

Meridian Trust Attendance Policy

(Managing the attendance and absence of students)

This document is informed by:

The Education Act 1996, 2002 & 2011,
 School Attendance (Guidance) May 2022,
 Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance,
 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006,
 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016,
 The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999,
 The Education and Inspections Act 2006,
 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, 2012 & 2013,
 Children Act 1989 & 2004,
 Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance September 2016,
 Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance,
 Regional Local Authority Penalty Notice Protocols & Early Help Pathways,
 Meridian Trust Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies.
 Supporting Pupils at school with Medical Conditions DfE Guidance
 Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs DfE Guidance
 Meridian Trust Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy v3
 Meridian Trust Supporting Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy Jan 2022

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Revisions

Version	Page/Para No.	Description of Change	Approved On
5	Front Page	Updated Trust name, Deleted Coronavirus Act, Updated School Guidance to May 2022	
5	Whole document	CMAT replaced with Meridian Trust	
5	4 g) iii)	Removed para re TTA absence as duplicated	
5	4 g) iv) now iii)	Word Exclusion replaced with Suspension	
5	5-8	Various updates to wording and phrasing to make information clearer	
5	Annex A	Update of Attendance Welfare Procedures	
6	Annex B	Updated Information	
5	Annex C	Update of TTA Request Form with new Trust Info & process adjustments	
5	Annex D	Removed as no longer relevant	

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1) **Introduction/rationale:**

- a) All Meridian Trust Academies recognise the importance of school attendance and punctuality in enabling students to achieve their maximum educational potential. This helps them to participate in the life of the academy they are enrolled at and their local community. This means students will have optimum life chances enabling them to achieve a high level of attainment and enter adulthood successfully - high attainment depends on good attendance.
- b) All staff (teaching & support) at Meridian Trust Academies have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all of our students are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- c) All absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. All absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parents/carers legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

2) **Meridian Trust Academies:**

- i) Are committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies in order to achieve the best outcomes for children via the early help pathways available in each county.
- ii) Provide a welcoming and caring environment where all members of the academy community feel secure and valued.
- iii) Have an effective system of communication with students and parents/carers to support good attendance and punctuality and to provide appropriate information and advice.
- iv) Will use an appropriate system of rewards and incentives to recognise the effort students make in achieving good attendance and punctuality.
- v) Follow Department of Education (DfE) Guidance and Best Practice in the use of Penalty Notices as a deterrent to absence during term time. Each Academy's Local Authority (LA) has the statutory duty to issue Penalty Notices and/or process legal action upon submission of appropriate evidence by said academy.
- vi) Expect students to aspire to achieve 100% attendance at school with a minimum of 96%, unless there are exceptional reasons for absence, which would then be authorised. The *Isle of Wight Council v Platt* case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend. Under this judgment a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

3) **Definition of a 'Parent/Carer':**

The term 'Parent/Carer' is used to address those with responsibilities for children. For the purposes of education and attendance matters and identifying those with legal responsibilities for student care and attendance, 'Parents' are determined as per Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 which defines a parent as:

- *the natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not;*
- *anyone who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child;*
- *any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.*

4) **The Law relating to attendance and safeguarding:**

- a) *Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable: -*
(a) to age, ability and aptitude and
(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have
Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'
- b) **Absence from school is a safeguarding concern.** A student may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. *Section 175 of the Education Act 2002* places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18 - **The child's welfare is always paramount.**
- c) Safeguarding the interests of each student is everyone's responsibility and within the context of Meridian Trust academies, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for students encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety, access to the curriculum and respectful

relationships/anti-bullying. Failure to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

- d) All Meridian Trust academies have access to trust level attendance welfare guidance and can discuss escalating their concerns to their LA with guided support from the Trust Attendance Welfare Leader.
- e) All Meridian Trust academies adhere to their respective **LA Code of Conduct** and **Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in the use of Penalty Notices** for unauthorised single periods of absence and persistent absence. Penalty Notices are an alternative to prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 enabling parents to discharge potential liability for the offence of non-attendance at school by paying a penalty within an allotted time frame. Failure to pay the penalty on time will result in the LA either prosecuting for the original offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, or withdrawing the notice (only if it is proven that it contains material errors or was issued incorrectly). For current payment levels and timescales please refer Annex B of this policy and your academy or LA website information.
- f) All Meridian Trust academies have a duty to work together with parents/carers and other agencies (see paragraph 5c) to prevent a prosecution being necessary, however if the level of attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, academies will be required to collate evidence of non-attendance and report the information to the LA. The LA will then fulfil their statutory duty of prosecution under **Section 444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act 1996**.
- g) Legal action may be used where:
 - i) Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more, overall, or within a minimum period of 8 school weeks (this equates to a level of 90% attendance, or below). This is usually more than one instance of absence but a single unauthorised absence event of at least 3 consecutive days (6 consecutive sessions) can be used; up to 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year but it may not be deemed appropriate to do a 2nd PN if the 1st one did not affect change; in these cases, any subsequent action would be via the Section 444(1) or (1a) route through the Magistrates' Courts.
 - ii) Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed (coded as U) contributes to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above and would be dealt with as detailed in g) i);
 - iii) Pupils identified in a public place whilst externally suspended from school (during the first five days of the suspension period) without reasonable justification, may also be subject to a Penalty Notice.

5) **Guidance relating to attendance:**

- a) The Government expects all schools to fulfil their responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. It is expected that schools will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance as a whole school culture, have a clear attendance policy, set high expectations for every student, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to students and parents, regularly and systematically analyse attendance data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts and to identify students who require support or strategies, ensure registers are accurate, build strong relationships with families to enable barriers to education to be removed. They are also expected to share information and work effectively with the LA and other local partners to address barriers to attendance and prevent students becoming persistently absent; taking action to explore and enforce where required.
- b) Each Meridian Trust academy has a member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for promoting good attendance.
- c) Meridian Trust Academies have **Attendance Welfare Procedures** which incorporate integrated working process with respective Local Authorities and other agencies using an early help pathway relevant to their LA; this process assists in the assessment of need, using an **Early Help Assessment** (EHA (formerly known as CAF)) in order for appropriate support to be given, or referrals to be made. Each academy will assist parents and students in the removal of any barriers preventing regular attendance by offering support in respect of safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and welfare within the early help pathway.
- d) All Meridian Trust academies will track and monitor student attendance to identify, action and highlight concerns that may require the above preventative interventions pathway. Initial concerns will be discussed with parents/carers by telephone, email and/or letter; this will be followed up with age appropriate discussions with students; and then meetings with parents/carers if concerns continue.
- e) Each Meridian Trust academy will support the re-integration of students sensitively after an absence and involve all appropriate staff, giving access to reasonable adjustments e.g. a reintegration timetable, counselling and/or mentoring services as appropriate.

- f) If a student is on a bespoke timetable due to other appropriate provision being provided, or a reduced reintegration or support plan being in place, their official registration session times may be different than stated in Paragraph 6 below.
- g) All reduced timetables will be agreed, be staged to support the student to increase steadily (but timely) and be working towards a specific end date. Academies will use either their **LA Reduced Timetable Forms** or the Meridian Trust **Reduced Timetable Agreement** to ensure a clear plan is agreed and in place. It will also detail responsibilities for safeguarding the child when they are not on the academy site and what education is being provided. A copy of which will be submitted to the academies respect LA where required.

6) Registration & Punctuality

- a) All academies will keep registers in accordance with government regulations. The legal registration will be taken twice during the academy day; morning session and afternoon session – please see your academy website attendance information for detailed registration times.
- b) Students may enter the academy sites after 8.00am. Morning registration takes place during the first half an hour of the school day (this may be during a tutor time, class reading time or a lesson session). There is a legal requirement for students to attend registration sessions, unless alternative individual arrangements are made locally.
- c) **Poor punctuality is not acceptable.** Any student arriving within 30 minutes of the register opening in the morning or 15 minutes after the register opens in the afternoon, will be deemed as 'late' and therefore will be coded as 'L' on the register; a sanction such as detention, will be used to 'repay' the missed time.
- d) Any student arriving after the register closes without a verified reason will be marked as **'unauthorised late' and coded as 'U'**. A 'U code' constitutes an unauthorised absence for the whole session due to missing the legal registration period; legal action may be taken for continued U code absences.
- e) Parents/carers are **required to notify their academy of their child's absence every morning** of absence, giving the reason. If no call is received, for the purposes of keeping the child safe, it must be assumed that the child is on their way to school and if they do not arrive, the absence will be followed up accordingly. During or after any period of absence it is helpful if Parent/carers confirm the reason for the absence in the form of a written note or email.
- f) When a child is absent, if contact is not achieved at any point between day 1 and 5 of absence, or if general absence level is a concern, a 'Safe and Well Home Visit' will be made to confirm the safety of the child.

7) Definitions of absence, types of absence and persistent absence:

- a) Every half-day = one session. One whole day = two sessions. Absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing and supported by evidence wherever possible at parents/carers cost.
- b) An **Authorised** absence may be for illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall within the school day), emergencies or other unavoidable cause. However, the academy reserves the right to decide whether an absence should be authorised, or not. Although reasons given for absence will be recorded, the absence may not be authorised if the reason is not deemed appropriate, reasonable, or if there are ongoing attendance concerns. This may be where absences for illness or other circumstances become too frequent, thus giving the academy reason to fulfil their duty to challenge, explore and subsequently support, as detailed in paragraph 5 c) of this policy.
- c) An **Unauthorised** absence is where the school does not consider it reasonable to be absent due to the reason given, or overall level of concern, and/or for which no "Term Time Absence Request" has been received. This includes but is not limited to: parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy before or during the school day, unexplained absences, late arrival at school after registration has closed, shopping, looking after other children, birthdays, day trips, cheap holidays, shopping trips, visiting or being visited by family and friends or absence that has no exceptional circumstances being evident. **Unauthorised absence** can lead to the academy **submitting evidence** to their LA for financial penalties/sanctions and/or legal proceedings to be considered using the **Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)**.
- d) **Persistent Absence (PA)** is where a student misses **10%** or more of their education within a specific period of time (e.g. whole academic year, term, or for a minimum 8-week period) for whatever reason (authorised or unauthorised). Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to the student's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this. Any case

that is **at risk of moving towards the PA level** is given priority and these students are tracked and monitored carefully through each academy's attendance welfare system (see paragraph 5d); this can also be combined with academic mentoring, as absence affects attainment.

- e) **Medical Evidence** can be helpful in demonstrating why legal action is not being considered however, it will be required to authorise absences **IF** attendance concerns have reached a **Parental Attendance Agreement (Parent Contract)** meeting level, or if a student's attendance is within the legal arena i.e. an official written warning has been given. The cost of providing evidence will be the responsibility of the parent/carer however, support to request the evidence in the interests of 'working together to safeguard children' can be given by the academy, if required. Where a student has a long-term medical condition, reference should be made to the *Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions* DfE Guidance and Meridian Trust's policy on Supporting Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School.
 - f) **Child Missing Education (CME)** is where a child's whereabouts becomes unknown (address no longer confirmed) and the school do not have reason to believe the child is not attending for unavoidable causes. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on LAs and Schools/Academies to follow procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries which will include telephone and email contact, home visit/safe and well check, letter to last known address along with checking with friends, relatives, neighbours, landlords (private or social housing providers) and other local stakeholders who are involved with the family (observing GDPR but being mindful that safeguarding duties allows sharing of information). Each enquiry should be recorded to show completion. **A CME is a serious safeguarding concern** and if there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral to Children's Social Care (or the Police if appropriate) should be considered.
 - g) Where CME is suspected, reasonable enquiries must be carried out within the first 10 days of a child being absent from education (although Trust guidance is between day 1-5), academies must attempt to locate the child using the above suggestions in the first instance. After 10 days of unauthorised absence where no contact has been established with parent/carer, a child **must** be reported to the Local Authority as a child missing education. Once a child has been reported as CME they will be held on roll for 20 days from the last day of attendance prior to deletion, as per '9b' of this policy. Where the child is located and their address is confirmed within academy's area, the child will remain on roll and attendance legal procedures will continue for non-attendance.
- 8) **Requests for absence during school term**
- a) Meridian Trust Academies actively discourage absence during term time. It is considered that each student should attend all sessions regularly and punctually in order to avoid disruption and maximise their educational achievement.
 - b) Parents/carers are required to complete a **Term Time Absence Request Form** in advance of planned absence taking place (we ask that this is at least three weeks before where possible) to enable the academy to consider and respond to the request. Parents must detail and evidence the **exceptional circumstance** of the request, ideally at the time of the request, or if subsequently requested.
 - c) In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & subsequent Amendments, Meridian Trust Academies are unable to authorise any period of absence unless it is for exceptional circumstances, and in advance, as per the following extract from the above mentioned regulations:
Leave of Absence
7. (1) Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the academy. (i.e. Head teacher/Principal)
(1A) Subject to paragraph (2) (which relates to employment abroad), leave of absence shall not be granted unless-
 - (a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor (Head teacher/Principal) by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and*
 - (b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.*
 - d) The Principal (or other designated/authorised senior leader) of each Meridian Trust Academy will determine whether the request for leave meets "exceptional circumstances" criteria. However, guidance suggests that Principals should not consider as exceptional circumstances the examples

listed in paragraph 7 c) of this policy. Parents/Carers may be required to attend a meeting to discuss the request in more detail with the Principal (or other designated/authorised person).

- e) Where the leave of absence request, or part thereof is **authorised**, parents/carers will be notified in writing detailing any restrictions set e.g. adhering to the dates requested. If restrictions are not adhered to, the leave will revert to unauthorised and dealt with as below.
- f) Where leave of absence is **unauthorised**, parents/carers will be notified in writing and it will be dealt with in line with the respective academy's LA's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act as per Paragraph 4 of this policy.
- g) Where an absence is **suspected** of being for the purposes of leave and a request was not made, it is the parents/carers responsibility to disprove the suspicion by providing evidence that the absence was for an alternative exceptional reason. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and dealt with as per Paragraph 4 of this policy.
- h) Where leave of absence is stated as **'for the purpose of religious observance'** each Meridian Trust Academy will follow the guidance from their respective local authority. As a general rule, **only one individual day**, exclusively set aside by a religious body will be accepted as a religious observance absence and there will be a maximum of three single days within a year that would be acceptable. Evidence from the religious body may be required.
- i) Children Who Have Not Returned from Overseas - Prior to following any off-roll procedures, the academy will fully investigate the reason for travelling overseas in the first instance, if they are not already aware of the reason, and consider potential barriers preventing return travel that may be a result of government guidance in the UK or other country.
 - i) Following the investigation, if the reason for the initial travel was deemed, by the Principal, to be for an exceptional circumstance and evidence has been provided; the Principal will determine a reasonable return date and advise the parent/carer of their decision. The academy will keep in touch with the parent/carer on a regular basis to ensure that their return date to school remains on schedule and there is a smooth re-integration back into full time education.
 - ii) If following the investigation, the reason for initial travel is not deemed, by the Principal, to be an exceptional circumstance then the academy will inform the parent/carer of the decision and the date which the child must return by also advising the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The academy will explain the risks and criteria concerning the potential of their child being taken off roll after 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence.
 - iii) If there is no communication from the parent/carer or there is no committed return date, and a pupil fails to return to school either after 10 days following a request period of leave return date, or after 20 days of unrequested leave of absence, a referral to the Local Authority as per the Children Missing from Education process.

9) Deletions from Register

- a) Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.
- b) This is possible if your child(ren) has not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and
 - (i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);
 - (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any unavoidable cause;
 - (iii) both the proprietor of the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

By following this policy, Meridian Trust academies/schools will be working in partnership with parents/carers, students and other agencies to promote maximum attendance as a priority in order to secure successful outcomes for all students.

Attendance Policy Supporting Documents in relation to individual academies

Annexes are subject to change without official ratification of the whole policy as they will need to be altered locally to link with each Local Authority as appropriate:

- Annex A** Attendance Welfare Procedures Summary
- Annex B** Additional Absence and Legal Information
- Annex C** Term Time Absence Request Form

Annex A

Attendance Welfare Procedures Summary

SUMMARY OF ATTENDANCE WELFARE PROCEDURES (STEPS 1-5)



The trust procedures are based on a *relational needs-led approach* focused on communication, discussion & support using early help pathways with a 'staged' process to identify concerns & take action to prevent escalation.

Attendance % is used as a guide, we will have a specific **TRIGGER** to justify an action e.g. Frequency or reasons for absence are concerning. We will do each **ACTION** ASAP. We will **MONITOR** & decide next action **weekly/fortnightly**.



ANNEX B – ADDITIONAL ABSENCE & LEGAL INFORMATION

Planned Absence

Term Time Absence Request forms are available from each academy website, reception area or house office. The Principal (or designated/authorised person) **cannot grant leave** of absence for a pupil unless the absence has been received in **advance** (we request a minimum of **three weeks** prior to travel where possible to allow for administering the request) and it is considered to be of **exceptional circumstances**. Additional evidence may be requested in order to consider authorising the absence request, at the cost to the parent/carer. A meeting may be arranged to discuss the request further.

Once the request has been considered, parents/carers will be notified of the **decision in writing** (prior to the absence being taken where correct notice has been given by parent/carer) which will be posted and emailed. The reason supporting the decision will also be detailed within the letter. If the absence is unauthorised the letter will contain a legal warning. If the requested absence is **unauthorised** as it is not deemed exceptional circumstances, it will be recorded as such on the students' attendance record (coded **G**).

If the requested period of absence is **authorised**, as it is deemed exceptional circumstances, it will be recorded as such on the students' attendance record (a code of **H** or **C** depending on circumstances). However, **failure** to travel on the given dates, i.e. additional absences before and/or after the dates given, will result in **unauthorised** (coded **G**) absences being recorded.

In the event of the above, parents/carers will be requested to provide evidence such as delayed travel arrangements or supporting medical documentation at their own costs. If this request is not met, the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice (as below).

Upon the pupil's return to the academy following a period of unauthorised absence (whether requested or not) the academy may request the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice(s). An exception to this will be if a student's attendance is already of concern and therefore the period of absence may be incorporated into a wider prosecution period, via the academy attendance welfare procedures, or there has been a Penalty Notice Warning issued and the attendance is being monitored for a 30-day period first.

Penalty Notice fines are set by the Government; the school does not receive the fine. They are currently £60 per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; this rises to £120 per child, per parent, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority must either prosecute the persons to which the Penalty Notice was issued for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

Please Note: Only the Local Authority can withdraw a penalty notice and they can only withdraw it if; it ought not to have been issued i.e. no offence was committed; it has been issued to the wrong person; or it contains material errors.

Following the receipt of all required documentation the Local Authority will issue the requested Penalty Notice(s). The Local Authority will liaise directly with the Academy at each stage of following a penalty notice being issued.

Unplanned Absence

Most absence will be addressed via the Meridian Trust Attendance Welfare Procedures which includes daily absence tracking and regular monitoring. Where absence is unauthorised and there are no defences this may lead to legal action via Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, or by way of a Penalty Notice Warning and potentially a subsequent fine.

Whichever legal route unauthorised absence is taken, parents/carers will always be fairly warned with a formal written Penalty Notice Legal Warning letter which notifies them there must be an immediate & significant improvement in attendance over the following 30 school days (15 days for the Summer Term of Year 11). Failure to improve may result in any of the legal actions mentioned above occurring.

Please ensure you discuss all absence from school with your academy, planned or unplanned, so that support or preventative measures can be put into place to avoid escalation to legal sanctions. **We want legal action to always be a last resort.** Thank you.

ANNEX C – Term Time Absence Request Form



TERM TIME ABSENCE REQUEST FORM FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

PRIOR TO APPLYING FOR TERM TIME ABSENCE PLEASE READ THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The full Meridian Trust Attendance Policy followed by each academy can be accessed via each academy website.

1. Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education through regular attendance at school or otherwise (e.g. elective home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996).
2. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school/academy they are registered at, the parent/carers will be guilty of an offence (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996).
3. School attendance is vital for educational progress and all Meridian Trust Academies/Schools strongly discourage term time absence.
4. There is no entitlement to have leave of absence during term time and Principal/Headteachers are unable to authorise absence unless it is **evidenced** that the request is an **exceptional circumstance** in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & subsequent amendments.
5. The expectation is that all students aspire to achieve 100% attendance at school, with a minimum of 96% unless there are exceptional authorised reasons for absence.
6. **A Parent/carers is defined** under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as: the natural parent of a child, whether they are married or not; anyone who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child (e.g. partner, step-parent, sibling over the age of 18 or grandparent).
7. Department of Education (DfE) Guidance states good attendance should be promoted, and absence should be challenged and addressed early to ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
8. **Penalty Notices** are used as a deterrent to absence during term time. Each Academy's Local Authority (LA) has the statutory duty to issue Penalty Notices and/or process legal action upon submission of appropriate evidence by said academy. A Penalty Notice is a fine of **up to £120 per parent, per child**, and failure to pay will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court where a prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 will be heard; if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
9. All requests will be considered on an individual basis and **must be received in advance** (we ask for at least 3 weeks in advance of the absence occurring where possible to allow for administering the request). Details of other school age siblings and where they attend school should be provided as we are required to liaise with sibling schools.
10. **If a request is refused the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.** All unauthorised absence will carry a warning that legal action may be taken; whether this action takes place will depend on the amount of sessions/days absence requested. Each LA has a minimum threshold where if the absence is for less than that minimum (normally 6 sessions (3 days)) a Penalty Notice would not be requested however, should there be subsequent unauthorised absence within the following 30 school days of the requested absence, all absence will form part of a wider absence period and action could be taken. If the absence is for more than the LA minimum, a Penalty Notice will normally be automatically requested upon your child's return to school.
11. If the period of absence requested is **authorised**, the requested dates must be adhered to. Failure to travel and return on the requested dates, causing additional absences to be recorded as unauthorised, may lead to a legal sanction being imposed if evidence cannot be provided, at your own cost, to verify the exceptional cause of the additional absences.
12. If absence is **not requested in advance** and it is suspected that absence from school is due to unauthorised reasons e.g. holiday or unexplained absence, you will be required to provide evidence to prove the absence was for legitimate authorised and exceptional reasons; failure to do so may result a Penalty Notice being issued.
13. Your child may also be registered as 'Child Missing Education' with the LA and their place at the academy may be at risk if they have unauthorised absence for 20 days or more and we cannot establish your child is definitely returning.



TERM TIME ABSENCE REQUEST FORM FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Term time absence request for: **Student Name**
 House & Form Year Group: 1st Line of Address & Post Code:
 1st Date of Absence: Last Date of Absence:

Please note: If the Principal's decision is that the absence is determined as **unauthorised** and it is for **6 sessions** (3 days) **or more** (depending on local LA protocol) a Penalty Notice will **normally be automatically** issued as soon as the child returns to school.

Purpose of Absence – Please ensure you detail below the specific reasons for the absence and **what is exceptional** about the circumstance. Please also attach evidence that verifies why the absence is exceptional, especially why the absence cannot be taken during a school holiday period. You may also attach an additional letter if you wish.

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Name of other children in the family	Age/Yr Grp	Education Provision/School	Please note you are required to complete a request for each child and to each school/academy if different. NB. Schools are required to liaise with each other and share information.

IMPORTANT WARNING – PLEASE READ PRIOR TO SIGNING

- You may be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal to discuss this request further.
- Once a decision has been made you will be notified in writing.
- If the absence is authorised, specified dates must be adhered to. Failure to travel and return on the requested dates, causing additional absences to be recorded as unauthorised, may lead to a legal sanction if evidence cannot be provided, at your own cost, to verify the cause for additional absences.
- If the absence is refused, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice Warning will be subsequently issued to both parents/carers.

By signing below, you are confirming **all** parents/carers (see point 6 overleaf) have read and understood the information and warnings within this form. **All parents/carers & adults living with the child must print & sign.**

Print Name..... Sign:.....DoB: Relationship to Student: Dated.....

Print Name..... Sign:.....DoB: Relationship to Student: Dated.....

Print Name..... Sign:.....DoB: Relationship to Student: Dated.....

ACADEMY USE: Current Attendance: ☐ % Last year's attendance (if relevant or request is Autumn Term) ☐ %

Number of School Days Requested: ☐ Request received in advance of travel (3 weeks' where possible) **Yes / No**

Are there Exceptional Circumstances? **Yes / No** Please detail rationale for decision:

DECISION: Date: Authorised (Letter TTA A) ☐ Unauthorised (Letter TTA U) ☐

Signed by Principal or Designated Person: Date:

Leave Taken? **Yes / No** Letter to Parent(s)/Carer(s) issued by Post on: Also by Email? **Yes / No**

Reason for Absence noted on Student Attendance Record ☐

Return Date Diarised for Review (to consider if action will be PN Request, Meeting or Continued Monitoring) ☐