



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 2022 (reviewed January 2024)
Review Date	September 2025
Prepared by	Headteacher
To be reviewed by	Headteacher and Governors
Appendices	<p>Appendix 1 – Taken from 'Working together to improve school attendance' Sept 2022</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Fynamore Primary School Absence Table</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Holiday Request Form</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Sample Letter – Absence Request (under 5 days)</p> <p>Appendix 5 – Sample Letter – Absence Request (Over 5 Days)</p> <p>Appendix 6 – Sample Letter – Below 95% Attendance</p> <p>Appendix 7 - Sample Letter – Attendance under 90%</p> <p>Appendix 7 – Sample Letter – Low Attendance Meeting Invitation</p> <p>Appendix 8 – Sample Letter – Poor Punctuality</p> <p>Appendix 9 – Sample Letter – Approving Religious Observance</p>
Supply / distribution	Available as a read-only document on the Fynamore school website and one hardcopy in the school office.
Other relevant approved documents	<p>Home School Agreement Policy</p> <p>DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'</p> <p>DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance</p>
Authorised by	Headteacher and Governors

1. Introduction

Regular attendance is crucial in raising educational standards and in ensuring that every child meets his or her full potential at Fynamore Primary School. There is compelling and irrefutable evidence which suggests that children with poor attendance tend to fall behind their peers and under-achieve.

In view of the above, we are committed to maximising attendance for all pupils. This policy gives a detailed overview of the way in which attendance will be recorded and monitored and sets out what is expected from school staff, parents/carers, governors and pupils of Fynamore Primary School.

This policy has been produced in collaboration with the Calne Area Heads group.

1A. The Legal Framework

For Parents:

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents must ensure that their children are educated. For most parents/carers this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. Failure to do so can result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted.

For Fynamore Primary School:

By law, schools are required to take the attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon and to report to Wiltshire Local Authority pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for ten consecutive school days or more without known reason.

2. Key Principles

We will approach attendance issues taking into account the following key principles:

- i. Ensuring good attendance at Fynamore is the responsibility of everyone in the school community including: parents and carers; school staff; governors and pupils.
- ii. The default position is that every pupil should be at school whenever we are open. Any instance of a pupil missing any school time should be regarded as wholly exceptional.
- iii. We will keep an accurate register of attendance and will monitor attendance figures.
- iv. Staff and pupils alike will be made aware of the registration process.
- v. Non-attendance will be identified. Efforts will be made to identify the reasons for it and to return the pupil in question to school as soon as possible;
- vi. We recognise that there may be many different reasons why a pupil may be absent from school. We will always approach issues of attendance sensitively, particularly in regard to our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. We will at all times do our utmost to ensure that all pupils feel appropriately supported and valued.

- vii. We will put in place procedures for returning absentees to catch up on missed learning without disrupting the learning of other pupils.
- viii. Attendance procedures will be regularly evaluated and reviewed by us. This attendance policy will be shared with all stakeholders.
- ix. Parents/carers will be made aware of and expected to comply with their legal duties.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

As stated above, ensuring good attendance at Fynamore Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the community including: pupils; parents and carers; staff and governors.

The Headteacher is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school – head@fynamore.org.uk

Fynamore Primary School staff will be expected to:

- Follow the procedures in this policy and encourage parents and pupils to reduce absences so that every pupil has access to full-time education;
- Register and monitor attendance in accordance with procedures set out below;
- Act early to address patterns of absence;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example;
- Convey high expectations to pupils regarding attendance and punctuality;
- Promptly investigate all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents/carers;
- Respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently;
- Offer prompt support to pupils who experience difficulties.
- Celebrate high attendance

Parents/Carers will be expected to:

- Comply with their legal duty to ensure that a child registered at the school attends regularly;
- Ensure that children attend punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn;
- Ensure that children are only absent in cases of genuine illness or other emergency;
- In the event that a child is prevented from attending, notify the school as soon as possible;
- Work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's education;
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance;
- Parents and carers need to contact the school office on 01249 810090, text the school mobile on 07537 438427 starting the message with FYN, submit an absences form on the school website (<https://www.fynamore.org.uk/>) or email office@fynamore.org.uk.
- Follow the leave of absence procedures set out below.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend the school and lessons regularly and punctually;
- Take the information home to their parents/carers about their attendance.

Governors will be expected to:

- Monitor attendance figures;
- Review the school's policy and performance as far as attendance goes.

4. Registration and Absence

4.1 By law, schools and Academies are required to record in the attendance register - once at the beginning of the morning session and once in the afternoon – whether pupils are present, absent, engaged in an approved, supervised educational activity off-site, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. We will comply with this by adopting the procedure set out below.

- Registers will be called promptly at 8.40am and at 1pm.
- The morning register will close at 9.10am.
- If a pupil arrives late, and the register is still open, they will be marked late but present.
- Consequently, if a pupil arrives after 9.10am they will be marked 'U' (late and arrived after the register closed).
- If a pupil arrives after 9.10am, with evidence of a medical/dental appointment they will be marked 'M' (medical).
- The afternoon register closes at 1.30pm.
- If staff do not know why a pupil is absent, the absence should be recorded as 'N' (no reason provided for absence yet). On the first day, the school's absence procedure will be followed and the registration mark amended as appropriate.
- All staff must record absence, using the agreed codes. Consistent criteria should be applied.

5. Monitoring Absence

- Records of attendance will be reviewed by the Headteacher on a regular basis.
- Weekly discussions will take place between the Headteacher and class teachers where individual pupils have a high absence rate
- Attendance which is below 95% over the course of a term (in a six-term year) is closely monitored by the Headteacher and admin team.
- If attendance falls below 95% and there are no clear reasons, a letter will be sent home to the parent. If this continues the parent will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss how working together could improve the pupil's attendance. However, if there is no improvement in attendance a further meeting will be called. During this meeting, it will be made clear that the school will proceed by involving the Education Welfare Service and ultimately legal action if no sustained improvement occurs.

6. Responding to Absence Involvement of Parents/Carers

6.1 If no contact is received from the parent/carer of the pupil on the morning of the first absence, we will contact the parent/carer by telephone on the morning of each absence, or if the parent/carer is unavailable, write a letter requesting information. If this action does not result in an explanation or the return of the pupil to school, a further letter will be sent.

- 6.2 Continued absence will result in a school attendance meeting being arranged. This will involve the Headteacher and/or School Nurse contacting the parent or carer to discuss the matter. If the attendance does not improve, the Headteacher will invite the parents/carers to a meeting. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.
- 6.3 If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved and the attendance does not improve, a formal Early Support Assessment (ESA) referral will be made. In consultation with the Education Welfare Service and the Chief Executive if necessary, a recommendation for issuing a fixed penalty fine will be considered.

Safeguarding

- 6.4 It is recognised that frequent absence from and lateness to school could be an indication of abuse or/and an impact of abuse. Attendance reviews therefore consider all aspects of safeguarding as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy. Where concerns have been raised about a pupil, additional attendance monitoring/reviews will be carried out.

Reintegration

- 6.5 In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence, an individual re-integration programme will be implemented by the Headteacher and monitored by the class teacher.

7. Other Procedures Notifying the School of Absence

- 7.1 Parents and carers should ring the school on **each and every day** of their child's absence by 9.00am giving reasons for the absence. An absence of more than 5 days may require the parent/carers to provide further medical evidence in the form of an appointment card, a copy of prescription medication or a letter from the GP.
- 7.2 Failure to notify the school of an absence will result in the absence counting as 'unauthorised'. Parents/carers are informed that it is an offence if they fail to ensure their child attends the school regularly, even if they are absent without the parent/carer's knowledge. Parents/carers should avoid, wherever possible, making medical/dental appointments during school hours, where this is not possible parents should inform the school office and present evidence of a medical appointment. We are unable to sanction absences for reasons such as shopping, waiting in for a delivery, birthdays or holidays.
- 7.3 Staff are available to give advice from 8.40 am every school day should parents/carers be uncertain whether their child should be at the school or not.

Requesting Leave of Absence

- 7.4 The Leave of Absence request form can be found on our website and is available from the school office. We are not permitted to allow permission for holidays in term time on top of the 13 weeks holiday a year that pupils already have.
- 7.5 A leave of absence request will only be authorised if it is for exceptional circumstances (not a holiday).

7.6 If a leave of absence request is refused permission by the school, parents/carers may be issued a Penalty Notice if they still take their child out. Penalty Notices are a fine of £60 per parent/carer per child, which rises to £120 if not paid within 21 days. If the £120 is not paid, the parents/carers could be taken to court and receive a much larger fine. This will be administered by the Education Welfare Service.

Deletion from School Roll

7.7 If we receive notice from parents/carers that a pupil is moving to another school / academy, we will notify the Local Authority (LA) as soon as we become aware.

7.8 If we receive verbal notification that parents/carers are withdrawing, their children from the school to home educate them, the school will not wait for the written confirmation before informing the LA via the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The school will only delete the child from roll once they have received written confirmation from the parents/carers, and been contacted by the intake school and/or notification has had time to be received by the LA. The school will not wait until the LA acknowledges the notice nor seek the LA's approval of the deletion.

Children Missing From Education

7.9 A child missing from education is a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school / academy roll, nor being educated elsewhere. If a pupil does not attend the school for 10 school days and there has been no response from the parent or carer to our request for information on the whereabouts of the pupil, the school will complete a Missing from Education form and send it to the Education Welfare Service. Reference should be made to the separate Children Missing from Education policy. We have a duty to keep a child on roll until we are given permission by the EWO to remove them

8. Review

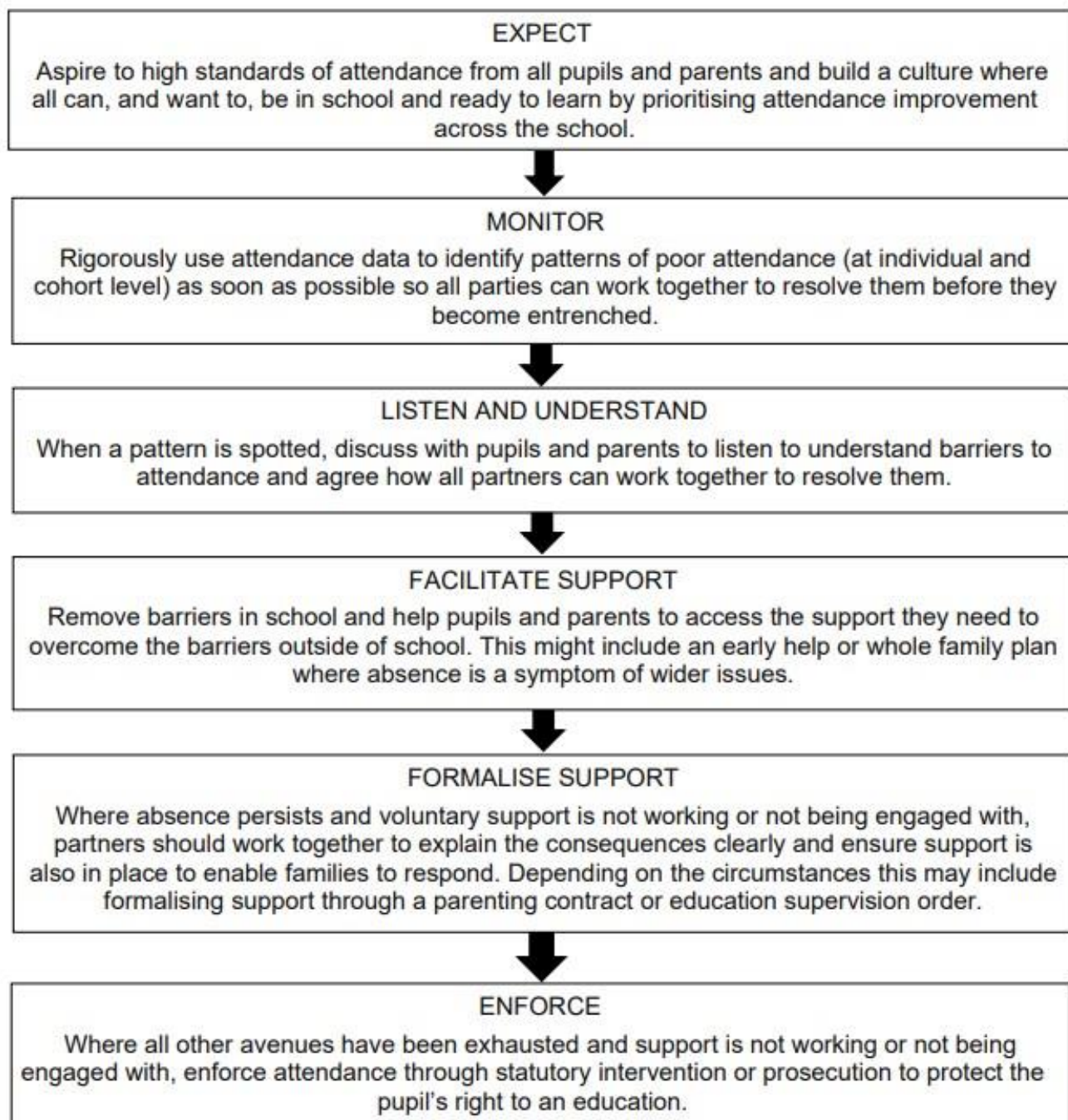
As noted above, this policy and the practices contained in it will be subject to regular review by both the Headteacher and Governors. Part of the evaluation process will be to consider what interventions have been successful. Attendance is scrutinised in the periodical Headteacher's Report. For instance:

- Has the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils and/or attendance as a whole improved?
- How successful have pupil reintegration plans been?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the local community?
- How well informed are new pupils and their families about the importance of attendance and the policies and procedures operating within the school?
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in assemblies or collective worship, lessons or as a theme for any other curricular lessons?
- Have appropriate and timely referrals been made to the Education Welfare Service and advice sought as necessary?

Taken from 'Working together to improve school attendance' Sept 2022

Working together to improve attendance

13. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



Appendix 2

Fynamore Primary School Absence Table

Percentage attendance	Description of Attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days absent per year	Learning hours lost per year
100%	Outstanding	190 days	0	0 hours
99%	Very good -best chance of success	188 days	2	10 hours
98%		186 days	4	20 hours
97%		184 days	6	30 hours
96%	Good -although room for improvement	182.5 days	7.5	37.5 hours
95%		180.5 days	9.5	47.5 hours
90%	Poor -there is less chance of success and it makes it harder for your child to achieve	171 days	19	95 hours
89%		169 days	21	105 hours
88%		167 days	25	115 hours
87%		165 days	27	125 hours
86%	Very poor -attendance is a serious concern and there will be a huge effect on your child's education and learning	161.5 days	28.5	135 hours
85%		161.5 days	28.5	142.5 hours
80%		152 days	38	190 hours
75%		143 days	47	235 hours

Holiday Request Form



FYNAMORE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

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. 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*)

.....

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 4

Sample Letter – Absence Request (under 5 days)

Dear (name of parent(s))

Request for Leave of Absence

I am writing with reference to your request for ***** to be absent for a holiday

I regret to inform you that I am unable to authorise the absence on this occasion. There is very little discretion allowed for Headteachers in approving a leave of absence taken in term-time, and the reasons that you have provided do not indicate an exceptional circumstance.

I must advise you, that if you take ***** out of school for this period of time, the absence will **NOT be authorised** and will mean that they will have a total of ***** of unauthorised holiday absence.

Where a pupil's unauthorised holiday absence amounts to 10 sessions (5 school days) or more within a 6 month period the Education Welfare Service will be notified and the Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice* to each parent for each child.

For your information, if *** were to take an additional ***** of unauthorised holiday absence this year, Penalty Notices* will be issued.** This would include any extension to this holiday, including changes to travel arrangements and illness at the start or end of this holiday, except where covered by a doctor's note.

Your children's attendance will be monitored and you will be notified if there is any concern.

Yours sincerely

Ms Sarah Weber
Headteacher

** For your information, if issued, the Penalty Notice (for 5 school days or more of unauthorised absence) would be a sum of £120 per parent per child, if paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 per parent per child, if paid within 21 days .*

Appendix 5

Sample Letter – Absence Request (over 5 days)

Dear (name of parent(s))

Request for Leave of Absence

I am writing with reference to your request for ***** to be absent for ***** for a holiday.

I regret to inform you that I am unable to agree the absence on this occasion. There is very little discretion allowed for Headteachers in approving a leave of absence taken in term-time, and the reasons that you have provided do not indicate an exceptional circumstance.

I must advise you that if you take ***** out of school for this period of time, the absence will **NOT be authorised** and will mean that they will have a total of ***** of unauthorised absence this academic year. Where a pupil's unauthorised absence amounts to 10 sessions (5 school days) or more within a 6 month period the Education Welfare Service will be notified and the Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice* to each parent for each child.

Therefore, if *** takes this holiday, Penalty Notices* will be issued.**

Your child's attendance will be monitored and you will be notified if there is any concern.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Sarah Weber
Headteacher

** For your information, the Penalty Notice (for 5 school days or more of unauthorised absence) is a sum of £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.*

Appendix 6

Sample Letter – Below 95% Attendance

Dear (name of parent(s))

Re: Child's name and DOB

I am writing to advise you that (name of child)'s attendance has fallen to 95% or below, thus I am becoming concerned that (name of child) is missing a significant part of their learning. I have enclosed a copy of (name of child)'s Registration Certificate which show an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regular attendance is extremely important, as missing school can impact on learning. Also, I am sure you are aware, it is a legal requirement.

I will continue to monitor (name of child)'s attendance and look forward to seeing an improvement. Should it fall further, I shall be inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting and the school will be requesting medical evidence for any further absences.

If there are any particular circumstances which the school may not be aware of which is to have an influence on (name of child)'s attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please continue to work with the school. You are more than welcome to contact me to discuss any queries or concerns you may have.

Yours sincerely

Ms Sarah Weber
Headteacher

Appendix 7

Sample Letter – Attendance under 90%

Dear (name of parent(s))

School Attendance: Childs name and DOB

I am writing to you concerning ***** attendance at school. I enclose an attendance print out and, as you can see, ***** percentage attendance level is *****.

This level of absence is a concern, as it is well below the school average attendance, which is currently *****. It is very important for continued progress that ***** attend school regularly.

Attendance rates consistently below 90% in children over 5 warrant the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and I am required to monitor attendance rates very closely.

The school has adopted Wiltshire's Fast Track Procedure and I am writing to advise you that should ***** attendance continue to be a concern, the EWO will be informed and I will ask you to make an appointment to attend a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) to discuss their absences.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need to discuss this matter in more detail or require further support to help improve ***** attendance.

Yours sincerely

Ms Sarah Weber
Headteacher

Appendix 8

Sample Letter – Low Attendance Meeting Invitation

Dear (name of parent(s))

School Attendance Meeting: Child's name and DOB

I am writing to you concerning ***** attendance at school. I enclose an attendance print out and, as you can see, ***** percentage attendance is *****. This is a concern, as it is well below the school average, which is currently *****.

Attendance rates consistently below 90% in children over 5 warrant the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and I am required to monitor attendance rates very closely.

The school has adopted Wiltshire's Fast Track Procedure and I am therefore writing to ask you to attend a **School Attendance Meeting (SAM)** with ***** to discuss ***** absences from school on:

[Date of Meeting]

Medical evidence is now required for any further absences to be authorised with immediate effect. This may be in the form of an appointment card obtained from your GP, a signed compliment slip stating the date and time of the visit, or alternatively, you can sign a consent form to enable the school to contact your GP directly.

Should (name of child)'s attendance remain irregular, a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Officer. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or Prosecution through the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Please confirm by telephone that you are able to attend this meeting (01249 81009). If the date or time is not convenient, please contact me to enable the meeting to be rescheduled. Please be aware this meeting will go ahead in your absence and you shall receive a copy of the minutes.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Sarah Weber
Headteacher

Appendix 9

Sample Letter – Poor Punctuality

Dear (name of parent(s))

Poor punctuality

I'm writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

[He/she] arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

- > [date]
- > [date]
- > [date]

[He/she] also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

- > [date]
- > [date]
- > [date]

The school day begins promptly at 8.55am with the doors being open to pupils from 8.40am. Registration closes at 9.25am. Afternoon registration takes place at 1pm.

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child doesn't miss work, and that disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

Please note that unauthorised absences and persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than 10 sessions (5 full days) within a six month period. You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

We're committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need. We would therefore like to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can work with you to help improve [name's] punctuality.

Please contact the school office on 01249 810090 to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Weber
Headteacher

Appendix 10

Sample Letter – Approving Religious Observance

Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion]. In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request and it will be considered an authorised absence.

Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity. However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent, and does not necessarily mean I'll agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Weber
Headteacher