMS. Reasons for absence and lateness are also recorded on CPOMS.

First day of absence contact, welfare visits & liaison with other schools.

Parents are encouraged to contact school as soon as possible if their child is not able to attend. If a child is absent with no reason given, school admin staff will make contact with the on the first day of absence. This contact is made by telephone and aims to ascertain the reason why the child is absent and when they are likely to return. The admin staff will make further regular calls if absence is prolonged. These calls also let parents know that the absence has been noted and that the school cares about the effect this has on the child's learning. If a child is absent from school for a period of more than 3 consecutive days the school will endeavour to make a welfare visit to the family home on day 4 or 5 of the absence to ascertain if the family require any additional support. Further welfare visits may be necessary if contact cannot be made or the absence is prolonged. We will also liaise with other local schools to establish whether siblings may also require support. A record of all calls, visits and the responses received is kept using the CPOMS system.

Attendance Status

Based on our school's attendance target of 97%, we band our pupils' attendance figures accordingly using a simple RAG rating to ensure that parents are fully aware of the figure for their child.

97% and above – **GREEN**

90%-96.9% - **AMBER**

Below 90% - **RED**

After the third week back of the autumn term we will write to parents and let them know their child's current attendance status. We will email parents (on a Monday) should this status have changed due to improvement or decline in their child's attendance.

Procedures for tackling low attendance

We will work closely and regularly with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to review the attendance of all pupils. In order to make our procedures as clear as possible we have created a flow chart that identifies the actions that we will take as a school when a child's attendance becomes a concern (See Appendix 1). The flow chart is accompanied by a suite of standard letters that will be sent to parents when trigger points are reached. The school will keep records of these reviews and which letters have been sent

Holidays during Term Time

Where holidays are taken during term time we will follow the procedures set out in Flowchart 2 (See Appendix 2)

Government guidance states that:

'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

'Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.'

All decisions in relation to whether leave of absence is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) should be applied consistently and equitably.

Parents are **not entitled** to remove children for holidays, leave of absence must be applied for and the decision to authorise absence rests entirely with the headteacher. Governors have agreed that holidays during term time are generally not 'exceptional circumstances' and **HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME WILL NOT USUALLY BE AUTHORISED at Amble Links First School**. Parents must still request leave of absence for holidays in advance using a holiday request form available from the school office (Appendix 3). All requests should be submitted to the school office at the earliest possible opportunity, ideally prior to booking a holiday and **at least 2 weeks before a holiday is taken**. The form gives further information about the implications and possible consequences of taking holidays during term time. School will send a response to the holiday request as soon as possible.

When a holiday is requested (or taken without a form being completed), we will follow the procedures detailed in Flowchart 2

Raising the profile of Attendance and Punctuality

In order to ensure that the importance of good attendance is promoted the school will take the following actions:

- Publish the previous week's overall school attendance figure and class attendance figures in the weekly school newsletter (sent to parents and available on the school website)
- Announce the previous week's school and class attendance and punctuality figures in a weekly assembly attended by parents and award a token to the class with the best weekly attendance and punctuality leading towards a whole class treat at the end of the year.
- Run an 'In to Win' prize draw for all children with 100% attendance and no more than 1 late mark within each half term.
- Send parents a full attendance report on a termly basis.
- Include pupil attendance figures on half termly progress reports and annual school reports.
- Send an email to parents when their child's attendance status changes.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School Admin Staff

- *Monitor registers on a daily basis and record absences.*
- *Make and keep a record of telephone calls to parents on the first day of a child's absence (these calls continue until an adequate response is gained).*
- *Accurately mark reasons for absences into registers and leave a message for teachers explaining absences.*
- *Ensure that all occurrences of absence or lateness are recorded onto the CPOMS system in a timely manner.*
- *Ensure that all attendance data is entered into the SIMS system on a daily basis.*
- *Calculate weekly attendance percentages for the weekly assembly.*
- *Give daily feedback to HT concerning attendance and punctuality issues.*
- *Liaise with Educational Welfare Officer where necessary.*
- *Work with HT and other school staff to develop strategies to improve school attendance.*

Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher

- *Ensure that attendance and punctuality receive high profile in the school through newsletters, social media, school reports, home/school communications, assemblies and rewards.*
- *Report to Governors on whole school attendance and punctuality on a termly basis*
- *Communicate with parents where concerns exist about attendance or punctuality.*
- *Liaise on a daily basis with school admin staff regarding attendance and punctuality.*
- *Complete statistical returns for the LA.*
- *Offer support to parents on attendance and punctuality issues.*

Class Teachers

- *Have high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classes.*
- *Complete registers on a daily and weekly basis following agreed procedures.*
- *Develop and share strategies to improve class attendance.*

What can parents do to help?

- Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and are punctual to their lessons.
- *Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is absent from school, usually on the first day of absence.*
- *Try to make appointments and book holidays out of school time.*
- *Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is absolutely necessary.*

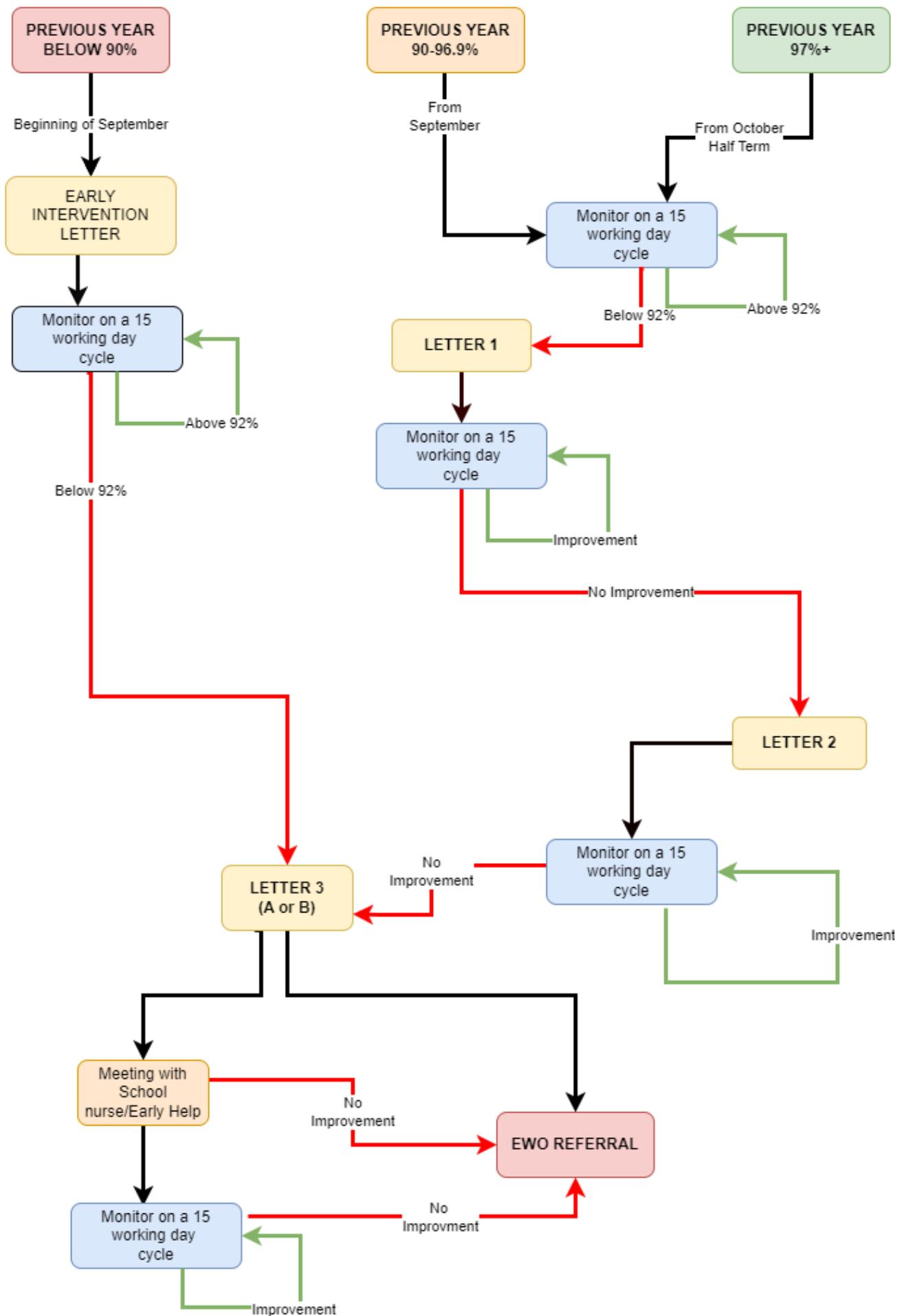
Review

This policy should be reviewed at least every 2 years or sooner where necessary.

THIS POLICY IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT IF REQUIRED

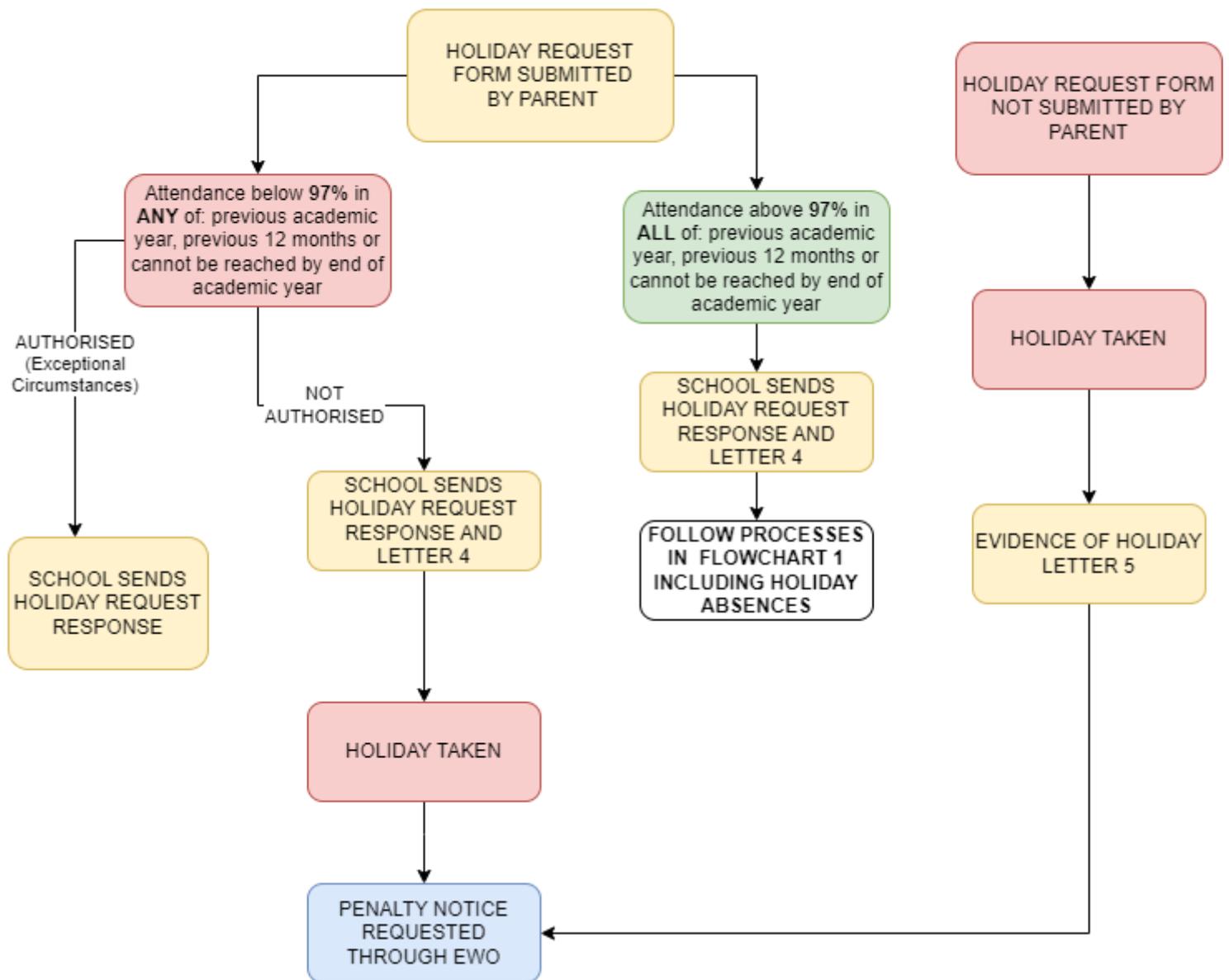
Appendix 1

FLOWCHART 1 - ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND ACTION PROCEDURE



Appendix 2

FLOWCHART 2 - PROCEDURE FOR HOLIDAYS TAKEN DURING TERM TIME



Amble Links First School

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Headteacher: Paul Heeley



Application for Leave of Absence of Pupil from School

This form should be completed and returned to school prior to booking a holiday during term time

Name of Child:

Class:

Proposed first day/date of absence:

Actual day/date of proposed return to school:

Total Number of School Days:

Reason for absence (please give details of 'exceptional circumstances' and submit any supporting evidence)

**It is the policy of all schools in the Coquet Partnership
NOT TO AUTHORISE HOLIDAY ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME.
PLEASE SEE THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION.**

If an unauthorised leave of absence is taken during term time and:

- your child's attendance was below 97% in the last academic year...
OR
- your child's attendance was below 97% in the 12 months leading up to the holiday....
OR
- taking the holiday will make it impossible for your child to reach 97% attendance by the end of the current academic year....

...an application for a penalty notice will be made to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

OUR OVERALL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE TARGET FOR 2023-2024 IS 97%

Declaration

I have read and understood the information on both sides of this form regarding leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and penalty notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should I take my child on leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Head Teacher.

Signature of parent/carer:

Date:

Important Information for Parents/Carers

Research suggests that children who are absent from School may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results. As a parent/carers you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

The Education Act (1996) requires parents to ensure their child attends school regularly. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless:

- An application has been made in advance to the Headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with: and
- The proprietor (Headteacher) or person authorised by the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

The Head Teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to justify an authorised absence. It is the parents' responsibility when submitting the request to provide all the information and evidence to prove this.

AMBLE LINKS FIRST SCHOOL DOES NOT AUTHORISE ANY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME.

The request for authorised Leave of Absence must be made at least two weeks in advance and the Head Teacher may invite the parent/carers(s) into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

If the Head Teacher authorises the Leave of Absence it is expected that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior and after the date covered by the request.

If the Head Teacher refuses Leave of Absence and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Head Teacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.

Children who attend school every day:

- Have the best chance of achieving well
- Are more settled
- Develop good work habits for the future
- Are better prepared for learning often enjoy school more.

Children who often miss school or are late:

- Miss important learning
- Can feel left out
- Develop poor work habits
- Suffer from low self esteem
- Are often unsettled
- Can find it hard to catch up
- Find it hard to be prepared for learning.
- Miss key concepts, special events, trips and visits.

Amble Links First School

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Headteacher: Paul Heeley



RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Name of Child: _____ Class: _____

Your application for leave of absence from: _____ to: _____ is AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED.

The reason for unauthorised absence is:

If an unauthorised leave of absence is taken during term time and:

- your child's attendance was below 97% in the last academic year...
OR
- your child's attendance was below 97% in the 12 months leading up to the holiday....
OR
- taking the holiday will make it impossible for your child to reach 97% attendance by the end of the current academic year....

...an application for a penalty notice will be made to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Child's overall attendance during last academic year:

Child's overall attendance in the last 12 months to date*:

*in assessing whether a penalty notice will be applied this will be taken from the start of the leave of absence.

Maximum possible attendance during this academic year if leave of absence is taken:

Signed: _____ (Headteacher) _____ Date: _____

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PENALTY NOTICES FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE TAKEN IN TERM TIME (LOCAL AUTHORITY)

