

Birkdale High School



**Birkdale
High School**

Aspire - Thrive - Succeed

Pupil Attendance Policy February 2019 - 2021

This Attendance & Punctuality Policy is part of a broader suite of Safeguarding Policies, which includes our Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.

This Policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from Sefton Local Authority.



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Birkdale High School **Pupil Attendance Policy**

Date of Policy: February 2019
Member of staff responsible: Headteacher
Review date: February 2021

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MISSION STATEMENT

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head Teacher and Governors at our school are committed to working closely with parents, other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

Birkdale High School is committed to providing all pupils with a full-time education experience that maximises each pupil's opportunities and allows each to realise their true potential. We believe that if a pupil is to benefit from education, regular, punctual attendance is crucial. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career; our school actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our pupils.

We give high priority to communicating with parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affects a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive, in partnership with parents and pupils, to resolve those problems as quickly as possible.

STATUTORY DUTIES, ROLES & REQUIREMENTS:

The Government expects schools to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%);
- Ensure every pupil has access to a suitable education, to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The table below shows the impact of absence:

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent per year	which is approximately this many weeks absent per year	which means this number of lessons missed per year
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Statutory duty of schools:

DFE guidance states "all schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance, which should be set out in an **Attendance Policy**. These systems should be reviewed regularly and modified where necessary to reflect the circumstances of the school." The policy must be communicated to all parties and implemented consistently.

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. Schools must record pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

School registers are legal documents. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Statutory duty of parents:

Parent must ensure that their children are educated, either at school or 'otherwise'. The 1996 Education Act (section 444) states that parents, (including non-related adult carers in the child's household), have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by '**regular**' attendance at school or '**otherwise**'. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines a parent/parents as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for him/her; or who has care of him/her.
- Absent parent(s)
- Parental partners (whether or not they're married or the natural parent of the child) as they have 'care' of the child
- A grandparent or older sibling (if the pupil lives with them as their main carer/care provider)

Education is compulsory. It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the pupil, that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

In terms of '**otherwise**', children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools; i.e. further education colleges (from the age of 14), special units, hospital, alternative educational settings/programs or work experience.

The law allows parents to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and 'suitable' to the child's education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people. Although, for most students the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

It is expected that Parents will:

- Familiarise themselves with the Whole School Attendance Policy
- Strive to ensure that children attend school regularly and exceed **the government's minimum attendance target 95%**
- Ensure children are punctual to school at all times
- Contact school on first day of absence
- Maintain contact with school on a daily basis should absence continue. This is for Safeguarding reasons
- Explain the reason for a child's absence (unwell or not well is not considered to be an explanation)
- Provide a note/medical documentation if their child needs to leave school during the day for any reason
- Provide a note/medical documentation if their child has been absent (you must do this even if you have telephoned) which they should then hand to their Form Tutor or Head of Year
- Contact school early where problems with attendance are emerging
- Support the school in intervention and action plans, including attending meetings when requested to
- Participate in Parenting Contracts

Pupils must:

- Attend regularly and punctually
- Meet or exceed the Government's minimum individual attendance requirement of 95%
- Provide a note of explanation (to Attendance Office) from a parent/carers on the day of return, following a period of absence
- Participate fully when action plans are put into place
- Report to Reception if leaving or arriving at any time during the school day

Birkdale High School (staff) will:

- Work hard to ensure that all pupils feel supported and valued
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the pupil registration
- Ensure staff receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning to school following a period of absence
- Promote a culture which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school; including learners, parents/carers, teachers and governors
- Promote and further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, he will be missed
- Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance
- Operate a robust absence management system
- Monitor, analyse and set targets to improve individual and whole school attendance levels, including statutory targets
- Work in partnership with other schools, agencies and the Local Education Authority, within the guidelines issued by the Department for Education
- Request the use of Fixed Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders and Prosecution under section 444(1) and 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996, to enforce attendance at school, where appropriate.
- Ensure attendance will be an important feature of the School Improvement Plan
- Ensure regular evaluation of our Attendance Policy and procedures

The role of the governors:

The Governing Body of Birkdale High School places a high priority on achieving standards. Excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential. In order for children to achieve their potential, pupils must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school. Regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits, which will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents and pupils, to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 95.5% attendance. ***They undertake this role by:***

- Nominating a named Governor for Attendance.
- Agreeing targets for attendance at school in line with DFE guidelines
- Receiving termly reports on attendance and review the policy biannually
- Monitoring whole school attendance termly and taking appropriate action, should it affect standards
- Supporting the school with intervention and action plans
- Participating in Attendance Panels where appropriate
- Participating in Parenting Contracts where appropriate

The School Day:

Birkdale High School uses electronic systems to monitor the attendance and punctuality of every pupil. We analyse data, patterns and trends. We operate a 'traffic light system' to help with rewards, setting targets for improvement when needed. The aim of this process is to support learners and their parents/carers in reviewing attendance, and to ensure we remain compliant with Statutory Guidance.

In accordance with the 2006 Education Regulations, the school is **legally** required to register students twice daily. It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions. Registers close half an hour after the start of each session.

Birkdale High School staff take the register electronically during every lesson. ***Only the official register (session attendance) will count towards pupils' overall percentage attendance.**

08.50 – 09.10	Form time and official a.m. register* (pupils need to be in form for 08.50. We recommend pupils arrive at school no later than 08.40, to ensure they arrive at form on time)
09.10 – 10.10	Lesson 1
10.10 – 11.10	Lesson 2
11.10 – 11.25	Break
11.25 – 12.25	Lesson 3
12.25 – 13.10	Lunch
13.10 – 14.10	Lesson 4 and official p.m. register*
14.10 – 15.10	Lesson 5

Registration:

Morning registration will take place at 08.50, during form time. Any pupil arriving to form after 08.50 is defined as late. Afternoon registration will take place at the beginning of lesson 4. **Any pupil arriving after the register has closed will be coded U** (see appendix 2).

Children who have to leave (or who arrive), for any reason, throughout the school day should be signed out (or in) at the main office by their parent or an appropriate adult (*safeguarding/fire safety*).

Punctuality:

The law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if late arrival is not resolved. **Poor punctuality can lead to a child;**

- Feeling embarrassed in front of their friends.
- Missing the beginning of vital lessons.
- Missing important instructions for the rest of the school day.
- Learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equal days' worth of teaching lost in a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

Teachers cannot re-open the form register once completed. Pupils who arrive late must go to the office entrance and must sign in, or be signed in by their parent/carer or an appropriate adult. A reason (for their lateness) must also be entered on the signing in sheet. ***Pupils who are not marked present in form, and who do not then sign in at the office, are recorded as absent. Their parents will be sent an absence message, via Group Call.***

The School Attendance Officer will input data from the late list. She will update the pupils register and record the reason for lateness. Pupils who frequently arrive late will be monitored. Sanctions will be used (such as detentions), and parents may be contacted.

Pupils who arrive late due to a medical appointment are reminded to provide an appointment card/letter, to have their absence recorded correctly. Depending on their time of arrival (or departure), they may be recorded as either present, or M (see appendix 2).

Absence from school:

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and students. Under the 1996 Education Act, parents commit an **offence** if their child does not attend school regularly.

Parents/carers have a responsibility to contact the school on the first day of absence, to explain the reason for the absence (unwell or not well is not considered to be an explanation). Parents/carers have a further responsibility to maintain daily contact and positive communication with the school, should the absence continue.

All absences should be reported to school before 9am, on each day of absence. Parents/carers are encouraged to ensure that their child brings in a letter confirming the reasons for the absence when the child returns to school and/or medical documentation, if requested.

If a child is absent, and the parent/carer does not contact school to explain their absence, the school will try to contact the parent/carer via its first day response system 'Group Call'. This is in line with national safeguarding procedures. **It is essential that the school has up to date contact telephone numbers and address information at all times.** The school requires a minimum of **two** emergency contact numbers. **Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent/carer, the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.**

If a child will be or is likely to be absent for a number of days (eg hospital admission), parents/carers must notify the school (in advance, where possible), so that suitable arrangements can be considered. The absence may be authorised for a longer period of time, but regular updates will be required. Depending on the individual circumstances, and if appropriate, school work may be provided.

Sometimes students seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may say that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. Parents/carers notice that they are worried from things that they say (they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied). If this is the case, the school should be contacted as soon as possible and parents/carers should ask to speak to the Head of Year.

If a pupil has low attendance and/or has a lot of time off due to illness, permission may be requested from parents/carers for our school nurse to contact them. Additionally, parents/carers may be requested to provide medical documentation before the school is able to continue authorising absence. If medical documentation is requested, any absence will remain **unauthorised** until it is received.

The school has the right to request medical evidence, which may include: a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, slip with date, pupil's name and surgery stamp, signed by GP Receptionist, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. If medical documentation is requested and none has been provided, our formal monitoring process will begin (refer to page appendix 1 and to Local Authority Involvement).

A medical absence will only be **authorised** if the circumstances are unavoidable, and medical evidence is provided. **The Head Teacher may decide not to authorise medical absence without this evidence.**

Parents/carers are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents/carers should inform the school (ideally, in advance) so that a decision can be made whether to authorise the absence or not, and they should provide a copy of the appointment card/letter.

Please note, medical appointments will be authorised for half a day, (1 session), unless there are special, pre-arranged circumstances. Proof of attending or an appointment card/letter must be provided.

What constitutes unauthorised absence? (Appendix 2):

- Truancy, whole day, part day or lessons
- Unexplained absence (no reason/update provided by parent/carer)
- **No medical documentation provided**
- Arriving late, after the register has closed
- **Medical appointment morning or afternoon, and the pupil fails to attend school before, and/or afterwards**
- Going shopping (replacement shoes etc)
- The pupil's birthday or the birthday of a family member
- Attending a hospital appointment for another family member
- The pupil/family returned late the previous evening from a family holiday/weekend away
- Looking after younger siblings

Persistence absence:

A learner is classed as a persistent absentee when their attendance is 90% or less at any point during the academic year. Any absence, whether authorised or unauthorised, is included. The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is below 90%.

According to the DFE guidance 'If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority'. In addition 'Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order, (section 443 of the Education Act 1996), or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school, (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Birkdale High School pupils who are identified as a persistent absentee, (and their families) will be identified and supported via the school's systems for addressing persistent absence (please see Appendix 1).

The school works in partnership with the Local Authority, to raise attendance across the school. If, despite the intervention measures put in place, attendance has not improved, a referral may be made to the Local Authority, which may result in legal action being considered. *Please see page ** Use of the Fixed Penalty Notice and Prosecution*

Leave of absence in term time:

The DFE 'Advice on School Attendance' explains that parents* can **no longer** expect schools to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. **The Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'**. The Headteacher will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school, if the leave is granted. **From this perspective leave of absence in term time is not a parental right and will only be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion.**

Parents/carers may choose to complete a 'parental request for absence during term time' (appendix 3, also available from the school office) or to write to the Headteacher. **It is important for parents to note that the Headteacher will not consider ANY leave of absence, unless the circumstances are exceptional.**

The DFE guidelines require the school to notify the Local Authority if a parent/s takes leave of absence **without** the Headteacher's permission. In such cases, the **G code** will be used on the register to show this absence is **unauthorised** (*Please see appendix 2*).

The school will apply to the **Local Authority** for a **Penalty Charge Notice (Fine)**, to be issued by the Local Authority (*see Use of the Penalty Charge Notice*). Such applications are dealt with under the **Sefton Council Code of Conduct**.

The school reserves the right to either contact the parents directly or to make an immediate referral to social care or the police, if the school feels that a pupil is potentially at risk while being taken out of school during term time.

If a pupil fails to return to school following a school holiday, or from an extended family holiday during term time, reasonable enquiries will be made to locate them. **This applies to leaves of absence that are both authorised and unauthorised by the school.** As a result, the school may invoke procedures for dealing with Children Missing Education.

Unfortunately, higher (illness) absence rates exist in the weeks immediately preceding and following school holidays. Whilst it is appreciated that some of this absence is genuine, we are also aware that in some instances opportunities have been taken for extended holidays.

If a pupil is/has been absent from school for 3 consecutive days immediately before or after a school holiday, a home visit may be conducted, regardless of whether the school has been notified of the absence or not. In all cases, medical documentation will be required, or the absence(s) will not be authorised.

Rewards:

Pupils with 100% attendance at the end of each half term are recognised and rewarded. E-Certificates are sent home, celebrating their attendance. Rewards are given in assemblies. Similarly, if students manage a whole term with 100% attendance this is also recognised and rewarded. Students who maintain 100% attendance throughout an academic year are rewarded with an attendance badge at the start of the next academic year.

Sanctions:

Pupils with poor attendance and/or punctuality (and their families), will be offered support via the schools robust systems for managing absence (*appendix 1*). Key staff discuss attendance with individual students and set them targets to achieve. They are closely monitored.

Local Authority Involvement:

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly (government minimum target is 95%, and Birkdale High School is in line with this, and absences are classed as unauthorised. All unauthorised absence is included, whether consecutive or cumulative.

Where parents/carers are clearly failing to fulfil their legal obligation to ensure their child's attendance (Education Act 1996 section 444(1) and 444(1a), Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003), we will refer to the Local Authority. A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions (5 days) lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in the current term **and/or** eighteen (18) sessions (9 days) lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms will be required to trigger the process.

The school never takes such action lightly. We make every effort to work with parents/carers and the individual learner to improve attendance and/or punctuality. However, where intervention is deemed ineffective, we will actively pursue such action to ensure we meet statutory requirements.

The Local Authority may issue a Warning letter/Fixed Penalty Notice, or may decide to invite parents to the Local Authority (School) Attendance Panel.

Local Authority (School) Attendance Panel Meeting (LAAP meeting):

What is the purpose of the Local Authority (School) Attendance Panel Meeting? - The meeting is an opportunity for you and your child to meet with Representatives from the Local Authority, to discuss the reasons for absence and to work together to formulate a plan to support improvement.

If the parent fails to attend the meeting, without reasonable justification, this could result in a Penalty Charge Notice being issued (to parents), or court proceedings, under the 'Single Justice' process.

What will happen at the Local Authority (School) Attendance Panel Meeting?

- The reasons for absence will be discussed
- Different strategies to improve attendance will be considered
- A supportive action plan will be agreed
- An attendance target date for improvement will be set

What happens next?

- The student's attendance will be closely monitored until the target review date

Whilst the intention of the LAAP meeting is that attendance will improve, if the attendance deteriorates by the target review date, the Local Authority may recommend legal action is taken. This could include **prosecution in the Magistrates' Court, Education Supervision Orders or Parenting Orders (see below)**.

Use of the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN):

Under section 444 of the Education Act, a Fixed Penalty Notice (Warning of a possible PCN) and where applicable, a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) will be issued to each parent, for each child who has unauthorised absence, even if one of the parents does not live with the child.

The Local Authority will:

- Issue a formal written warning to the parent(s) of the possibility of a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) being issued
- In the same letter, set a period of 15 school days (monitoring period) within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence(s)
- Issue a Penalty Charge Notice through the post at the end of the 15 day period, if the required level of improvement has not been achieved

Use of the Penalty Charge Notice (PCN):

The penalty (fine) is £60. Each parent has 21 days to make payment. If payment is not made by day 21, the penalty (fine) will rise to £120, and must be paid by day 28. *So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480.* Payments must be made directly to the Local Authority.

There is no right of appeal by parents against the Penalty Charge Notice. Failure to pay will result in further legal action being taken by the courts.

Prosecution:

Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence: Prosecution will also be pursued when a PCN has failed to ensure improvement in attendance. Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence: Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Education Supervision Order (ESO):

Under the 1989 Children Act the Local Authority has the power to issue an Education Supervision Order (ESO) and place a child under their supervision, on the grounds that the child is not being 'properly educated' and is in danger of 'significant harm'. The Local Authority can issue an order if the child is persistently absent from school. The Local Authority appointed 'Supervisor' can give 'directions' to the parents on how the child should be educated and work with the parent to ensure the child attends school regularly.

Parenting Order:

Under the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, if a student continues to have attendance issues after a parent has been convicted, the courts can also issue a **Parenting Order**. This legally requires the parents to participate in a programme of parenting support and counselling. If the unauthorised absence continues, a new case will be brought against the parent(s)/carer(s); previous parental failure to engage with the school and the Local Authority can be cited.

Children Missing (in) Education (CME):

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future (Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2018) and Children Missing in Education Nov 2013, updated Sept 2016).

Definition:-

- The child or young person fails to attend school without offering a reasonable explanation.
- The school has been unable to locate the pupil at the last known address or any of the contact numbers
- The Parent(s) have failed to offer an explanation in relation to the child or young person's absence or a change of school or any other education provision

Between days 1-5* – We will make all investigations to determine the whereabouts or reasons for absence.

Between days 6-19* – We will refer to our Attendance Welfare Officer, who, depending on the outcome of necessary enquiries/home visit, may contact the Attendance and Welfare Service, via a 'missing pupils' checklist'. A copy of which will be kept on file, in school.

Notifying the Local Authority:*

The attendance team is responsible for identifying learners who are missing education, and for liaising with the Local Authority. Staff will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered 'missing'. After making reasonable enquiries and/or if a pupil has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12, we will notify the Local Authority. ****However, there may be occasions where this process happens over a shorter time frame (based on additional information that***

we may know/receive about an individual student or family, or if absence is either side of a school holiday).

Where a child leaves our school without a destination or another school is not identified our school follow Sefton Council Children Missing Education Procedures, which can be found at [https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-education-\(cme\).aspx](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-education-(cme).aspx).

Movement of children in the UK between local authorities and schools is tracked nationally, by each Local Authority. Movement of children whose families move/take them abroad is tracked by the UK Border Agency.

The school will liaise with the Children Missing Education Co-ordinator, who can be contacted on 0151 935 3181 or CME@sefton.gov.uk carole.blundell@sefton.gov.uk

Removal from Roll:

Schools are legally required to advise the Local Authority (Sefton) about the details of all children admitted to and removed from the roll of their school. No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the school and the Attendance and Welfare Service. Birkdale High School will be guided by the Local Authority in accordance with the criteria set out in Regulation 9 of the Education (Learner Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 1997 and 2001).

Appendix 2 - ABSENCE CODES

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used for **authorised absence** on the register.

Code I: ILLNESS - Schools can request medical evidence from parents / carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments - Parents/Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.

Code C: Other circumstances - This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, i.e. – family funeral.

Code D: Dual Registered - This code will be used if a student is registered at two schools.

Code J: Interview - This code will be used when it has been agreed that the student can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam.

Code P: Approved sporting activity - This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, i.e. – training sessions, trials and sporting events.

Code R: Religious Observation - This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only authorise one day absence for religious events.

Code V: Educational visits and trips

Code W: Work Experience

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are to be used for **unauthorised absences** on the register:

Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence.

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is **not satisfied** with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived late to school after 9.15am

If a student arrives after 9.15am without any written or verbal confirmation from parents/carers to explain their lateness, the school will mark the pupil with the U code. This means that, although the student is in school, she is marked absent for the entire morning. This will be marked as an authorised absence and could result in prosecution for parents/carers if the pupil is persistently late.



PARENTAL REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Parents/Carers please note:

- The declaration must be read and signed by all persons requesting authorised leave
- Permission must be sought at least **four weeks in advance** of the intended leave date
- **Please complete Section 1 overleaf** and return the completed request to the school office, for the consideration of the Headteacher
- Only the Headteacher can authorise leave during term time
- Leave during term time will be considered in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY**
- Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively
- A letter will be issued to you confirming our decision
- If your request is declined, a copy of the letter confirming the decision will be sent to the Managers of the Attendance and Welfare Service at Sefton Council and a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) may be issued
- Copies of all requests and letters will be kept on file for future reference

The overall decision lies with the Headteacher.

Please provide documentation of the ‘exceptional circumstance’ to support your request.

Declaration:

I am aware that legislation allows only the Headteacher to authorise leave during term time and **only in exceptional circumstances**. I understand that if my application is declined and I take my son out of school at this time, the absences will be coded as unauthorised, which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or a court summons being issued against me.

Documentation in support of my/our request for authorised leave for our son(s) during term time in exceptional circumstances is attached.

Signature: (parent/carer) Date:

Signature: (parent/carer) Date:

Please note where applicable both parents must sign the form. Thank you

Section 1 - Parent/Carer: Please complete and return to the school office at least 4 weeks in advance of requested absence.

I wish my son: (Name)..... (Form).....

To be given authorised leave from:/...../..... to:/...../..... **(Inclusive)**

He will be back in school on/...../.....

Reason: (Please tick as appropriate and provide a full explanation in the space provided below)

- Exceptional Circumstances
- Club/Sporting Activity (A letter from the club/organisation must be provided)

FAMILY HOLIDAYS WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED

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Section 2 – To be completed by School Attendance Office:

Current % attendance: % Unauthorised absence: Y/N If Y, no. of sessions?

Section 3 – To be completed by Examinations Officer:

Is the above named scheduled to take any examinations during the above period? Y/N

If Y above, is it possible to re-sit? Y/N Is there a charge? Y/N If Y, how much? £

Section 4 – To be completed by School Attendance Office

Letter issued to parent(s)/carer(s) on: /..... /.....

Attached to pupil's file by: (Please sign)