

Attendance Policy

May 2020

Date for review May 2021

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Taunton Academy that all students attend lessons. High standards of attendance are central to the school's objective in aiming for excellence in all aspects of school life. Strong and effective management, working in partnership with parents is essential in maintaining good levels of attendance.

- To ensure and encourage a level of attendance of at least 95% for all students in order that they maximise their educational achievement
- To reduce the number of persistent non attendees (students with less than 90% attendance)
- To set the culture that unjustified absence will not be tolerated
- To support parents in ensuring that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and ready to learn
- To maintain accurate attendance registers as required by law

Key Points:

- Effective monitoring of attendance is vital. (Appendix 2 and 3)
- Registers must be accurate and kept in accordance with this policy.
- The appendices to this policy outline the names (Appendix 1) of everyone involved in ensuring good attendance. These include
 - Parents
 - Students
 - Form Tutors
 - Heads of Year
 - Attendance Team
 - Deputy Heads / Assistant Heads
 - Home School Liaison Officer
 - Education Safeguarding Service

Attendance and Punctuality

Across the Trust good, excellent and outstanding attendance and punctuality are acknowledged and rewarded.

- Governors, Directors and staff within the Trust recognise the high correlation between achievement and attendance and strive to maintain high levels of attendance for all students. See
- Parents have the responsibility to ensure attendance at school. Unless there is a major health concern attendance should rarely drop below 96%.
- We ask for the cooperation of all parents in helping the school to monitor attendance closely.

Reporting an Absence

First day contact is now an integral part of the school Attendance policy. Students and parents should be aware that a student's absence will be noted acted upon swiftly, especially those who are Pupil Premium or in care. **If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we will request a Welfare Check from the police.**

- All absences must be reported by 9.00am each day (and on every subsequent day) by either calling the absence line or emailing the school.
- Any student absent for 3 or more days, even if the school have been advised, may receive a visit from the Home School Liaison Officer.
- If you know your child is going to be absent, please let us know in advance. If your child has been absent due to a medical appointment, please attach or email in a copy of the appointment card/hospital letter. We will not authorise the absence if we do not have this, and we will require confirmation by email or phone if the appointment is on the same day prior to letting your child leave school site.
- Any planned medical absence should be notified by telephone or letter. As far as possible appointments should be made out of school hours.
- Once the school has obtained confirmation the school will authorise the absence if the reason given is considered appropriate e.g. illness, unavoidable medical appointment etc. If the reason given is not appropriate the absence will be considered unauthorised and the parent contacted. The school will follow up any absence which has not been notified.
- Medical Evidence **may** be required if your child has a prolonged absence of more than three days. Medical Evidence **must** be produced if we have previously written to you stating that no further absence due to illness will be authorised without it.

Examples of medical Evidence (this is the responsibility of the parent to provide to the school directly):

- medical appointment card/printed slip
- medical appointment letter
- copy of prescription showing name and date
- Prescribed medication with pharmacist label showing name and date
- Hospital Discharge letter

Please note: We never ask for 'doctor's notes' so please do not approach your GP asking for this.

Punctuality

Arriving late to school and into lesson is very disruptive for the teacher and other class members. It also means that late student themselves miss important input from teachers.

If for whatever reason you know your child will be arriving late for school please call the absence line as early as possible so we can note their absence correctly and also be aware that they will be in.

Lateness

There are negative results caused by students who constantly arrive late. These include:

- The loss of learning suffered by the student which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time in school.
- The disruption for other children and the teacher in the class
- Raised levels of unauthorised attendance which could result in a £60.00 fine
- **If there is no good reason for being later this will count as an unauthorised absence**

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness will be include:

- Informing parents/carers when a student is regularly late, a call will be made to parents by the Home School Liaison Officer to discuss the matter.
- Staff on gates until 9.00am to monitor
- Lunchtime detentions, after school detentions and use of penalty notices.

Holiday/Term Time Leave

Holidays/leave of absence in term time will not usually be authorised because they will affect a student's education. There is **no automatic right** to take children away from school for a holiday. A leave of absence will only be given for exceptional circumstances. The school may request a Penalty Notice for over 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence where the student's attendance falls below 95%.

Exceptional circumstances **may** include:

- Emergency service / forces personnel with proof of enforced holiday period
- Forces personnel returning from or embarking on active service.
- Holiday industry employees with proof of this being the **ONLY** time period allowed by employer
- A transcontinental leave request to see a terminally ill close relative. Please see the Somerset County Council website for more information.
- See SCC website for more details.

If a leave of absence in term time is requested the following procedure must be followed:

- In advance of the holiday and in good time for the request to be action, parents should complete a form from the school office and return it to the school reception. (see example in Appendix 4 and 5)
- If the request is due to work commitments preventing time off at other times then evidence from the workplace will be required in writing.
- 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. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

The Trust follows DoFE guidance and will take legal action against parents/carers who do not send their children to school regularly. We do try to work with parents to ensure there are no barriers to school attendance. If strategies for supporting regular attendance do not work, the Trust will take legal action. In the first instance, a Penalty Notice will be issued. If this does not result in improved attendance The Trust works closely with the Education Safeguarding Service to ensure full attendance and adherence to procedures. At The Taunton Academy, regular attendance is classed as attendance of 95% or more. Attendance below this level could result in the issue of a Warning Penalty Notice, Penalty Notice or referral to the Education Safeguarding Service at County Hall.

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.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold, currently 10 unauthorised sessions in 12 school week period, 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 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. 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.

A pupil's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

- A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.)
- Prosecution. Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months imprisonment.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

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

Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow Somerset Child Missing Education process and make CME referral as appropriate.

Exclusions

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 Headteacher.
- The school will notify the parent of the exclusion. If the pupil is a Looked After Child, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and 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, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation

Pupils on Part-time Timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any part-time timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to a full-time timetable.

APPENDIX 1

Post Holders at The Taunton Academy involved with Attendance

Headteacher	Mrs J Veal
Assistant Headteacher – Holistic Provision	Mr Fergal O'Rourke
Home School Liaison Officer/Attendance Lead	Lindsey Clark
Attendance Support Officer	Cheryl Shannon
School Medical Officer	Nicola Mills
Director of Inclusion SENCo	Karen Mellish
Hub/Return to Learning Manager	Rebecca Bailey
Data Manager	Claire Haskell
Head of Year 7	Alison Vercoe
Head of Year 8	Tamara Dixon
Head of Year 9	Emma Ballard
Head of Year 10/11	Ben Saddington

Home School Liaison Officer – Lindsey Clark 01823 348266

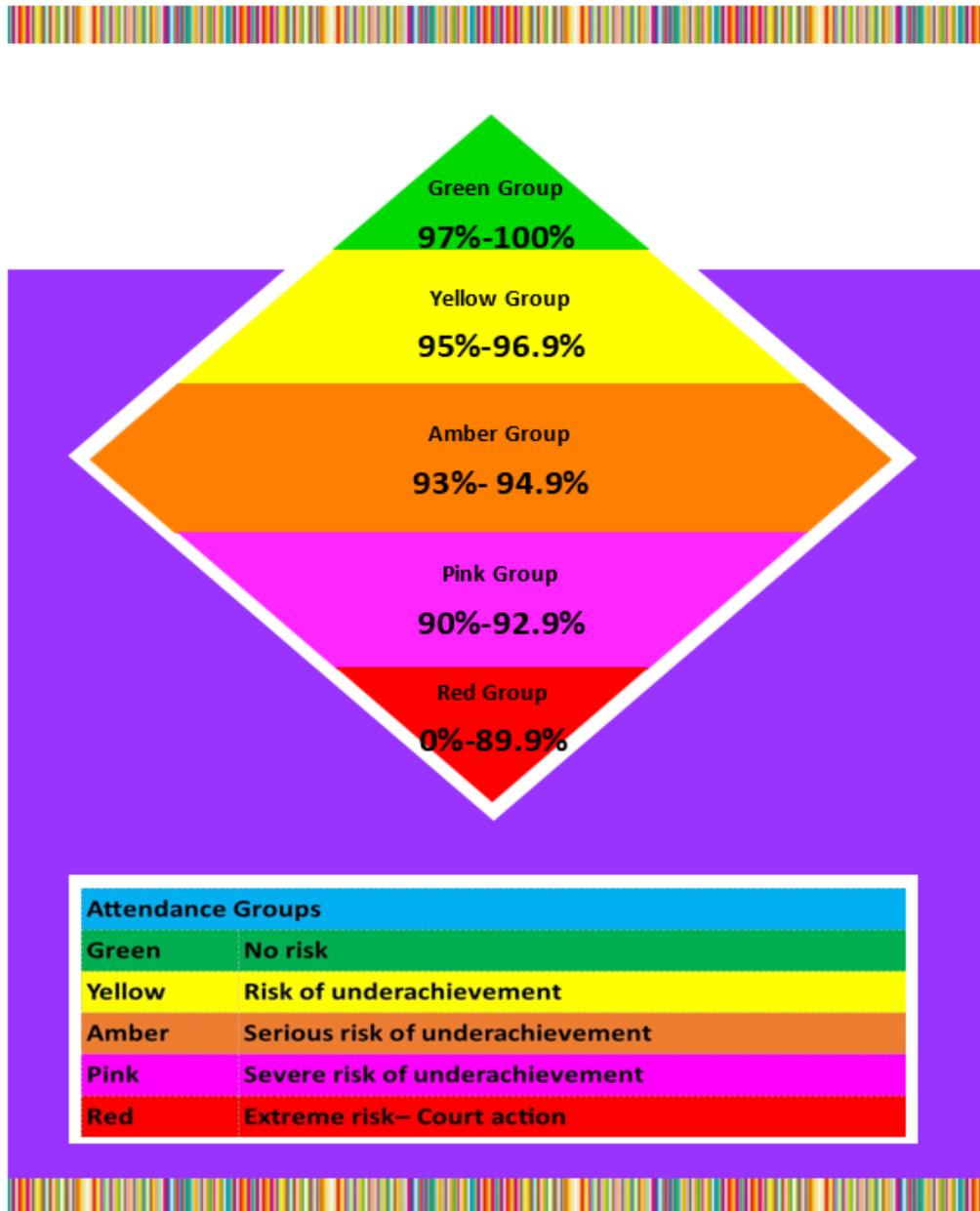
Main areas of responsibility;

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Assistant Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues/lates.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team) and advises the Headteacher as requested.
- Carries out home visits and parent meetings to support parents and students in improving attendance.

For any queries regarding this Attendance Policy or concerns about the attendance of your child please contact Lindsey Clark on the direct number above.

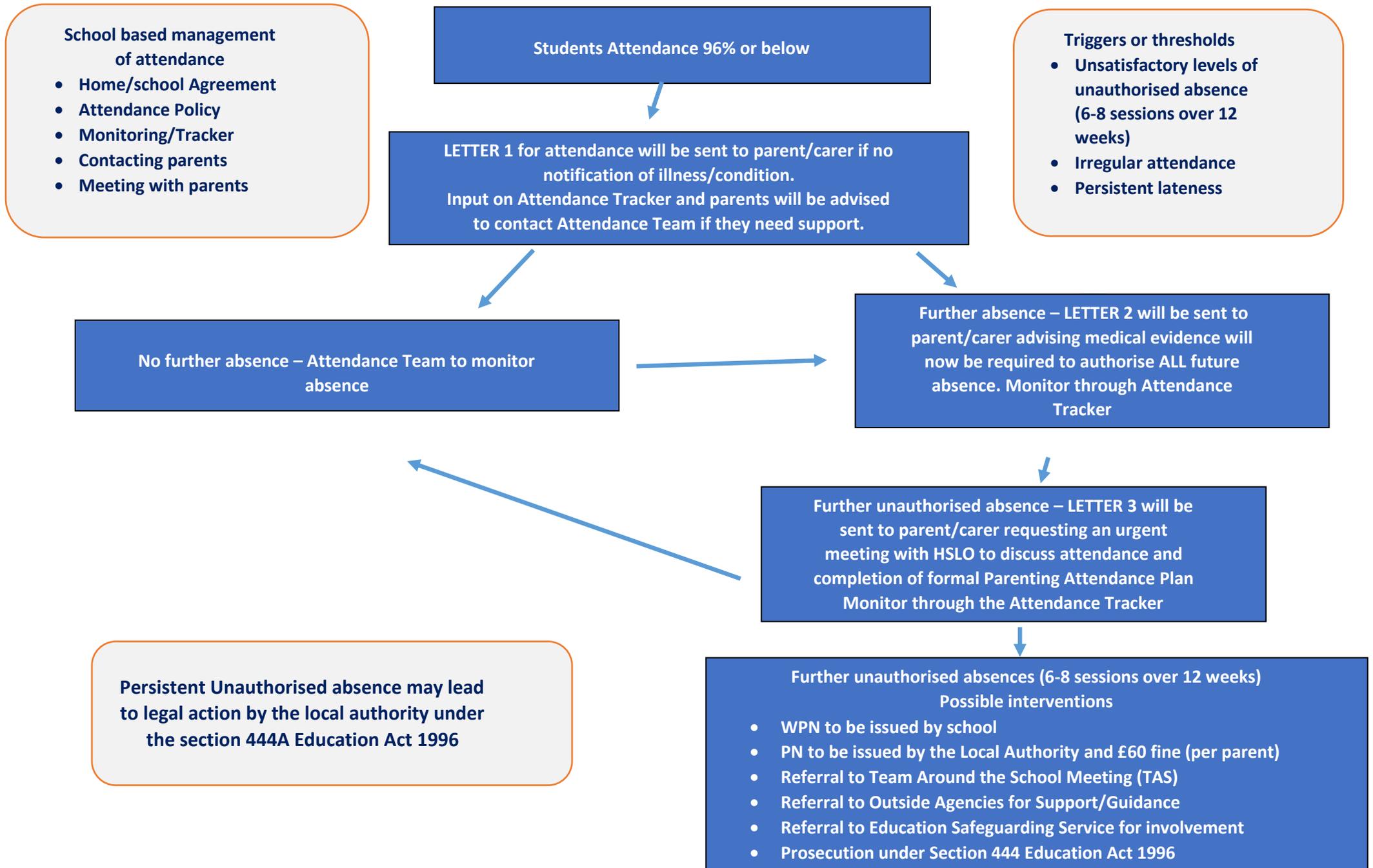
APPENDIX 2

Attendance Information Sheet



We would like to remind you about the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Missing lessons makes it hard to catch up and students have to work harder when they come back. Students attend school for 190 days per year; there are 175 non-school days a year for holiday, cultural experiences and family time. Any child with attendance of 90% or below is classed as PA (persistently absent) by the Government. Every school is required to take action to work with families to improve attendance and it is useful for you to know the interventions we use at the Taunton Academy to ensure this is achieved.

APPENDIX 3





APPENDIX 4

TERM TIME LEAVE

ADVICE TO PARENTS: Please read carefully the information below.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and come into force on 1 September 2013.

The amendments make it clear that the Headteacher can only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. All reference to a holiday and/or extended leave, including the threshold of ten school days is removed. Any request for leave must be made in writing for the attention of the Headteacher in advance.

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education. However, from discussion with the DofE and concerned professional associations it is suggested that exceptional leave may include:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad
- Police, Fire Service staff being told when they can or cannot take leave
- If a close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to be together especially if the family member lived overseas
- Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period

Somerset County Council (SCC) supports schools:

- In expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school regularly. Any absence from school will impact on educational achievement, success in later life and longer term health and well being
- In ensuring the law is upheld. Parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school of their child. Schools must explain their stance on term time leave in their attendance policy so parents/carers are clear on expectations and potential consequences, such as any unauthorised absence including taking term time leave not agreed with the school, can result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child. Any Penalty Notice unpaid is taken to Magistrates Court as failure to secure the regular attendance of their child. If found guilty of such an offence, they might receive a criminal conviction and a potential fine of up to £1,000

SCC cannot override a school's decision not to authorise any term time leave. There is no right of appeal.

Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts the learning of the whole class. Teachers have to spend time helping children catch up when they return. Parents should arrange holidays for the 13 week school holiday periods. Schools are open 190 days which leaves 175 days of the year for a holiday. Please make your request prior to making any bookings and at least four weeks before the anticipated leave date.

NB. If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in a penalty notice being issued or legal action taken for poor attendance.



APPENDIX 5

To: The Taunton Academy

I wish to apply for term time leave for my child:

.....
(Name of child) (Tutor Group) (Year Group)

.....
(Name of child) (Tutor Group) (Year Group)

**To be authorised as being absent from school from/...../..... to/...../.....
(inclusive)**

No. of school days **for the purpose of a holiday at**
(please specify location)

This holiday is believed to arise from 'exceptional circumstances because:
(please provide full details below)

Signature Parent/Carer **Date**

Print Name

This form must be returned to the school office as early as possible before the holiday dates requested (minimum 4 weeks' notice)

OFFICE USE ONLY
AGREED / REFUSED Signed If refused reason to go in reply letter
(Head).....

Guidance Documents:

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

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

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

School Attendance (DfE September 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

School census 2017 to 2018 (DfE May 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las>

[School Exclusion \(DfE September 2017\)](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

Committee/person responsible for Attendance Policy	Fergal O'Rourke
Date Reviewed	May 2020
Next Review due	May 2021