

# Woodrush High School

An Academy for Pupils Aged 11-18



## Attendance Policy

Reviewed by: D Monk

Next Review: September 2025

## **1. Aims**

- 1.1. To support every child in our school in aiming for 100% attendance throughout the academic year. We aim to do this through providing a stimulating and caring environment where students will develop into aspirational young people.
- 1.2. To ensure excellent attendance is an expectation we have of every student to support their academic success, their happiness and their general well-being in school.
- 1.3. To work closely with parents and relevant support services to address factors that may have a detrimental impact on any student's attendance.
- 1.4. To encourage students to attend school regularly and maintain excellent or good attendance.

## **2. Statutory Framework**

- 2.1. Attendance at school is compulsory. All children must attend school up to the last Friday in June in the academic year in which a student reaches the age of sixteen is a legal requirement. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure regular attendance of their child.
- 2.2. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered will the absence be authorised.
- 2.3. As a school we will work together with parents, students and the Local Authority to improve attendance at school by reducing the number of absences and lates.
- 2.4. References: Education Act 1996 (EA 96) The Education (Pupils' Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 (ER91)

## **3. Rationale**

- 3.1. Woodrush High School recognises the need for good attendance and views this as one of our key responsibilities; good attendance enhances students' opportunities for learning, prepares them to be responsible citizens and keeps them away from the dangers they may experience whilst being absent from school.
- 3.2. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
- 3.3. The routines that a child develops around attendance and punctuality are the same as any future employer and therefore essential life skills. We believe that future aspirations and attainment depend on good attendance.
- 3.4. This policy is written in conjunction with the schools safeguarding policy and behaviour policy
- 3.5. The school also has a Children Missing in Education Policy – these policies run in conjunction with each other

## **4. Impact on Attendance**

- 4.1. It is our responsibility towards students to consistently strive to achieve 100% attendance as we recognise a direct link between good attendance and student achievement. We strive to consistently support students and their families even though they may be facing personal challenges.
- 4.2. Poor attendance can lead poor outcomes – this is outlined below and is communicated to both students and parents through the 'Parents Attendance Booklet' which is sent to parents annually, outlining our expectations

Likely Outcomes	Grade 9-5 English / Maths	Grade 9-4 English / Maths	Average English Grade	Average Maths Grade	Positive Progress	Days Lost to learning per year
Attendance above 96%+	50%+	70%+	5+	5+	~60%	7
Attendance 90%+	35%+	60%+	5	4	~50%	19
Attendance 85%+	10%+	20%+	3	3	~20%	26
Attendance 80%+	0%	20%+	2+	2	~20%	36

## 5. Expectations

- 5.1. We expect that teachers will encourage and monitor attendance at lessons and registration.
- 5.2. We expect that teachers will be consistent in their approach to attendance, working in partnership with parents.
- 5.3. We expect that teachers will ensure students are aware of their own attendance levels and how those levels impact on their learning.
- 5.4. We expect every parent or carer to accept shared responsibility for their child's regular and punctual attendance.
- 5.5. We expect that attendance will be closely monitored and recognised as an achievement.
- 5.6. We expect that students having issues with attendance will be quickly supported and closely monitored to improve attendance.
- 5.7. Sanctions and rewards through monitoring are outlined below:

## 6. Stages of Action (See also Appendix A - Roles and Responsibilities)

	Action we take	Hours of lost learning each year	Days missed each year	Education missed at Secondary School
Excellent Attendance 100%-96%	Commended for excellent attendance –Termly Letter from Headteacher for 100% attendees	15-20hrs	3-4 days	¼ term
Good Attendance 96%-94%	Commended for good attendance – Recognition in House Assemblies	20-35hrs	4-7 days	½ term
Requires Improvement 94%-92%	Monitored - Warning letter of concern if declining	36-60hrs	9-12 days	2 terms
Poor Attendance 92%-90%	Parents contacted by HOY/SEL – Formal Warning Letter	75-95hrs	15-19 days	½ year
Persistent absence 90%-80%	Meeting held with Attendance Welfare Officer	95-140hrs	19-28 days	¾ year
Critical <80%	Meeting Held with Deputy Headteacher /Headteacher – possible legal proceedings for prosecution	>140hrs	>28 days	1 year

## 7. Recording of Attendance

- 7.1. Woodrush High School will ensure it fulfils its legal obligation to register students every morning and afternoon. A student needs to be present at both attendance registrations to receive 100%

attendance for that day. Morning registration takes place at 08.30am at line up and students arriving late in form time after 8.35am will be recorded; afternoon registration takes place at 13.45pm during lesson 4. Teachers record students' attendance electronically and all lesson registers are to be completed within the first 15 minutes of the lesson time.

- 7.2. In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day; deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, classroom teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. If a student arrives after a register has been taken teachers will amend their registers at some point during the lesson.

## **8. Lateness and Punctuality**

- 8.1. The prompt arrival by all students each day is crucial to the effective running of the school. Every part of school they miss, by being late, means that they are behind with what is being delivered within the classroom.
- 8.2. At Woodrush High School we believe that every moment matters and therefore persistent lateness is not tolerated and will be sanctioned.
- 8.3. The main school gates will lock at 8.30am and any student who arrives after this time will have to access the school by the front entrance. They will be marked late by their classroom teacher and the number of minutes late recorded.
- 8.4. The first time, in a week, a student arrives at school after 8.30am, without a valid reason from parents/guardians, students are given a C1 Late warning.
- 8.5. If the student is late again, in the same week, they move onto a C2 Sanction half hour detention.
- 8.6. The third time a student is late, in the same week, the student moves onto C3. C3 is a Friday extended afterschool detention with HOY.
- 8.7. Students will be deemed late to lessons if they arrive after the teacher has started teaching within that lesson. Teachers will record the number of minutes late.
- 8.8. If a student has not arrived by 09:30am and the school have not received a reason for absence, an unauthorised absence mark will be given, and parents or carers will be contacted via telephone or text message.
- 8.9. Key Vulnerable Students are on a first day calling list and will be contacted accordingly if they have not arrived by lesson 1.
- 8.10. Form Tutors and Heads of Year will monitor student lateness to school and will check attendance at detentions.
- 8.11. The school reserves the right to adapt its sanctions for lateness during the course of a school year, based on whether the above-described sanctions are having effect.

## **9. Authorised Absence**

- 9.1. Woodrush High School cannot legally authorise any level of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Department for Education (DfE) has issued guidelines to all schools that state valid reasons for authorised absences. These include:
  - 9.1.1. A child is ill or receiving medical attention (medical evidence will be required if the illness lasts for over a week or there is a pattern of poor attendance);
  - 9.1.2. Days of religious observance, notified in advance.
  - 9.1.3. Absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement or serious illness);
  - 9.1.4. Other absences such as an approved activities or unforeseen family circumstances that will be viewed on a case-by-case basis.
- 9.2. Year 11 students may be given authorised absence as study leave following the commencement of public examinations during the Summer Term.
- 9.3. In every situation the school will expect to be notified on the first day of absence. In exceptional circumstances Woodrush High School accept that this is not always possible but will expect to be contacted as soon as possible.

## **10. Medical Appointments**

- 10.1. All medical or dental appointments should be made outside of the school day
- 10.2. Where this cannot be made; all students attending medical/dental appointments must provide a signed note from parents confirming the date and time of the appointment. This needs to be done in advance of the appointment and needs to be given to their form tutor, head of year or attendance officer. A note will be given to the child to sign out of school from student services; if needed.
- 10.3. Any student arriving after registration, due to medical reasons, will be recorded as late but the medical appointment will be noted, and this mark will not impact the student's overall attendance.
- 10.4. If no evidence of a medical appointment is provided, an absence mark will be recorded (which will adversely affect attendance).
- 10.5. If a student will be having frequent appointments, we request that parents inform their child's Head of Year or inform Mrs Davies (Attendance Officer). We will look at exceptional circumstances on an individual basis.

## **11. Roles and Responsibilities (See Also Appendix A - Attendance Responsibilities)**

- 11.1. At Woodrush High School we believe the responsibility of good attendance is shared between the student, parent and school.
- 11.2. Parents or carers will;
- 11.3. Make all reasonable efforts to ensure their child attends school 100% of the time and arrives punctually.
- 11.4. Notify the school, preferably by telephoning the absence line (01564 823 777), detailing the reason for the absence and stating an estimated return time.
- 11.5. To arrange medical/dental appointments outside of the school day. When this is not possible it is expected that students return to school before or after their appointment.
- 11.6. To supply medical certificates or other evidential material if requested by school.
- 11.7. The School will;
  - 11.7.1. Mark registers accurately and monitor data closely to pick up patterns of poor attendance at the earliest opportunity.
  - 11.7.2. Contact parents as soon as a student is recorded as absent and a reason has not been given. This procedure is in line with safeguarding guidelines to ensure we are aware of student's whereabouts at all times. If we do not have any contact from parents, and we have concerns, we may do a home visit.
  - 11.7.3. In line with safeguarding procedures, if a child has been absent from school for a period of 10 consecutive days we have duty to report this to the local authority.
  - 11.7.4. Monitor all students' attendance closely and intervene at the earliest opportunity to explore reasons for poor attendance.
  - 11.7.5. Praise good attendance and celebrate high attendance.
- 11.8. Woodrush High School has a legal responsibility to ensure each student is supported to achieve 100% attendance and must follow a legal framework set by Worcestershire County Council to prosecute parents who refuse to engage with school to improve attendance levels.
- 11.9. Persistent Unauthorised Absences will result in Woodrush High School issuing a penalty notice or further legal action.

## **12. Penalty Notices**

- 12.1. A penalty notice can now be issued after a student has had 10 unauthorised absences within an academic year (5 days of school). Woodrush High School do not have to issue a warning letter before requesting a penalty notice for holidays during term time.

12.2. All Penalty Notices are requested by Woodrush High School and issued by the Local Authority.

### **13. Request for Absence within Term Time (See Appendix B)**

13.1. Woodrush High School's policy is that requests for absence for a family holiday during term time will not be authorised. This is in line with the Local Authority Guidance in relation to holiday requests during term time. We do appreciate that there are exceptional circumstances for requests. Penalty notices will be given to each parent of each child.

13.2. Other absence in term time will only be authorised under exceptional circumstances

13.3. If a parent still wishes to apply for permission, they will need to fill out a 'request for a leave of absence during term time' – these are available on request from the school.

13.4. Parents must realise that taking holidays during term time is not beneficial to their child's education and should be avoided. No parent can demand leave of absence for the holiday as a right.

### **14. Rewarding attendance**

14.1. Woodrush High School recognises that it is important that good attendance is rewarded. Students achieving 100% attendance each term will be recognised and congratulated with a letter from the Headteacher and a A5 award.

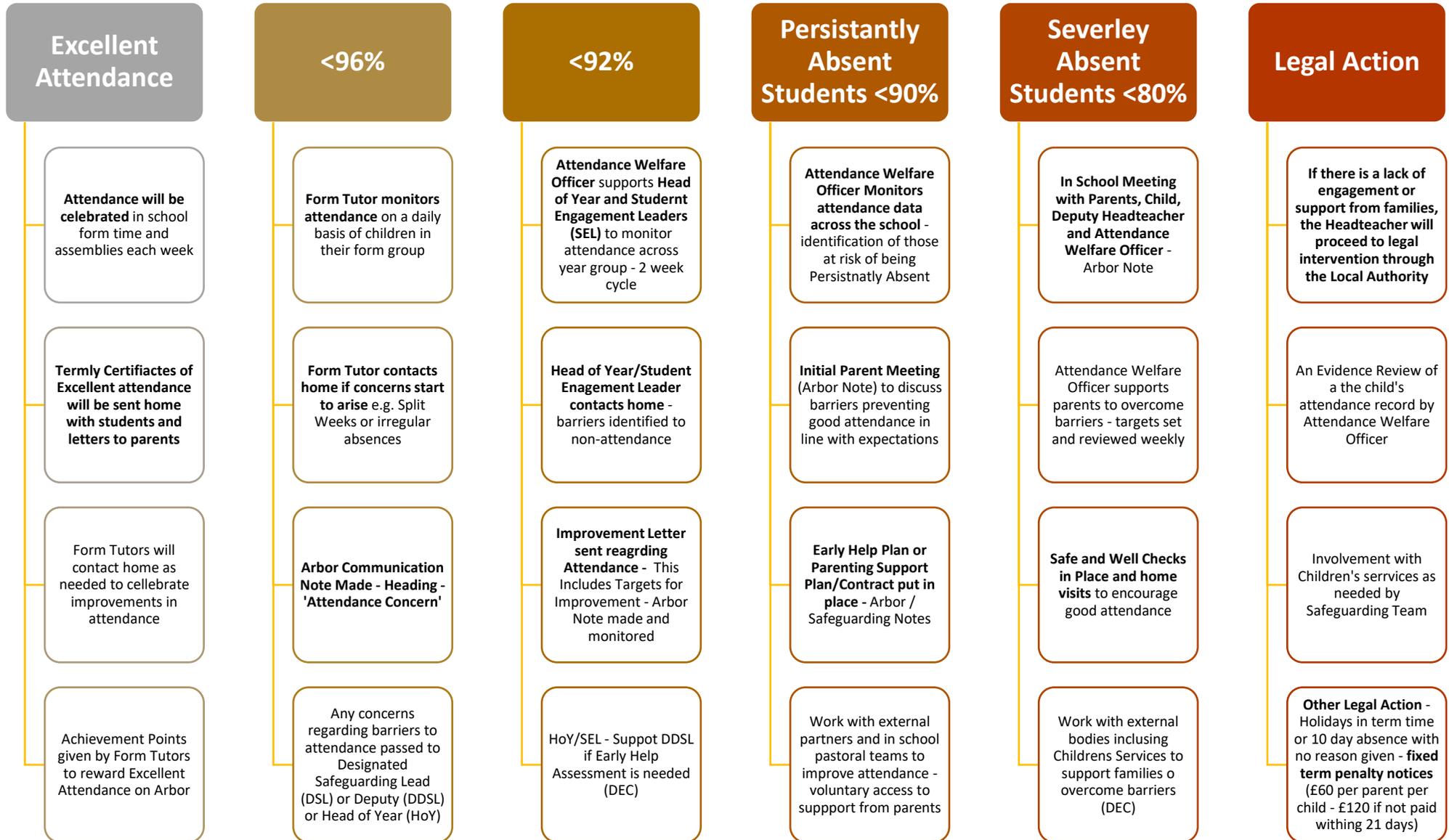
14.2. Students maintaining 96%, or above, attendance will be issued with an A3 award each half term. The school regularly considers methods to ensure that there are high profile positive messages about good attendance that run across the school.

### **15. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the policy**

15.1. The above policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance. They will also be responsible for providing statistics on attendance on a regular basis to the Senior Leadership Team and the full governing body where required. The SLT and governor link will regularly review this policy and the impact it is having on attendance levels throughout Woodrush High School.



### Thresholds for Attendance Improvement and Management





All Pupils >96%		
Parents/Carers are expected to	Schools will	Other Stakeholder Involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ensure your child attends school</b> except when a statutory reason applies</li> <li>• <b>Notify the school on the day your child is absent</b></li> <li>• Book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours</li> <li>• Do not take holidays in term time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Have a clear attendance policy and expectations</b> around attendance that is known by all</li> <li>• <b>Develop and maintain a culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance</b></li> <li>• Have robust systems in place that follows up attendance</li> <li>• Have a senior leader with responsibility for championing and improving attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trustees</b> – ensuring the school has robust systems to monitor attendance and ensure staff training is in place</li> </ul>
Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent from school – Attendance 90% to 92%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with us as a school to help us understand barriers to your child’s attendance</li> <li>• <b>Proactively engage with support offered to prevent the need for more formal support</b></li> <li>• React to attendance concerns through improved attendance of your child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify groups of at-risk children on a weekly basis – <b>attendance concern letters issued to parents/carers to identify and support</b></li> <li>• Work with each identified pupil and their parents/carers to understand and address reasons for absence – including in school barriers</li> <li>• Out of school barriers – <b>signpost for support for school support or external services</b> – In School Early Help</li> <li>• Take the lead in a multi layered approach with other partners including the local authority if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local Authority</b> – Signpost to services to support those at-risk of becoming persistently absent</li> <li>• <b>School and Children’s Services</b> – facilitate an early help assessment to create a multi agency approach</li> </ul>
Persistently Absent Pupils – Attendance <90%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure attendance to meetings in school to discuss attendance concern and to remove barriers</li> <li>• Proactively engage with an Early Help Plan to prevent the need for legal intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parent Meeting</b> - Attendance letter sent requesting parent/carer meeting to discuss attendance barriers and to create an Early Help Plan</li> <li>• Make parents/carers and the child aware of legal intervention if attendance doesn’t improve</li> <li>• If there are safeguarding concerns work with external agencies and children’s services to support the family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trustees</b> – Support the school in issuing legal interventions</li> <li>• <b>Local Authority</b> – Formal Support Options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders</li> </ul>
Severely Absent Pupils – Attendance <80%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively engage with support offered including voluntary Early Help Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parent Meeting with Senior Leader</b> – prosecution warning if no improvement</li> <li>• Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority</li> <li>• If appropriate, conduct a children’s social care assessment and build attendance into children in need or child protection plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local Authority</b> – Provide support to create family plans and EHCP as needed. Ensure joint working between children’s services and other statutory safeguarding partners</li> </ul>
Supporting Pupils with medical conditions or SEND		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sections - As above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents/carers to maximise attendance</li> <li>• Ensure joined up pastoral support and put in place additional support and adjustments such as individual healthcare plans and ensure provision outlined in any child’s EHCP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trustees</b> – Support the school in monitoring cohorts of children’s attendance across the school</li> <li>• <b>Local Authority</b> – Work with relevant service and partners e.g., SEN, Educational Psychologists and Mental Health Service to ensure joined up support for families.</li> <li>• Ensure suitable education such as alternative provision due to health reasons</li> </ul>
Supporting pupils with a Social Worker		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the school and local authority to understand their child’s barriers to attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the pupils social worker if there are unexplained absences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Children’s Services</b> - Regularly monitor attendance</li> <li>• <b>Local Authority</b> - Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

#### IMPORTANT NOTES

- 1 If your child is a persistent absentee (attendance below 90%) – the request will automatically be rejected
- 2 If you feel that absence from school in term time is unavoidable, complete this form below and return to Student Services not less than SIX WEEKS before the planned absence is due to begin.
- 3 Parents are advised that they have no automatic right for their children to be absent from school.
- 4 **Please be advised that holidays in term time are not a right and will only be granted under exceptional circumstances.**
- 5 No absence will be authorised during any examination periods, this includes internal examinations and Controlled Assessments
- 6 You must notify the school immediately if for any reason, your child is not able to return to school by the agreed date. In such cases, you should explain the circumstances and also indicate the revised date for return. Failure to keep the school fully informed can result in your child being removed from the school's register.
- 7 Unauthorised absences will be accompanied by a penalty notice – this will be £60 per child per parent leading to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

Parents and Carers are strongly urged not to book holidays or take special leave during school term time because:

- Your child will miss out on important schoolwork and may not be able to catch up. This could have serious consequences regarding progress, attainment and opportunities later in life.
- Other pupils' education could be affected – the time teachers must help all the children in a class is reduced if they spend time helping your child catch up after a holiday.
- Educational experiences in school missed as a result of a family holiday cannot be recaptured later.
- There are 190 school days in a year – these leaves 175 days for holidays, cultural activities and family time.

**If you withdraw your child from school for this leave it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. You will be served with a Penalty Notice or a summons to court for your child's unauthorised absence. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.**

## Request for leave during term time application form

Parents and carers are reminded that leave of absence taken **without** permission during term time may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice by the Local Authority. The cost of the fine is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay an issued fine could result in prosecution in the magistrates' court.

Date: .....

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

Name of Child: (full name) \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

First date of absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Last day of Absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Please state reason for leave (include any exceptional circumstances to be considered):

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I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows:

Full Names and school attended:

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Signature of 1<sup>st</sup> Parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*After consideration, the Headteacher will write to you to let you know if the absence is authorised or not.*

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### For Office Use Only

Number of school days applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Agreed / Not agreed Signed (Headteacher) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notification of decision letter sent to parent(s): Date: \_\_\_\_\_