

Amble Links Primary School
Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Date Written: July 2024
By: Paul Heeley
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Date for Review: July 2026

School contacts regarding attendance:

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Introduction

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at a school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This policy reflects the DFE Statutory Guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)'.

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

Teachers are required to complete the register electronically through School360. An attendance register will be kept electronically using our school MIS (Arbor). The register will be taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they will record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school using appropriate national attendance codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Teachers are required to submit registers by 9am (morning session) and as soon as possible after 1pm (afternoon session)

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

Times of the school day

Morning Nursery – Doors open at 8.40am and school starts at 8.45am. Children arriving after 8.45am will be marked using the 'L' Code - Late (present). Children arriving after 9.10am will be marked as 'U' –Arrived in school after registration closed – this is counted as an unauthorised absence. The morning session ends at 11.45am.

Afternoon Nursery – Doors open at 12.10pm and school starts at 12.15pm. Children arriving after 12.15pm will be marked using the 'L' Code - Late (present). Children arriving after 12.30pm will be marked as 'U' –Arrived in school after registration closed – this is counted as an unauthorised absence. The afternoon session ends at 3.15pm

Reception and Key Stage 1 - Doors open at 8.40am and school starts at 8.45am. Children arriving after 8.45am will be marked using the 'L' Code - Late (present). Children arriving after 9.10am will be marked as 'U' –Arrived in school after registration closed – this is counted as an unauthorised absence. School closes at 3.15pm

Key Stage 2 - Doors open at 8.30am and school starts at 8.35am. Children arriving after 8.35am will be marked using the 'L' Code - Late (present). Children arriving after 9.00am will be marked as 'U' –Arrived in school after registration closed – this is counted as an unauthorised absence. School closes at 3.15pm

Punctuality

When children are recorded as being late to school on 3 or more occasions during a half term , a letter will be sent to parents making them aware of the situation, outlining the implications of lateness on a child, offering support and advising that the Education Welfare Office may be contacted should lateness persist.

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

Parents are expected 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 Emails

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 on a 3 weekly cycle.

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.

National threshold when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice

The school will consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. The school does not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and will make judgements on each individual case. The National 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 the school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, we will make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

Is support appropriate in this case?

- If yes, the school will 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 will be issued subject to the other conditions detailed in section 182 of ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#)

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 Primary 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 (Attendance Officer)

- 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 Arbor and CPOMS systems 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 the Headteacher concerning attendance and punctuality issues.
- Liaise with Educational Welfare Officer where necessary.
- Work with the Headteacher and other school staff to develop strategies to improve school attendance.

Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion)

- 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 Local Authority.
- 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.
- Make appointments and book holidays out of school time.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is absolutely necessary.

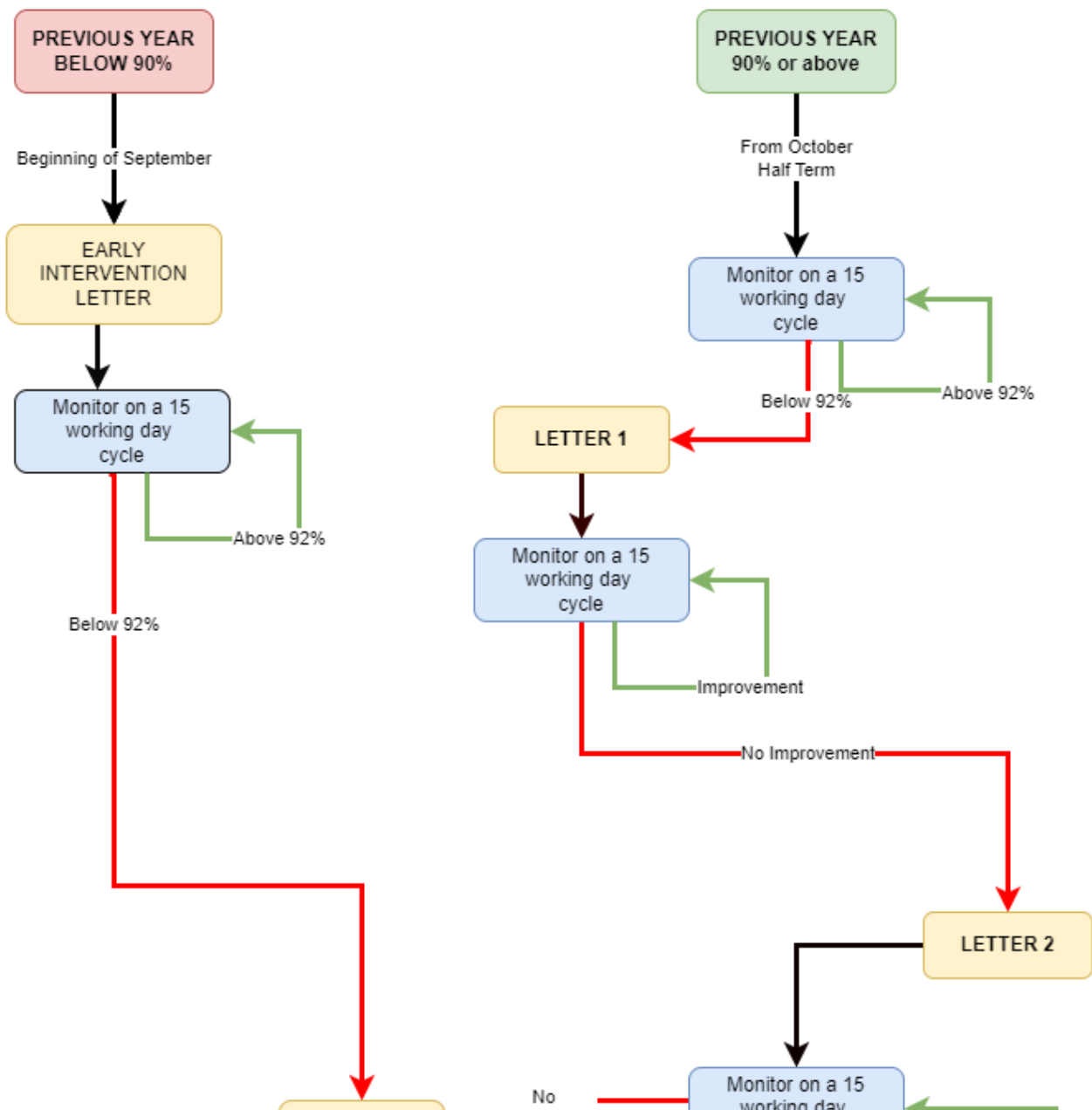
Review

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

THIS POLICY IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT IF REQUIRED

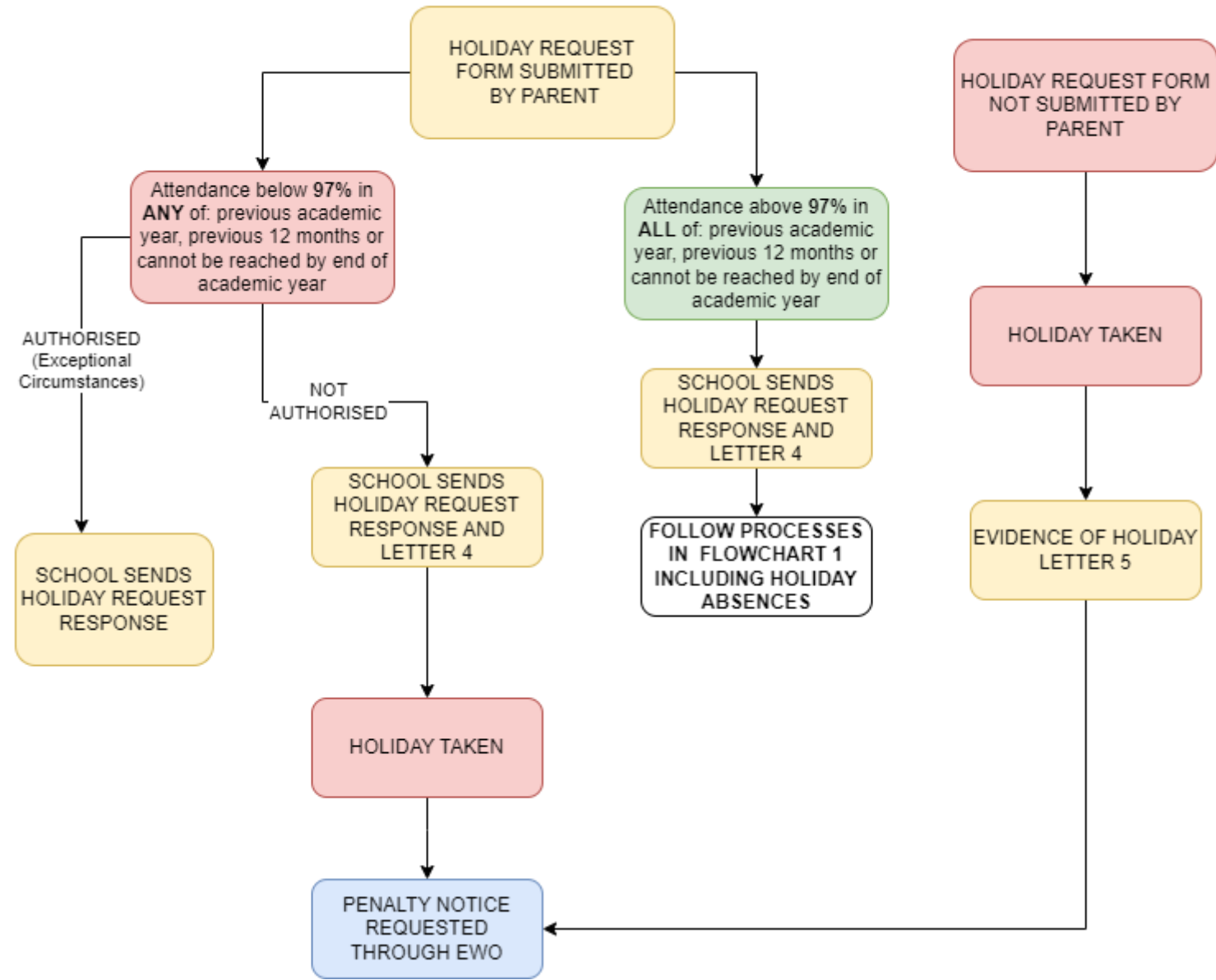
Appendix 1

FLOWCHART 1 - ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND ACTION PROCEDURE



Appendix 2

FLOWCHART 2 - PROCEDURE FOR HOLIDAYS TAKEN DURING TERM TIME



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Headteacher: Paul Heeley

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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:
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Proposed first day/date of absence:

Actual day/date of proposed return to school:	Total Number of School Days:
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Reason for absence (please give details of 'exceptional circumstances' and submit any supporting evidence)
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**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 2024-2025 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:
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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 PRIMARY 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.

For a first offence, the Penalty Notice will be £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days rising to £160 if paid after the 21 days - it must be paid within 28 days.

For a second offence, the amount is £160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days.

Please note that a third penalty notice **cannot** be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the date of issue of the first. Prosecution/other interventions will be considered (you should also be aware that a Penalty notice can be issued individually to each parent in respect of a child) failure to pay may result in prosecution before your local Magistrates Court.

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.


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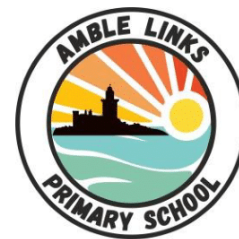
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Headteacher: Paul Heeley

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Response to your request for leave of absence during term time

Name of Child:

Class:

Your application for leave of absence from **XX/XX/XX** to: **XX/XX/XX** is

Unauthorised/Authorised

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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