



Policy Attendance

This policy has been written with regard to the guidance 'Working together to safeguard children', 'Keeping children safe in education' and the 'Special Education Needs Code of Practice', which places Special Education Needs and Disabilities together and abbreviated to SEND. A copy can be seen in the Headteacher's Office.

The overall objective of the school's Equality Policy, in line with the Equality Act 2010, is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, promote equality of opportunity, and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

Title	Attendance
Date of Issue	September 2024
Review Date	September 2025
Prepared by	Headteacher
To be reviewed by	Headteacher and Governors
Appendices	Appendix 1: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for parents Appendix 2: Leave of absence request form Appendix 3: Attendance Policy - Quick Guide for Parents Appendix 4: Letter for parents – Wiltshire Council. Attendance changes Appendix 5: School process for parental request for leave of absence Appendix 6: Parent leaflet – Penalty Notices for Absence from School
Supply / distribution	Available as a read-only document on the Fynamore school website and one hardcopy in the school office.
Other relevant approved policies and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy • medical needs • Admissions Procedure • Anti-bullying Policy • Exclusion Policy • Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy • Curriculum Policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Policy <p>This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together to improve school attendance, DfE (August 2024) • The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 • School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015) • Children missing education, DfE (September 2016) • Keeping children safe in education, DfE (September 2024) • Working together to safeguard children, DfE (December 2023)
Authorised by	Headteacher and Governors

This policy has been revised to reflect changes in national attendance guidance and legislation that came into force in 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' on 19th August 2024.

Our vision for attendance:

At Fynamore Primary School, we believe that good attendance supports our school vision of 'Together we are amazing.' Fynamore strives to provide a welcoming, nurturing environment, where every member of the school community is treated with care and positivity. We strongly feel that good attendance and punctuality is vital in ensuring that our children should never be held back from achieving great things.

Our aspirational school attendance target for all pupils is 96% which means that pupils must be absent for less than 8 days throughout the school year.

1. Introduction

At Fynamore Primary School, we recognise that good school attendance is essential for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their academic progress and attainment, emotional wellbeing and wider life chances. Non-school attendance leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education. For more information see Education, schooling and health summary - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-schooling-and-health/education-schooling-and-health-summary>

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as a child being too unwell to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

It is important to understand the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our commitment to:

- Promote safeguarding and the welfare of our pupils
- Work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

- Ensure every pupil has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure pupils succeed academically, socially and emotionally whilst at school.
- Ensure pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Our policy outlines Fynamore Primary School's strong commitment to attendance and aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents/ carers, pupils and governors about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain good levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy and SEND Policy. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

2. Roles and responsibilities

At Fynamore Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Staff responsible for attendance:

- **Senior Attendance Champion - Kate Hurst**
khurst@fynamore.org.uk

[01249 810090](tel:01249810090)

- **Attendance Officer - Emma Groom**

egroom@fynamore.org.uk

[01249 810090](tel:01249810090)

- **Named Governor for Attendance – Paula Parsons**

pparsons@fynamore.org.uk

[01249 810090](tel:01249810090)

Improving school attendance and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the shared responsibility of governors, school staff, parents/ carers, pupils, and the wider school community.

Our Governing Body recognise the importance of school attendance and are committed to promoting and improving attendance by:

- Setting high expectations of senior leaders, staff, pupils, and parents/ carers so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the Governing Body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion.
- Ensuring senior leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and works effectively with Wiltshire Council's Attendance Team and wider services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping senior leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with social care involvement and/ or pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the Attendance Policy on an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

The Senior Management Team (including the Senior Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer) will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to all pupils and their parents/ carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/ carers.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with positive teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend school and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that attendance regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior attendance champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources in order for the member of staff to fulfil this role effectively.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret attendance data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a response (including involving further agencies, if necessary) to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

- Clearly document interventions used should legal proceedings be instigated

All staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to all pupils and their parents/ carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/ carers.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with positive teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with attendance regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.

The Senior Attendance Champion (Kate Hurst) and Attendance Officer (Emma Groom) will further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support.

Parents/ Carers will:

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home/ family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school and instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school by telephone, email or text message if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.

- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective and consistent routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested by school to discuss any attendance issues and/ or any support required.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents/ carers and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another trusted member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Aim to attend school on time every day, ready to learn.
- Follow our procedure of arriving via the main office if they are late. This will help to keep accurate records and monitor individual attendance. This is also very important for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

3. Understanding types of absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher (Ms Sarah Weber).

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

Absence as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed or not attending school for any reason

Regular attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

Authorised absences are as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted such as:

- Parents/ Carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
 - Absences which have never been properly explained
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed
 - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays taken during term-time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Headteacher (Ms. Sarah Weber), including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
 - Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

These types of absence can lead to the school referring to Wiltshire Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

3.1 Persistent and Severe absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' (**PA**) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents/ carers to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**' (**SA**). Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are persistently absent, or may become persistently absent from school. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to Wiltshire Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for absence condoned by the parent/ carer. An Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court may also be considered.

Parents/ Carers found guilty in a Magistrates' Court for failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1,000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

3.2 Leave of Absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Fynamore Primary School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher (Ms. Sarah Weber) and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Fynamore Primary School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher (Ms. Sarah Weber) at least one month before the planned leave (**see Appendix 2**). Fynamore Primary School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will also result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to Wiltshire Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from Wiltshire Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

3.3 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. A pupil will not be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will speak to parents/carers regarding our concerns and look at what support can be put in place to ensure regular attendance at school. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend a school-led Attendance Support Meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referrals to outside agencies.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>.

We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

3.4 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Fynamore Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

3.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. We recognise that there are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. At

our school, we have high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their background whilst recognising the lifestyle and cultural traditions of GRT communities. In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil who is a mobile child¹ and is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family has no fixed abode and are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Wiltshire, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Fynamore Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Fynamore Primary School in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Fynamore Primary School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

3.6 Children Missing Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME) is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school or is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. A 'missing child' is one who is not accounted for even though they should be in our care.

At Fynamore Primary School, we have a relentless focus on attendance for both educational and safeguarding reasons. Children Missing Education (CME) can pose safeguarding concerns. They may be at increased risk of abuse or neglect and at risk of underachieving academically, socially and emotionally. We understand that some children may be more vulnerable to be missing from education and we carefully monitor absence and patterns of absence in school. For vulnerable children, we will always try to seek an alternative to a fixed-term exclusion.

Wiltshire Local Authority are notified regarding Children Missing Education (CME) and have a legal duty to work with schools to help them back into education.

Roles and responsibilities:

- Fynamore Primary School will undertake a home visit on the fifth day of absence at the latest if a child stops attending school and we have had no contact from the parent/ carer as to the reasons why.
- In the event that a child fails to attend school on the agreed or notified date, we will undertake initial reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence and will notify Wiltshire Children's Services no later than 20 days after a child is identified as not in education.

¹ A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

- In the event that a child does not start school when we expect them to, we will inform the Wiltshire Local Authority admissions team.
- If we believe there are safeguarding concerns for a child, we will alert agencies and other professionals working with the family.

We accept our responsibility to make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a child prior to a referral to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service (EWS).

By definition, 'reasonable enquiries' could include:

- checks with all members of staff who the child may have had contact with
- checks with the student's friends, siblings and known relatives at the school
- telephone calls to any numbers held in school records
- a visit to the last known address
- if safe, enquiries with neighbours and known family

If all initial reasonable enquiries have been exhausted, the school will make a referral to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service (EWS) and complete a CME1 form on day 10 of a child's absence. During this time, the school will continue to make reasonable enquiries and attempt to contact the family until the local authority confirms that they have exhausted their enquiries and approval has been given to remove the student from roll:

- The school will work within local arrangements with regards to the readmission of children who may wish to return after removal
- The school will notify Children's Services if any student is to be deleted from the admission register

Staff members

All staff will be alert to the potential need to implement early help for a student who is frequently missing or goes missing from our care or from home. All staff will be aware of our unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures. Where staff have concerns (e.g., a noticeable pattern of absence), they will refer their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Parents

Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education. Parents are responsible for notifying the school in writing if they wish to home-educate their child in order for the child to be removed from the admission register. Parents will notify the school regarding any absences or changes to their child's education arrangements. Parents are responsible for providing school with more than one emergency contact number, where possible.

Induction and training

All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, including an update on the various safeguarding concern possibilities that CME could represent, any changes to the early help process and staff members' role in this process.

Admission register

Fynamore Primary School will ensure that the admission register is kept up-to-date at all time and will encourage parents/carers to notify the school of any changes as they occur, such as via email and through data collection sheets.

Children will be recorded on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified, as the date that the student will attend the academy.

Once a child has been recorded on the admission register, the school will notify the LA, within five days, of all the details contained on the admission register for the new child.

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that a child will live at another address, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- the full name of the parent / carer with whom the student will live
- the new address
- the date from when it is expected the child will live at this address.

Where a parent/ carer notifies us that the student is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record the following information on the admission register:

- the name of the new school
- the date when the student first attended, or is due to attend, that school

4. Our Procedures

4.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Expected absence procedure for parents

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before **8.50am** when our register closes.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before **8.50am**
- Please report absences using the Absence Form on our school website (www.fynamore.org.uk), telephone the school office on 01249 810090 or text the school mobile on 07537 438427 starting the message with FYN. When contacting school about an absence, you must leave your child's full name, class and and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official registration system.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

Senior Attendance Champion	Kate Hurst	khurst@fynamore.org.uk 01249 810090
Attendance Officer	Emma Groom	egroom@fynamore.org.uk 01249 810090

Attendance Admin Officer	Sophie Croxford	office@fynamore.org.uk 01249 810090
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If your child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at **9am** and where no reason for absence is known. We will telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.

We will also inform a pupil's Social Worker and/or Family Keyworker if there are unexplained absences from school in line with statutory requirements.

4.3 Late Arrival at School

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

At Fynamore Primary School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at **8.40am**. The school site opens at **8.35am**. The school register will be taken at **8.40am onwards**. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parent/ carer, and provide a reason for their lateness. If their arrival is before **9.10am** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at **9.09am**. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the Senior Attendance Champion (Kate Hurst) or Attendance Officer (Emma Groom) but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We understand that there will be times where some children may struggle to attend school or arrive punctually, some may experience challenges due to an emotional/ mental health need (such as anxiety). We have an experienced pastoral team in school who can support your child and family in these instances. Please contact Kate Hurst (DSL) or Debbie Stiles (SENDCo) if you feel you require support. You can find information on 'Emotional-based school avoidance – information for parents/ carers' for further support and guidance on our school website.

We expect parents/ carer and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and, as a school, we celebrate good punctuality and attendance through our 'Class of the Week – Attendance' award and reward system.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

4.4 Support Systems

At Fynamore Primary School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- ***Write to you if your child's attendance is causing a concern and/or where punctuality is a concern;***
- ***Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion (Kate Hurst) or Attendance Officer (Emma Groom)***
- ***Create a personalised support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;***
- ***Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate or undertake an Early Help Assessment & Plan with you;***
- ***Refer the matter to an external agency for multi-agency support***
- ***Refer to Wiltshire Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate).***
- ***Refer the matter to Wiltshire Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions***

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. We will investigate and offer support to any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

4.6 Part-time timetables

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils aged 5 and above and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a pupil's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full-time education and it would not be in their best interest to do so. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a part-time timetable in place without written agreement from the parent/ carer and/ or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil where it is safe to do so; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

5. School Attendance and the Law

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

5.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

We will work with parents and Wiltshire Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with Wiltshire LA to use legal measures.

6. Deletions from the Register

At Fynamore Primary School we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At Fynamore Primary School we will always work with parents/ carers to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We follow Wiltshire Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Wiltshire Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

Fynamore Primary School will follow Wiltshire Council's 'Children Missing from Education' guidance when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, the school will carry out joint enquiries with Wiltshire Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

Appendix 1: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for parents

Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities

At Fynamore Primary School, our aim is to collaborate with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This guidance is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's progress and attainment.

The important legal information – New from August 19th, 2024

The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

In line with national guidance, Wiltshire Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents/ carers have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. Wiltshire LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of two penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the first penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child **or** who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance.**

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

Requests for leave of absence

Working together to improve school attendance

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>) advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headteacher (Ms. Sarah Weber) to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'

Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise schools will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

Support with ensuring regular school attendance

If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact:

Kate Hurst – Senior Attendance Champion
khurst@fynamore.org.uk
01249 810090

Emma Groom – Attendance Officer
egroom@fynamore.org.uk
01249 810090

Appendix 2: Leave of absence request form.



FYNAMORE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

At Fynamore Primary School, we believe that every school day is important & maximum attendance and punctuality are valuable life skills.

Taking your child out of school during term time may harm your child's academic progress.

Absences may only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances.

Fynamore Primary School may agree up to 10 days holiday absence in **exceptional** circumstances with consideration being given to pupil's attendance, progress and attainment. Absences may only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. Please note that **family holidays will not usually count as a reason to authorise absence in term time.**

Circumstances which are notified to the school or Local Authority **after** a decision has been made by the Headteacher will **not be considered**. Therefore please be certain to provide details of the exceptional circumstances relating to your application below and attach any supporting evidence.

Please read the attached Local Authority leaflet which explains Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time.

Name(s) of Child(ren):	
Date(s) of Birth:	
Class Teacher(s):	
Date of First Day of Absence:	
Date of Return to School:	
Number of School Days Absence Requested:	
Sibling(s) at other school(s) and name of school(s):	

Exceptional circumstances (reason) for Leave of Absence during term time:
(please attach further details if required)

.....

.....

.....

Please read the following statements and sign to indicate you understand this:

I would like to request the above absence.

I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress.

I understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied, and my child is absent during this period.

I understand that a fine will be payable per parent, per child.

I have read and understood Wiltshire Council's information regarding penalty notices for absence from school and the action they may take.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Carer name: _____

For school use only:

Name:			
Attendance %:			
Total sessions pupil absent this academic year:			
Total unauthorised absence this year:			

Request authorised: Yes / No

Signed: _____ Headteacher Date: _____

Appendix 3: Attendance Policy - Quick Guide for Parents

Attendance Policy - Quick Guide for Parents

Useful staff contact details:

Senior Attendance Champion	Kate Hurst	khurst@fynamore.org.uk 01249 810090
Attendance Officer	Emma Groom	egroom@fynamore.org.uk 01249 810090
Attendance Admin Officer	Sophie Croxford	office@fynamore.org.uk 01249 810090

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name: Sophie Croxford (Attendance Admin Officer)

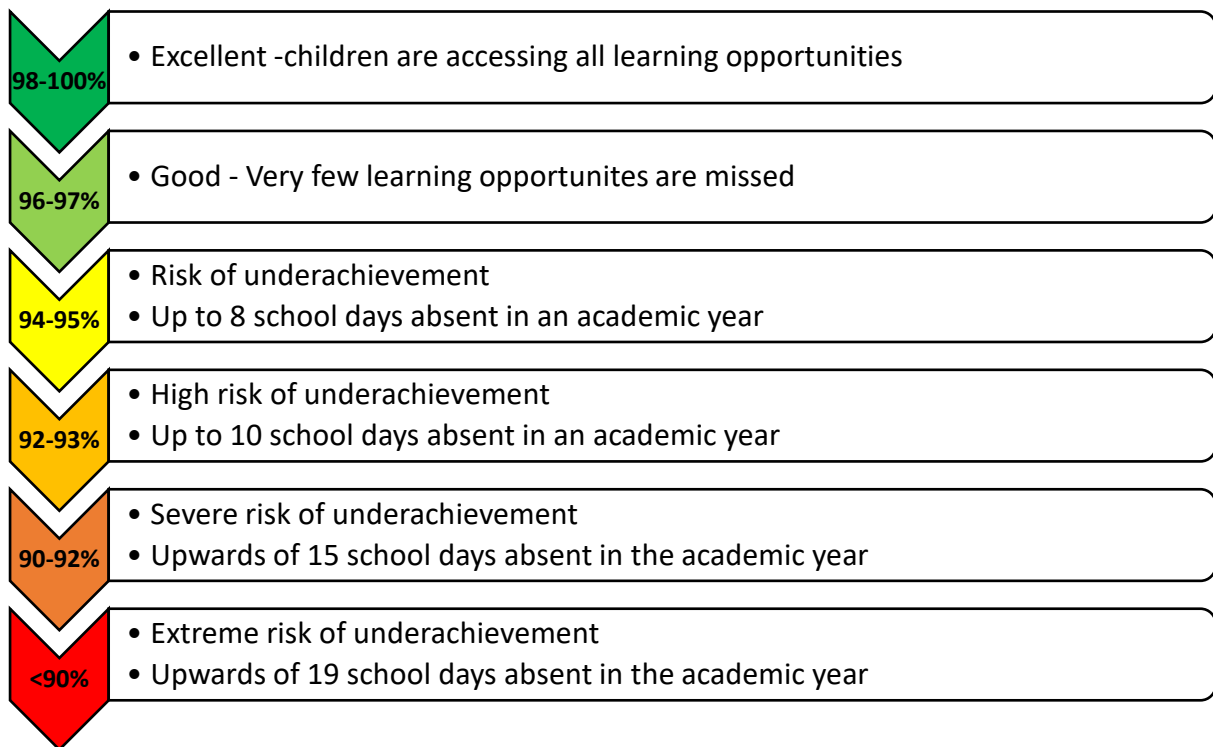
Email address and telephone number: office@fynamore.org.uk

01249 810090

We expect pupils to attend school as close to 100% of the academic year. You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by **8.40am**.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time – holidays can not be authorised and are very likely incur a penalty notice charge.
- If your child appears to be only slightly unwell, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Please supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



‘On the day’ absences: what should I do if my child is not ‘fit’ to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence using the Absence Form on our school website (www.fynamore.org.uk), telephone the school office on 01249 810090 or text the school mobile on 07537 438427 starting the message with FYN. When contacting school about an absence, you must leave your child’s full name, class and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official registration system. Daily attendance is now directly reported to Wiltshire Council and the Department for Education. Fynamore School will be regularly monitoring attendance and punctuality and will contact parents for an meeting if your child’s attendance becomes a concern.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our ‘Leave of absence request’ form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted as soon as possible in advance of the leave of absence. You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been declined or consent to take a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances from the Headteacher.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. Your child will be recorded as late to school if they do not arrive by 8.40am. If you arrive after 9.10am then your child will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the entire morning.

The Department for Education remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children’s attainment. We hope we can count on your support in this matter.

You can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We understand that there will be times where some children may struggle to attend school or arrive punctually, some may experience challenges due to an emotional/ mental health need (such as anxiety). We have an experienced pastoral team in school who can support your child and family in these instances. Please contact Kate Hurst (DSL) or Debbie Stiles (SENDCo) if you feel you require support and see guidance about ‘Emotional-based school avoidance – information for parents/ carers’ on our school website.

Appendix 4: Letter for parents – Wiltshire Council - Attendance changes

The logo for Wiltshire Council, featuring the text "Wiltshire Council" in white on a green background with a white swoosh underneath.

JULY 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

CHANGES TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND PENALTY NOTICES FROM 19 AUGUST 2024

We are writing to you because the Department for Education (DfE) has introduced some new guidance for schools and local councils for managing school attendance. They have also introduced a new national framework for penalty notices (fines) and amended the law. These changes come into effect from the 19 August 2024 and all schools and councils across the country will be expected to follow the new statutory guidance.

WHEN CAN A PENALTY NOTICE BE USED?

A school should consider next steps once 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence happens in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

Unauthorised absence means any absence from school which has not been agreed by the school or when parents have not provided any explanation.

A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session and can be across school terms or academic years. This can be any form of unauthorised absence including arriving late after closure of the register and days of unauthorised absence which add up to 10 half days or 5 full days within a 10-week period.

Once the threshold has been met the school will consider whether support may be appropriate to help your child to attend school. We would like to encourage all parents to continue to work with schools if attendance is becoming a concern. However, when schools and councils believe that they have exhausted all offers of support, and a parent/carer is not engaging with the attempt to improve their child's attendance at school a penalty notice may be issued.

CAN I HAVE A HOLIDAY IN TERM TIME?

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The guidance is clear that headteachers should not be considering a holiday as an exceptional circumstance.

If a request for leave for the purposes of a holiday is declined and the pupil is absent for 5 days or more then the school is expected to notify Wiltshire Council. We will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for any support to be offered as specified in the statutory guidance. In every case, the notification for the penalty notice comes in from the school to Wiltshire Council for the process to be completed.

Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave(holiday) in term time that fall below the 5-day threshold.

WHO CAN RECEIVE A PENALTY NOTICE?

Penalty notices are issued to parents/carers of statutory school age children only. They can be issued to each parent or carer who is deemed liable for the child's absence from school. This may include parents who do not live with the child. Please note that in education law this responsibility can extend to step-parents or other adults who live in the same place as the child.

Penalty notices will be issued to each parent for each child of statutory school age. So, for example two parents of two children will receive four penalty notices.

IS THERE A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF PENALTY NOTICES I MIGHT GET?

In all circumstances, the maximum number of penalty notices that can be issued will be two penalty notices per parent per child in a rolling three year period.

The new regulations come into force on 19 August 2024 and will apply to unauthorised absence from the beginning of the autumn term 2024.

Any penalty notices that might be issued in the future which relate to unauthorised absence taken during the academic year 2023/2024 will not be counted as part of the two penalty notices within three years regulation.

HOW MUCH WILL THE PENALTY NOTICE BE?

FIRST OFFENCE PENALTY NOTICE

£160 per parent per child

Reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days

SECOND OFFENCE PENALTY NOTICE (within 3 years)

**£160 per parent per child paid
within 28 days**

THIRD OFFENCE AND FURTHER OFFENCES (within 3 years)

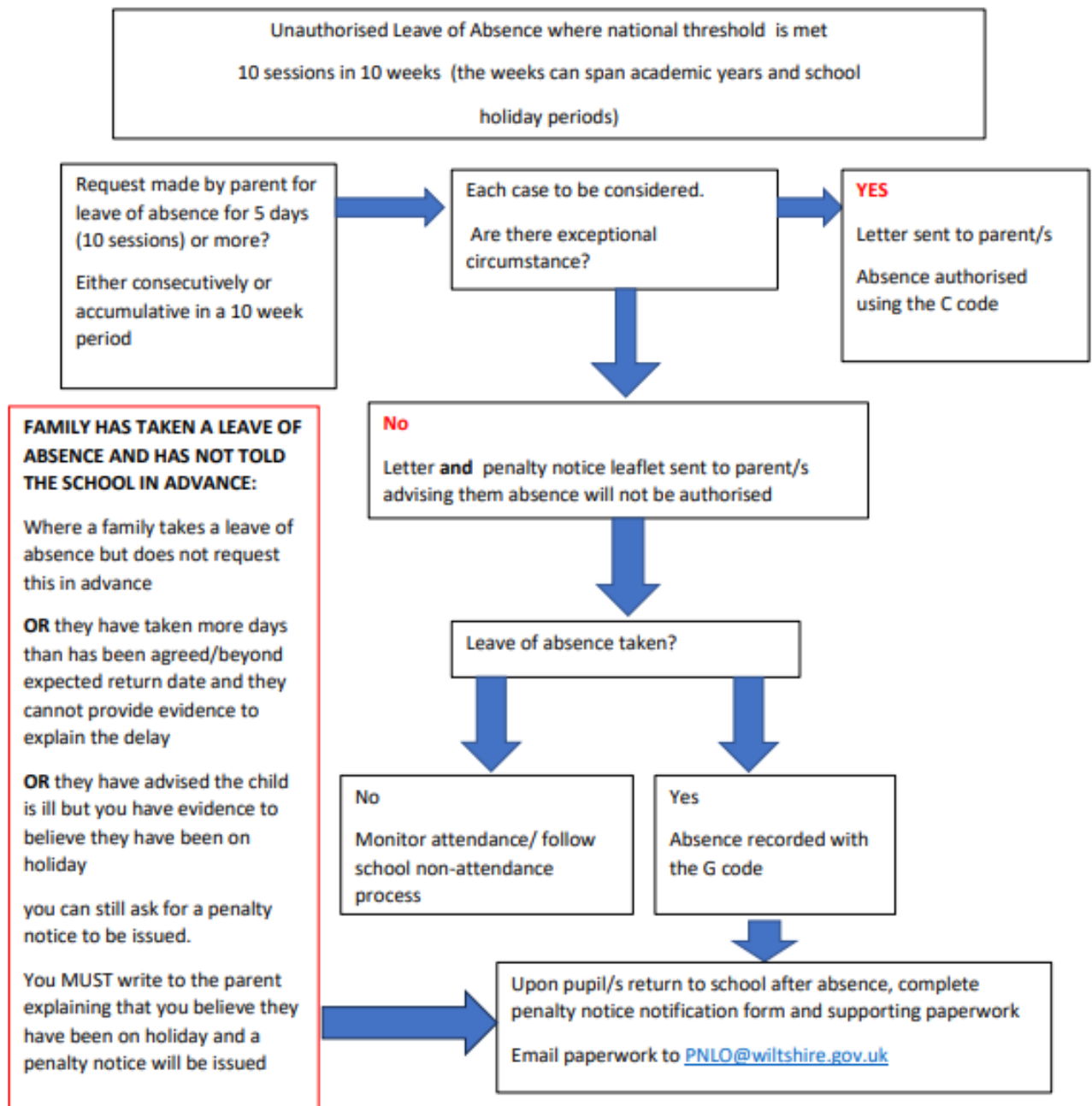
The third or subsequent time an offence is committed for unauthorised absence Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

Wiltshire Council will be publishing its updated code of conduct for penalty notices and all the necessary updated information on the Wiltshire Council website in time for the start of the new term in September.

Appendix 5: School process for parental request for leave of absence



PROCEDURE FOR UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE (Holiday)



Appendix 6: Parent leaflet – Penalty Notices for Absence from School



Unauthorised absence is where the school has not given permission for the absence or where no justifiable reason has been given to the headteacher or when a child does not register either in the morning or the afternoon before the school register is closed.

Why have I received this leaflet?

Either – you have received a Notice to Improve School Attendance warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued as your child has had at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10 week period.

Or – your child has unauthorised absence which has not been agreed by the school but support is not deemed appropriate (eg for a family holiday). You will not have received a Notice to Improve School Attendance in this situation.

What can I do now?

- If you have been issued with a Notice to Improve School Attendance due to unauthorised absence, you should make sure that your child does not have any more unauthorised absence from school.
- You should make contact with the school and arrange to discuss the support available to help improve your child's attendance

Can I get help if my child is not attending school regularly?

Yes, talk to your child's school.

The Education Welfare Service may also help:

Please email: EWS@wiltshire.gov.uk

PENALTY NOTICES FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

EDUCATION ACT 1996

Information for Parents and Carers

With effect from 19 August 2024

The Education Act 1996

Section 444A and section 444B of the Education Act 1996 give powers to the local authority (LA) to issue penalty notices where the parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

Why are Penalty Notices used?

Reducing pupil absence from school is really important. Missing school reduces a pupil's educational attainment chances. Absence from school makes a child more vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and other crime. A child is less likely to get a job or training when s/he leaves school if they have been regularly absent from school.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution and is used to try and improve a pupil's school attendance without the need to appear in court.

If the fine is paid, a parent or carer cannot be fined or prosecuted again for the period covered by the penalty notice.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent for each child and payment is required for each penalty notice issued

Who issues them?

The Local Authority through the Education Welfare Service.

How are they issued?

By post to your home.

What are the costs?

If this is your first penalty notice then payment of £160 is required within 28 days of receipt of the penalty notice; this sum is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. If this is the second penalty notice to be issued to you in respect of the same child within 3 years of the first penalty notice, payment of £160 is required within 28 days of receipt of the penalty notice. If the penalty notice is not paid in full within 28 days the LA is required to start proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for your child's poor school attendance. If you plead guilty, or are found guilty, the courts have a wider range of options which could include a maximum fine of £1000. In addition a Parenting Order could be imposed.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the penalty notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the penalty notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. However, legal proceedings might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the penalty notice.

When are they used?

- When a parent/carer continually fails to provide a reason for a pupil's absence in accordance with school's procedures
- Following notification from a school to the LA that a pupil has had an unauthorised leave of absence
- When a pupil is referred to an Education Welfare Officer and fails to achieve the required improvement in attendance

In most cases a pupil will have had a minimum of 10 school sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence during a 10 week period before a penalty notice is considered.
