Healthy Empowered Ambitious Respectful Together

Our values are at the HEART of our school

Attendance Policy

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Part 1 - Policy

1.1 Introduction

At Washingwell Community Primary School our ambition is for all students to strive for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every session and every day that school is open. We consider this paramount to pupils achieving their full potential and enhancing lifelong outcomes.

Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and is an integral part of our school ethos.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and relevant partner agencies to remove any barriers and build strong and trusting relationships. Promoting and ensuring excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

1.2 Aims and ethos

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to a full-time and efficient education to which they are entitled. Washingwell Community Primary School acts early to address any patterns of irregular attendance aiming to create a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood, valued, and supported by all.

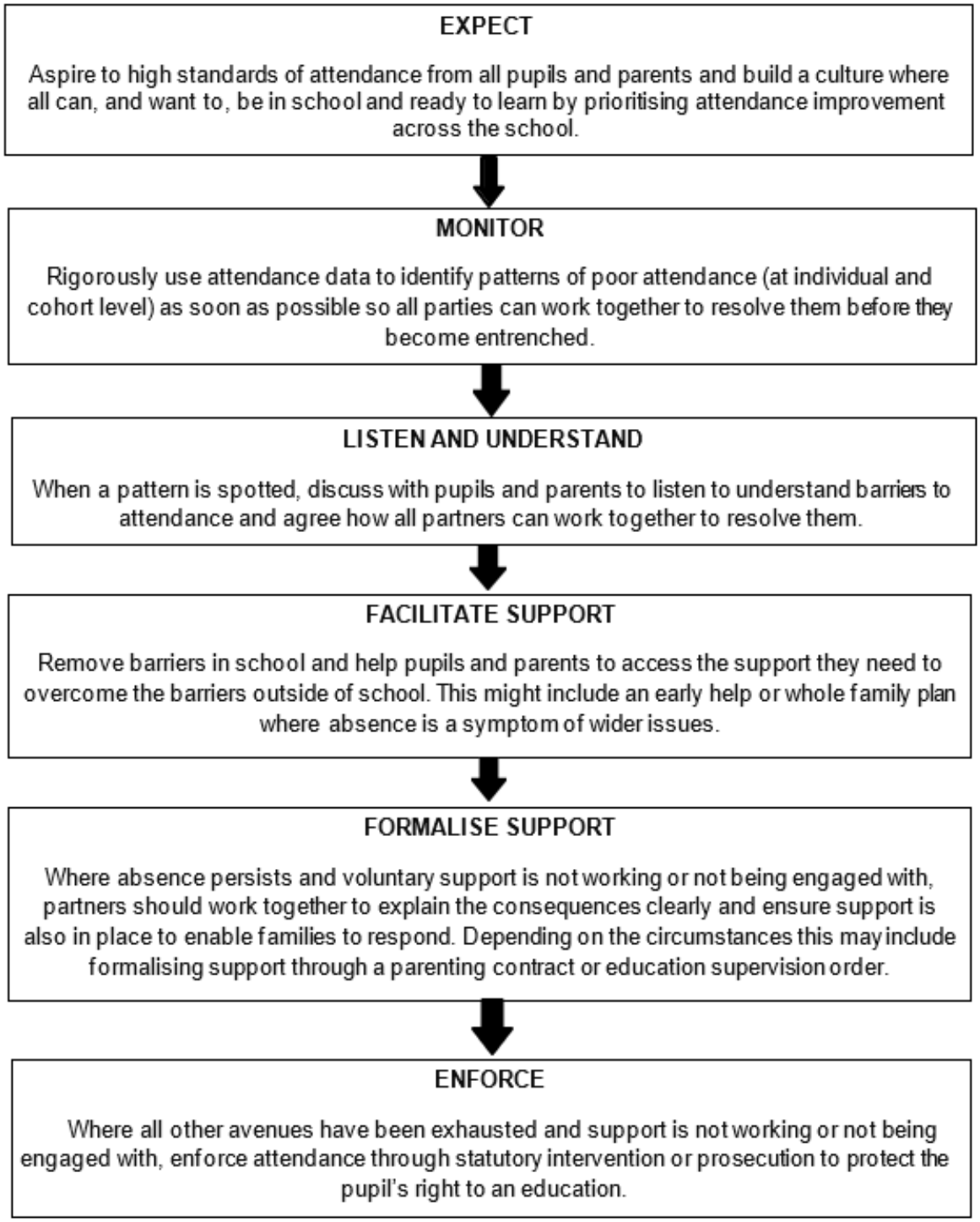
By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, all school staff, parents/carers, pupils, and partners can work together to remove any barriers affecting attendance.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents[1] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At Washingwell Community Primary School we follow the DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Approach, which is statutory document:

[1] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has day to day care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.



Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Every child enrolled at our school is expected to attend every day they are required to, on time, so that they can achieve their full potential. We monitor and manage attendance and punctuality across all year groups and expect parents to notify the school of any absence. This applies to pupils who are not yet compulsory school age as it is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age.

At Washingwell Community Primary School we will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[2] school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved and as part of the wider school community.
- Raise pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Work with external agencies where required, such as health, the LA and local organisations to support our pupils, parents and school.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge learning gaps.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance and punctuality.

1.3 Safeguarding and Attendance

We are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school has made all reasonable enquiries and cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare and safety.

1.4 Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance 2024 from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

[2] A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

1.5 Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

1.6 Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in conjunction with relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers such pupils may face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

In line with DfE expectations reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period, to support pupils to reintegrate back into education and access full time provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and external partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

1.7 Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of pupil registers
- the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support for pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils experiencing attendance challenges.

Part 2 - What the Law Says and Our School Procedures

2.1 Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

2.2 Contents of Attendance Register

In addition to the admissions register the law makes it clear that schools must take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management Information System to record attendance information.

2.3 Present at School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Attendance Lead will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am on each school day.
Our morning register is taken at 8.55 am and will be kept open until 9.15am
Our afternoon register is taken at 1.10pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm
A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**), which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly.

See DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

2.4 Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

Illness

The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' 2024[3] which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

[3] Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Parents must contact school on the first day of their child's absence by completing an online reporting form on the School website, via Arbor or by telephoning school and leaving a voicemail. When notifying school of any absence it is important that parents/carers provide full and accurate details of the reason for the absence and expected date of return. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our school supports pupil mental health and wellbeing following DfE guidance Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Inclusion Lead for further information on the support available.

Online mental health support and advice can be accessed: **Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS (www.nhs.uk)**

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult.

Administering Medication

See also First Aid Policy, Supporting Pupils in School with Medical Conditions.

School staff can issue some prescribed medication during the school day with signed consent from a parent/carer as per our First Aid policy.

Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and this school will remain their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

Suspensions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the Head Teacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult.

2.5 First Day of Absence Response

On occasions that school have not received this notification of absence by 9.20am office staff will attempt to contact parents/carers and any other emergency contacts for the child via telephone, Arbor and/or email. Where no contact has been received by 10.00am, the Inclusion Lead (or other relevant member of staff) may conduct a home visit. We may also contact any older or younger siblings' schools to identify a family pattern of absence. We may also request a police welfare check.

In the event of multiple unexplained absences, school staff will prioritise contacting children who are: Children in Care; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing; primary aged pupils who make their own way to school.

2.6 Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

Although good attendance is an expectation, the school seeks to improve whole school attendance by offering incentives, these may include:

- Half termly attendance certificates
- Yearly attendance certificates and medals
- 'In it to win it' outings
- Class punctuality certificates
- Positive postcards
- Letters

2.7. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, use of penalty notices or prosecution.

2.8. Leave of Absence Requests

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

In line with DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. If any leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Parents should complete a *Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time* form which, is available on the school website.The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least 14 days before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be

aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, in advance where possible, to be considered alongside social care staff and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact social care/ the Virtual School in relation to any requests made for term time absence for a child in care.

Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in Term Time

The national threshold for issuing penalty notices is 10 unauthorised sessions, within a rolling 10 school week period. For a first offence the penalty notice is £160, per parent, per child, this reduces to £80 if paid within 21 days. For the second offence the penalty notice is £160 per parent, per child.

Parents have no right of appeal.

If the penalty notice is not paid after 28 days, the parent/s may be prosecuted.

Parents can receive up to 2 penalty notices in a 3-year rolling period. They are issued per parent per child. There is no limit to the number of notice to improve that can be issued.

At the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool, such as prosecution, will be considered.

2.9 Persistently Absent pupils

A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any pupil that is seen to have reached the persistently absent threshold or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

2.10 Approved Educational Activity

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up

action as necessary**.** Attendance updates will be provided on a**n** individually agreed basis, with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provision setting.

2.11 Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's 'Home to school travel and transport' guidance document, or ask the school for a printed copy.)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

2.12 Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

At Washingwell Community Primary School, attendance levels are categorised as follows:

- **Red Zone: Under 90% (Persistent Absentees)**
  Students in the red zone are more likely to underachieve, find making friendships difficult and misbehave.
- **Amber Zone: 90.1% - 95.9%**
  Students in this zone are still at risk of underachieving due to the absence level. Students who miss school regularly are more likely to suffer from school related stress.
- **Green Zone: 96% - 100%**
  This is our expectation for all students. Those in the Green are more likely to do well in examinations, have better job opportunities and can develop strong friendships within school.

As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Attendance Lead to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal attendance action plan or parenting contract being drawn up.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with parents to overcome any barriers preventing regular attendance we may refer a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions. Details of all the steps we have taken to improve attendance will be shared with the Legal Intervention Team.

Where there are complex family circumstances, our school will take a holistic, early help approach to the issue and will involve other agencies if deemed necessary. Where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or, fail to implement the suggested changes a referral to the Legal Intervention Team may be required.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

Working with Children and Families where attendance concerns exist may entail;

- Verbal discussions with parents as soon as attendance concerns arise
- Formal staged response to ongoing or persistent absenteeism
- Direct work with individual children to identify difficulties
- Referrals to other agencies

2.13 Formal Attendance Procedures

A Star Attendance is used daily to identify those pupils whose attendance is becoming a concern. We have a 4-stage approach to addressing these concerns:

Stage 1: An initial attendance concern letter will be sent to each parent individually.
Stage 2: Ongoing attendance concern letter and reply slip
Stage 3: Serious attendance concern letter and meeting with Inclusion and Attendance Lead/or Attendance Governor and/or Class Teacher. This will include an attendance contract between school and home.
Stage 4: Letter to parents informing them of the school's intention to refer the matter to the Local Authority Legal Intervention Team to request legal action.

All letters will be sent using Arbor as this is the usual method of communication used by the school. In the case where we do not use Arbor as the usual means of communication letters will be sent individually via Royal Mail. Letters will be sent to each parent individually.

Pupils who are not of compulsory school age will only receive a Stage 1 Initial Concern letter.

2.14 Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority Legal Intervention Team may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

Penalty notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance, for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information.

Penalty notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance.

2.15 Children Missing Education (CME)

When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, school staff will take will complete and record one or more of the following actions:

• Contact the parent by phone, email, letter

• Carry out a home visit

• Contact others listed on contact information provided by parent

• Check with known relatives, neighbours, landlords, private or social housing providers

• Check with any other agency involved with the family such as CSC, etc

• Check with the local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known.

If school think there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).

To report any children missing from education school will complete CME Referral Form and send this to **LITCMEReferrals@Gateshead.Gov.UK**.

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with Regulation 8 Education law.

2.16 Reintegrating pupils from long-term absenteeism

Following a long period of absence, a child may feel vulnerable, so school staff may consider the following:

- a phased or gradual return
- allocation of a 'Key Worker'
- consideration about whether Special Needs support is appropriate

2.17 Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school by 8.50am on the first day of their child's absence the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. School may then use any other emergency contacts provided by parents to clarify this. Where no contact has been made, the Attendance Lead and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team may conduct a home visit. School may also contact siblings' schools/pre-schools to identify patterns of absence.

2.18 Reporting to Parents

School shares attendance information weekly on our school newsletter. Induvial attendance is shared on a termly basis through parent consultation meetings and also annually on children's school report. Parents can request their child's individual attendance figure at any point during the school year.

Where attendance falls below 90% (Autumn Term), 92% (Spring Term) and 94% (Summer Term) school will contact parents using letter templates in the Appendices.

2.19 Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Reasons for absences are recorded on SIMS and may also be recorded on CPOMS where there are concerns.

Information recorded:

- Who absence is reported by or whether school have needed to initiate the contact.
- Whether this information is provided on time.
- Reason given for the absence.

2.20 Roles and Responsibilities

See Appendix 2

2.21 Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Attendance Lead or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be agreed with the governing body.

2.22 Links with other policies/procedures

This policy is linked to the following policies

- Safeguarding Policy

- Behaviour Policy
- SEND policy
- **Appendix 1**

Attendance Codes

Codes	Definition	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (PM)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
B	Education off site	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Regulated performance	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registration	Dual registered at another school
E	Excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded without an alternative provider
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Holiday not granted by the school
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment) and this has been authorised by the school.
J1	Interview	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Alternative provision	Attending an alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority

Codes	Definition	Meaning
L	Late	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
M	Medical/dental appointments	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason for absence not yet established (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or should be replaced with code O if no reason has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised Absence	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
P	Approved sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
Q	Access arrangements	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements that the Local Authority has a legal duty to provide
R	Religious observance	Religious observance
S	Study leave	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Traveller absence	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
U	Late (after registers closed)	Arrived in school after registration closed
V	Educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
X	Not required to be in school	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	Unavoidable causes	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available. This only applies for distances over 2 miles for pupils under the age of eight and 3 miles for older pupils.
Y2	Unavoidable causes	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Codes	Definition	Meaning
Y3	**Unavoidable causes**	**Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed**
Y4	**Unavoidable causes**	**Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed**
Y5	**Unavoidable causes**	**Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention**
Y6	**Unavoidable causes**	**Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law**
Y7	**Unavoidable causes**	**Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause (other than years 1 to 6)**
Z	**Pupil not on roll**	**Prospective pupil not on admission register**
-	**All should attend/No mark recorded**	**No mark**
#	**Planned school closure**	**Planned whole school closure**

Appendix 2

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- The Attendance Governor will monitor data half termly and share this with the wider Governing Body
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Attending meetings with the Attendance Lead and individual families where concerns exist.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of the policy.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing rewards for excellent and/or improved attendance.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Use attendance data to help analyse risks to pupils.
- Provide attendance data for multi-agency meetings.
- Prioritise follow up procedures for children who have not arrived at school where there is a concern for the child's safety.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance twice daily, using the correct codes (where known), and submitting by 8.55am and 1.15pm.
- Providing background information to support referrals including academic information and emotional and social skills concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Discussing attendance at all consultation evenings.

Office staff are responsible for:

- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early.
- Scanning and uploading medical information onto SIMS.
- Submitting attendance data to the DfE (and others) as required.
- Duties of Attendance and Inclusion Lead in their absence.
- Weekly class attendance percentages are shared on weekly newsletter.

5 The Inclusion Lead is responsible for:

- Daily attendance monitoring using A Star Attendance.
- First Day Response: contacting home if no reason for absence is received (phone call, text message, email or home visit).
- Respond to Leave of Absence in Term Time requests.
- Talk to pupils on a 1:1 basis regarding attendance related matters.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Improving school attendance by carrying out home visits and attending meetings with the parent /carer.
- Meeting and working with parents to improve attendance. This may include offering parent contracts, attendance plans and CAF (Common Assessment Framework) / TAF (Team Around the Family).
- Refer to outside agencies for additional support for families including School Health, CYPS and Early Help Team.
- Inform the Local Authority when a child is expected to be absent for more than 15 school days.
- Making referrals to the Legal Intervention Team.
- Overall monitoring of school attendance and punctuality.
- Analysing trends in authorised and unauthorised absence such as pupils entitled to Free School Meals, Pupil Premium pupils, pupils with SEND, Children in Care, attendance by Ethnicity and Language (English/EAL)
- Provide regular attendance reports to staff and governors.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school every day on time. Children can enter school between 8.40am and 8.50am. After 8.50am will result in your child being marked late.
- Children arriving after 8.50am must be brought in via the school office.
- Contacting the school office by 8.50am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence.
- Parents can inform school by completing an online absence form on our home/school communication system Arbor, alternatively parents can telephone school, select Option 1

and leave an answer machine message. Full and accurate details of the illness and expected date of return should be given.

- Inform school if any absence is expected to last beyond 15 days.
- Provide the school with more than 2 emergency contact numbers for their child.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. We may require sight of the medical appointment in order to authorise these absences.
- Ensuring that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time four weeks prior to the first date of proposed absence. Requests should only be submitted if absolutely necessary as these are not routinely authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Pupils are expected to:

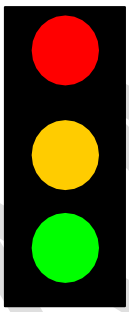
- Attend school every day on time.
- Meet with the Inclusion Lead regarding any issues that impact on attendance.
- Engage in support offered to improve attendance.

Appendix 3

Initial Attendance Concerns Letter

Dear <ParentalSalutation>,

As you are aware Washingwell Community Primary School uses the traffic light initiative to monitor the attendance of pupils. As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we formally monitor attendance to identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. We then issue a first letter to register our concern with parents/carers.



Red – Danger Zone - **Below 91%**

Amber – At Risk Zone – **92% - 95%**

Green Zone – Safety Zone –**96% and Above**

During this routine monitoring of attendance, we have noticed that <LegalForename>'s attendance is currently <PercentageAttendance>%. This is below the expected level of attendance.

At Washingwell Community Primary School we value and reward good attendance as research shows that your child is more likely to achieve their academic attainment if they have a good attendance record. The information below illustrates the impact that poor attendance can have on your child's educational success.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year Pupils in this group will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.
95%: 10 days absence a year Pupils in this group are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 10-day holiday during term time every year can only ever achieve 95% attendance.

SAMPLE

92%: 15 days absence a year
Pupils in this group are missing three weeks of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best. The school may consider referring pupils with this level of attendance to the Local Authority.
90%: 19 days absence a year The Government classes pupils in this group as "Persistent Absentees" and it will be almost impossible for them to keep up with work. Parents of pupils in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

Please ensure that over the coming weeks your child's attendance improves to meet the minimum expected level of 96%.

We can support you and your child around any attendance issues you may have therefore please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Tough on 0191 4884400 should you wish to discuss this further.

Thank you for your cooperation and support with this matter.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 4

Ongoing Attendance Concerns Letter

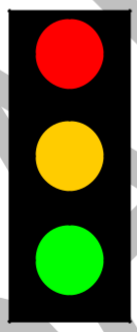
Attendance Period: <AttendancePeriod>

Dear <ParentalSalutation>,

As you are aware Washingwell Community Primary School uses the traffic light initiative to monitor the attendance of pupils. Since we wrote to you, <LegalForename>'s attendance has failed to improve significantly and is now

<PercentageAttendance>%, this includes <NumberOfUnauthorisedAbsences> occasions of unauthorised absence.

This is below the minimum expectation and is having an impact on your child's education. To put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year.



Red – Danger Zone - **Below 91%**

Amber – At Risk Zone – **92% - 95%**

Green Zone – Safety Zone –**96% and Above**

Authorised absence means that school has given approval in advance for a pupil to be away from school or that the explanation offered afterwards by a parent/carer has been accepted. Decisions regarding the authorisation of absences are the responsibility of the Head Teacher. Unauthorised absences on your child's attendance record may mean that you are liable to incur a Fixed Penalty Notice or could face prosecution.

Due to the current level of absence please note that any future absences relating to illness and/or medical reasons will not be authorised without some additional assurances that the absences are unavoidable.

Some examples of evidence that could be used are: Prescriptions, Appointment Cards, Doctor's Notes etc. If this evidence is not supplied, your child's absence will be recorded as an "unauthorised" absence.

SAMPLE

Only in exceptional circumstances will low attending students not get monitored, these would-be children with medical conditions requiring repeat treatment or who have had a stay in hospital.

To support you and your child a parent survey has been attached to this letter. Please use this form as an opportunity to provide any further information that may help to understand your child's absence.
Please complete and return to the School Office as soon as possible.
We would appreciate your support to make sure your child's attendance improves. We will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve and this may lead to a referral to the Attendance Team.
We can support you and your child around any attendance issues you may have therefore please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Tough on 0191 4884400 should you wish to discuss this further.

Thank you for your cooperation and support with this matter.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Parent Feedback form: Ongoing Attendance Concerns

frl Name of Pupil: <LegalForename> <LegalSurname>	Class: <RegistrationGroup>
Comments: (Please advise of any further details regarding the absence of your child from school. This information will help to review your child's current attendance.)	
Would you like a follow up telephone call from school? (please state the best time available)	
Name of parent/carer	
Date	
Contact details	

SAMPLE

Appendix 5
Serious Attendance Concerns Letter

Attendance Period: <Date>

Dear <ParentalSalutation>,

As a parent/carer you have a legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly. As your child <LegalForename> has an unsatisfactory level of attendance, which is <PercentageAttendance>% and there have been <NumberOfUnauthorisedAbsences> sessions of unauthorised absence to date, attendance will be monitored from <MonitoringStartDate> to <MonitoringEndDate>.

During this monitoring period attendance and punctuality will be recorded daily. All Pupils will be expected to have 100% attendance unless medical evidence is provided.

All children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at a school must attend regularly and punctually. It is your responsibility as a parent to ensure this. Should your child fail to attend regularly and punctually the school may consider referral to the local authority.

The local authority has a duty to ensure that you fulfil your statutory responsibilities in relation to school attendance. You may be invited to answer questions under caution in accordance to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The local Authority will then decide whether to take legal action against you which could mean applying for an Educational Supervision Order, issuing you with a penalty notice which is a fixed penalty fine or prosecuting you under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If you were found guilty, the maximum fine for the offence is £2,500 or up to 3 months' imprisonment.

If your child is experiencing any difficulties affecting attendance at school or you have any queries, please contact Mrs Tough on 0191 4884400 to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Attendance Action Plan

Name of Child:	<LegalForename> <LegalSurname>
Address:	<ParentalSalutation> <FirstLineOfAddress> <SecondLineOfAddress> <PostCode>
Name of Parent/Carer:	<ParentalSalutation>
Name of school:	Washingwell Community Primary School

Current Attendance:	<PercentageAttendance>%
Date:	<Date>

Target Attendance:	100%
Monitoring period:	<MonitoringStartDate> to <MonitoringEndDate>

Appendix 6

School Response to Leave of Absence in Term Time requests

Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time – Authorised

Thank you for completing an online form to request leave of absence for your child during term time.

I have considered your request in line with our Attendance and Punctuality Policy and feel that it does meet the criteria for the following reasons:

- Your child's current attendance as at today is % which is at/above what is expected and
- There are exceptional circumstances surrounding your request.

For the above reason, the planned absence will be recorded on the school register as 'Authorised'.

Mrs Hall

Head Teacher

****

Request for Leave of Absence During Term - Unauthorised

Thank you for completing an online form to request leave of absence for your child during term time.

I have considered your request in line with our Attendance and Punctuality Policy and feel that it does not meet the criteria for the following reasons:

- The reason surrounding your request is not classed as an exceptional circumstance.
- Your child's attendance as at today is % which is below what is expected.

For the above reason, the planned absence will be recorded on the school register as 'Unauthorised'.

Mrs Hall

Head Teacher

****

Request for Leave of Absence During Term – Unauthorised/Request for Penalty Notice

Thank you for completing an online form to request leave of absence for your child during term time.

I have considered your request in line with our Attendance and Punctuality Policy and feel that it does not meet the criteria for the following reasons:

- The reason surrounding your request is not classed as an exceptional circumstance.
- Your child's attendance as of today is % which is below what is expected.
- We have serious concerns about the absence on your child's education.

For the above reason, the planned absence will be recorded on the school register as 'Unauthorised' and a request for a Penalty Notice has been submitted to the Local Authority.

Appendix 7

RE: REFERRAL TO THE LEGAL INTERVENTION TEAM

As you are aware under the 1996 Education Act, all parents are required to ensure that a child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have. It is with extreme disappointment that I must contact you once again about <LegalForename>'s attendance. We have for some time tried to support you to improve <LegalForename>'s attendance in accordance with our school policy by way of letters, telephone contact, meetings and home visits, where appropriate.

Unfortunately, <LegalForename>'s school attendance is still causing concern. At the date of writing <LegalForename>'s attendance is <PercentageAttendance>% and has attended school on <NumberOfAttendances> occasions out of a possible <NumberOfPossibleSession> when the school was open for instruction under the Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2006; <NumberOfUnauthorisedAbsences> of these absences were considered to be unauthorised. As we have explained to you in the past a parent can offer an explanation for their child's absence but the law clearly states that it is the Head Teacher's decision as to whether it is felt the explanation offered by a parent for an absence is justified. Our Attendance Policy outlines the procedures for dealing with a pupil's absence and is available to parents via the school website.

As <LegalForename>'s attendance has not improved I have no other alternative but to refer this matter to the Local Authority's Legal Intervention Team. This team has a statutory duty to investigate matters of on-going poor school attendance and to consider formal statutory action.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a criminal offence is committed if a registered pupil does not attend school regularly. The Legal Intervention Team can issue a Penalty Notice to parents if a child has missed 10 or more sessions without permission from the school, the Legal Intervention Team can also instigate criminal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

I would strongly recommend you co-operate and work with the Legal Intervention Team to prevent the need for legal action. If you wish to discuss the content of this letter further, please contact Mrs Tough.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 8

educationGateshead
raising achievement for all

Gateshead Council

Legal Intervention Team Referral Form

Consideration for legal action: School Attendance

The Local Authority regards legal action (penalty notice/prosecution) as a last resort when all school interventions and strategies have failed to improve the attendance.

All fields are mandatory and should not be left blank. Where there are gaps in information, please indicate the reason. The referral must be fully completed by the school for the assessment to be completed.

Please note that information contained in the referral form will be shared and discussed with the parent and could ultimately be used as evidence in court.

Pupil Information

Name	
Date of birth	
Address including Postcode	
School	
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	

Parent/carer Information

1. Parent/carer

Full name including title	
Date of birth	
Relationship	
Address including postcode	
Telephone number	
Email address	

2. Parent/carer

Full name including title	
Date of birth	
Relationship	

Address including postcode	
Telephone number	
Email address	

Siblings

Name	Date of Birth	School	Current Attendance

Attendance – Please provide attendance certificates.

Current attendance	
Previous year's attendance	

SEND / EHCP Status

	Y/N	Primary need	Brief description of support
SEN support			
EHCP			

Suspensions

Date of suspension	Period of suspension (days)	Reason for suspension

CSC Involvement

	Y/N	Social Worker or Lead Practitioner and contact information	Length of involvement
CAF/TAF			
Early Help			
SWISS			
TAS			
CIN			
CP			
Looked After			

Other Agencies Involved

Please provide details of any other services involved with the child including statutory, voluntary and other LA services

Agency	Named worker and contact information

Evidence of School Actions

Please explain in detail the attempts made by school to engage the parent(s)

Date	Contact type	Outcome

Please give details of the support school have considered and offered, including the dates and the outcome

Date	Support	Outcome

Additional concerns and relevant background

Please provide details of any additional concerns or relevant background information, not previously mentioned, that may impact the child's attendance (such as issues at home, health needs, drug or alcohol misuse, mental health issues, bereavement etc.)

Has the parent been informed that a referral has been made to the LA?

Does the parent require an interpreter (verbal contact), or translation (written contact), and if so which language?

Please ensure you have completed all sections of the form in as much detail as possible and attached supplementary documents:-

- Registration certificate, current and previous year
- All letters to parent re attendance
- Letter advising parent of referral to LIT

Referrer Details

I confirm that:

- All school interventions to improve attendance (as described in the School Attendance Policy and LA Attendance Strategy) have been implemented.
- The case has been reviewed and there are no further school strategies available.
- Prosecution of parent(s) in Magistrates Court is considered by school to be an appropriate course of action.

Name of referrer	
Designation	
Contact email and telephone number	
Date	

Please submit referral forms to LITAttendanceReferrals@Gateshead.Gov.UK

** *Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:-*

- *all natural parents, whether they are married or not*

- *any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person*
- *any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).*

Appendix 9

Request for Penalty Notice Unauthorised Leave of Absence

Request for Penalty Notice

Unauthorised Leave of Absence

Legal Intervention Team Use Only		
NFA	**WL**	**PN**

Pupil Details					
Name		DOB		Gender	
Address		Post Code		Contact Num	
School		Year Group			
Ethnicity		Language used at home			

Parent(s) Names				
Title	First name	Surname	Relationship	Address and contact number if different

Siblings name/s	DoB/Age/Year Group	School/s

Dates of Leave of Absence From: Until:

Supporting documents attached	Yes
Attendance certificate	
Attendance certificate for siblings	
Copy of leave of absence request	

Copy of written response to leave of absence request	
Copies of notes/minutes of subsequent meetings/conversations regarding the request	
Copy of School Attendance Policy (to be submitted annually)	
Copy of letter informing the matter being referred to LA requesting PN	

Referrer Details			
Name of Referrer		Date	
Contact Details			

Please note:

- *All requests for a PN are made within 4 weeks of the child's return to school at the latest.*
- *If the referral form is incomplete a Penalty Notice cannot be issued.*
- *If the case of leave of absence taken in the last 4 weeks of the academic year (including the final week of term referrals must be submitted before the Friday of the second week of the school summer holiday.*