



ST. THERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Attendance Policy

Our Mission Statement

At St. Theresa's School
We learn together
We play together
We pray together
We grow together in the love of God.

Date of policy review: November 2015

Next review: November 2016

Policy written by: Maureen Kelly
Policy reviewed & passed by: Governing Body
Key person responsible: Maureen Kelly

Attendance Policy

Aims of the School

At St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School, we aim to provide a high quality education in a safe, caring and disciplined environment so that all children are able to reach their full potential during the primary phase and leave here with positive feelings about education and its value to them.

Principles

- The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually.
- It is important that all parents/carers and children know that staff value good attendance and punctuality.
- It is important that parents/.carers and staff are aware that children have a greater opportunity to make better than expected progress and attain better than expected results/levels if they are punctual and have good attendance.
- It is important that parents/carers and staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the attendance of children.

Purpose

- To improve and maintain levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To minimise disruption to the learning environment caused by lateness and absence.

Statutory Framework

- Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states that;
'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend school regularly; his parent is guilty of an offence.'
- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the Headteacher is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter or message will the absence be authorised.

Rights & Responsibilities

Improving attendance at St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community: parents/carers, children and all staff. The Headteacher has delegated the day to day responsibility of attendance to the Office Manager and Administration Secretary.

1. The Headteacher and Office Manager

- Will ensure that registers are kept accurately and that absence figures are reported in the school census;
- Will clarify authorised and unauthorised absences with the class teacher if there is any doubt as to whether the reason for absence is justifiable;
- Will send appropriate letters to parents and carers if a pupil's absence gives cause for concern;
- Will promote regular attendance at assemblies, with parents/carers at parents' evenings and for each new intake;
- Will consult with the Education Welfare Officer if, despite school action, a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern;
- Will decide on parental requests in respect of leave of absence.

2. The Class Teacher

- Will keep an accurate and neat record of attendance and absence;
- Will differentiate accurately between **authorised** and **unauthorised** absence;

- Will promote good attendance and punctuality;
- Will monitor attendance and punctuality;
- Will communicate with parents/carers and children regarding attendance and punctuality;
- Will follow up unauthorised absences;
- Will notify the Headteacher for any child who has frequent absences;
- Will keep all late letters and absence letters in the register.
- Will ensure that absence letters and messages from parents/carers are passed to the administrative assistant.

3. The Office Staff

- Will daily monitor attendance of lone travellers and children who are on the monitoring list;
- Will keep an accurate record of attendance and absence on the pupil database (Integris);
- Will prepare a monitoring list of children whose attendance is below 96%;
- Will differentiate accurately between **authorised** and **unauthorised** absence;
- Will monitor attendance and follow up unauthorised absences;
- Will analyse monitoring list data for FSM, gender and ethnicity at the end of each academic year.

4. The Education Welfare Officer

- Will assist the school in identifying poor patterns of attendance;
- Will assist those families who are experiencing difficulties with school attendance;
- Will support staff in the development of whole-school approaches to maintain and develop excellent attendance and punctuality;
- Will meet with parents/carers of children who has poor attendance;
- Will use legal action where necessary.

5. Parents/Carers

- Will notify the school as soon as possible that their child is absent through sickness or unavoidable cause;
- Will avoid making medical or dental appointments for their child during school hours;
- Are aware that permission is only granted for leave of absence if there are extenuating circumstances; will apply to the school in advance for permission to take their child away from school.

6. Children

- Will be aware of the importance of regular attendance at school;
- Will talk to a member of staff if there is anything which makes them feel unhappy at school and could reduce their willingness to attend.

A GUIDE FOR STAFF

Registration

Calling of the registers

- Class teachers are responsible for attendance registers.
- Morning registration will take place at 8.50am.
- Registers will be sent to the office at 9.00am.
- Afternoon registration will take place at 1.15pm.
- Registers to be sent to the office by 1.30pm
- Register codes will be displayed in the register.
- Registers will be completed neatly in pen.
- Tippex and pencils will not be used in the registers.

Who will amend the register?

- The Class Teacher will take the Register at 8.50am.
- Children arriving after 8.50am will be marked as late.
- Children arriving after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised absence mark. *If an acceptable explanation for late arrival is received the absence will be authorised.*
- The designated member of the office staff will be responsible for amending the register after 9.00am.
- In class where there is doubt about an explanation contact should be made with the parent/carer.

Monitoring procedures

- Class Teachers who monitor children's attendance and punctuality.
- Class Teachers will communicate with parents/carers and children to ensure that they understand the impact of poor attendance and/or punctuality on learning.
- The attendance of targeted pupils will be monitored daily by the designated member of the office staff.
- Registers will be monitored weekly by teachers and office staff and any concerns passed on to the Headteacher.
- Class Teachers will refer any child with frequent absences to the Headteacher.
- Office staff will input attendance data onto the Integrus System on a weekly basis.
- Where appropriate the designated member of the office staff will generate letters regarding absences and/or poor punctuality. Children who arrive after the close of register three or more times will automatically receive a letter.
- Where there are serious concerns regarding a child attendance/punctuality the matter will be discussed with the EWO and where appropriate the concern will be referred to the EWO.

Daily and Weekly totals

- These will be completed by the designated member of the office staff.

Authorised/Unauthorised

Providing an explanation is received staff may consider authorising the following absences:

- Illness.
- Dental / Medical appointments.

- Family bereavement.
- Participation of approved public performance.
- Exceptional leave of absence, where prior approval has been obtained from the Headteacher.
- Exceptional family circumstances.

Absences will remain unauthorised if no legitimate / acceptable explanation is received from parents/carers.

The following explanations will not usually be deemed legitimate:

- Holidays during term time.
- Parent/carer is unable to bring their son/daughter to school because they are ill or busy.
- Looking after siblings.
- Shopping trips.
- Unexceptional special occasions, e.g. birthdays.
- Exceptional leave of absence longer than the duration originally authorised by the Headteacher.
- Exceptional leave of absence where prior permission was not sought or where permission was refused.

If staff are unsure how to mark a particular absence they should consult with the Headteacher.

In cases where there is doubt about an explanation contact should be made with the parent/carer.

Keeping of notes

- Absence notes should be kept in the registers.

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND PARENTS/CARERS

First day response

- On a daily basis the designated member of the office staff will record lateness after 9.00am.
- On a daily basis the designated member of the office staff will record absence.
- The Office Manager will generate a list of children to be contacted on the first day of any absence. These are children who have not turned up for school and no contact has been received from the parent/carer. Parents on the list will be reminded that they are required to contact the school immediately if their child will not be coming that day. If this happens 3 times or more the parents will be invited into school at the request of the Headteacher to go through the attendance procedures.
- Children travelling to school without adult supervision are deemed as 'independent travellers' and will be contacted as a matter of priority on the first day of absence.
- All other children are monitored.

Late Gate / Late Arrivals

If a child is late for school more than 3 times in the week the parents will be contacted by the Headteacher who will ask for an explanation. The headteacher will make every effort to support the parents in getting their child to school including the offer of breakfast club at a reduced rate.

Letters home

- Children who arrive after the close of register three or more times in one week will either automatically be spoken to face to face or a letter from the Headteacher.
- Children with outstanding absence notes will receive a text or a letter at the beginning of the following week by the Office Manager.
- Children whose attendance is concerning will receive a telephone call from the Office Manager who will report the outcome of the conversation to the Headteacher.

Headteacher

- If a pattern of concern regarding attendance develops the Headteacher will contact the parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss the matter.
- Where appropriate the Headteacher will inform the family that future absences on health grounds will no longer be authorised without medical evidence.
- If there is still no improvement the Headteacher will write to the family and advise them that a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer. The Headteacher will refer the pupil to the Education Welfare Officer.

Acknowledging good attendance and punctuality

- Each half term, children who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a certificate.
- The nominations will be given to the Headteacher and children will be acknowledged in a special assembly.

Monitoring and Recording Attendance at St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School

**Important information
for teachers**

Registers are LEGAL documents

They may be required as evidence in court cases

Registration

Calling of the registers

- Class teachers are responsible for attendance registers.
- Registers will have information regarding registration procedures clearly displayed on their front cover, *see figure 1 below.*

Morning Registration at St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School	
8.50 – 9.00	Present (/) must be in black ink Absent (O) must be in red ink
9.00	Registers must be returned to the office promptly
9.00 – 9.15	Late before close of Registration (L) Children arriving after 9.00am must be marked as L in the register
9.15 →	Unauthorised Late (O) place a 'U'* in the centre of the circle (*Please Note: to be entered by designated member of office staff only)
The appropriate absence codes must only be entered <i>if</i> the school accepts the reason for absence, if in doubt discuss with the Headteacher.	

Fig. 1

- Children arriving between 9.00am and 9.15am must be recorded as late.
- Children arriving after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised absence mark – *if an acceptable explanation for late arrival is received the absence will be authorised.*
- Afternoon registration will take place at **1.15pm.**
- Register codes will be displayed in the inside cover of the Register.
- Registers will be completed neatly in Pen.
- Tippex and pencils **must not** be used on the Registers.

Authorised / Unauthorised

Providing an explanation is received staff may consider authorising the following absences:

- Illness
- Dental / Medical appointments
- Family bereavement
- Participation of approved public performance
- Exceptional leave of absence, where prior approval has been obtained from the Headteacher
- Exceptional family circumstances

Absences will remain unauthorised if no legitimate explanation is received from parents / carers.

The following explanations will not usually be deemed legitimate:

- Looking after siblings.
- Parent / carer is unable to bring their son/daughter to school because they are ill or busy.
- Shopping trips.
- Unexceptional special occasions, e.g. birthdays.
- Exceptional leave of absence where prior permission was not sought or was refused.
- Exceptional leave of absence longer than the duration originally authorised by the Headteacher.

If in doubt please consult the Headteacher.

Who will amend the registers?

- The Class Teacher will amend the Register between 8.50am and 9.00am (and during afternoon registration as appropriate).
- The Office Manager member of the office staff will be responsible for amending the Register after 9.00am.

Monitoring of Registers

- The Headteacher will have overall responsibility for ensuring that staff update and amend registers correctly.
- All children who are absent and for whom the school has not received a reason to be contacted on the first day of absence.
- Children with attendance concerns or attendance below 96% to form a specific group – this group to be contacted at each absence and directly monitored by the Office Manager.
- The attendance of this group will be recorded on an Absence Monitoring List which will be overseen directly by the Office Manager, thus ensuring that such absences are not authorised by class teachers without the Headteacher and Office Manager's knowledge.
- The Office Manager will oversee that school staff and class teachers are made aware of any children brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer.
- Analysis (FSM/ethnicity/gender) of the group will be carried out to identify sections of the community which may require additional support.

Pursuing Absence Notes.

- 'Reasons for Absence' form to be generated through the database by the designated member of the office staff to children with outstanding absence notes each week.
- Class teachers should send 'Reasons for Absence' forms and absence letters to the office as soon as they are received.
- Where the designated member of the office staff deems it appropriate she may telephone the families concerned in an effort to obtain explanations – she will ensure this information is communicated to the class teachers and that registers are amended accordingly.
- Children who arrive after the close of register three or more times in one week will automatically be contacted by the designated member of the office staff and if it continues they will be contacted by the Headteacher.
- Approximately 2 weeks before the end of half term the designated member of the office staff will note which absence remains outstanding and write to families concerned.
- At the start of the following term the Education Welfare Officer may then contact these families if absence notes are still outstanding. (It should be noted that while the aim is to actively pursue absence notes the decision whether or not to except the explanations given rests with the Headteacher of the school)
- Where there are serious concerns regarding a pupil's attendance/punctuality the matter will be discussed with the EWO and where appropriate a pre referral check list completed for referral to the EWO Team.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND PARENTS/CARERS

Holiday in Term Time / Extended Leave of Absence.

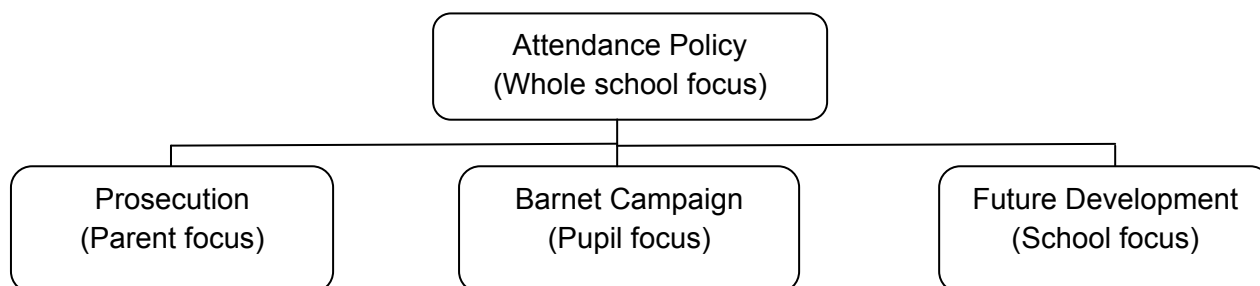
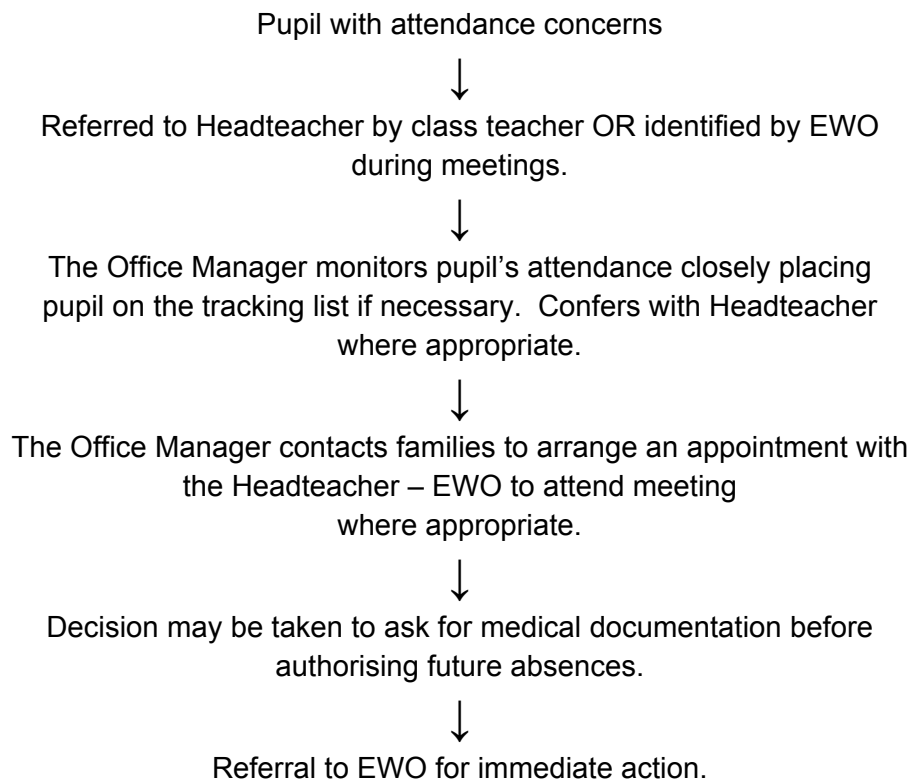
- Families will not be granted holidays during term time.
- Families will apply to the school in advance for permission to take their child away from school.
- Families applying for leave of absence will be asked to complete a form and will be referred to the Headteacher who will meet with the parents/carers.
- The school adheres to the LA's advice to schools. The form makes reference to the provisions under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004 (Fixed-penalty Notice).

First day response

- On a daily basis the designated member of the office staff will deliver the First Day response – this is dependent on the information she receives from teachers taking morning registration.
- Independent travellers failing to attend school will be given priority.

Acknowledging good attendance and punctuality

- Each term statistics will be used to identify children who have achieved excellent and/or improved attendance.
- Nominations will be generated by the office staff at the end of each half term.
- A certificate will be presented half termly to nominated children in a special assembly.



Guide for Parents/Carers

The following information applies to parents/carers of all children at St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School. The Headteacher is responsible for attendance and she is supported by the Office Manager Mrs Orsi. Mrs Orsi is the first point of contact in the school office for parents/carers reporting absences.

We have a whole school strategy of improving attendance through working in partnership with parents/carers and children. Attendance at St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School must be consistently above 95% and we need you and your child's contribution to ensure that we maintain this. We are aware that there will be occasional exceptional circumstances that will require individual support or alternative arrangements. As a staff team we are available and we encourage parents/carers to discuss any difficulties they may be experiencing. Good attendance and punctuality ensures that children develop good social skills, have full access to education and achieve their full potential. Please note that parents/carers are not entitled to take their child out of school for holidays and such absences will be subject to a fine from the Local Authority referred to as a Fixed Penalty Notice (see Q11 below).

A child who is absent for one day per fortnight will have missed one year of school (190 days) by the time they leave secondary education.

Q1. When does my child need to arrive at school?

- The school will be open in the morning from 8.30am or at 7.45am for children attending the breakfast club.
- We recommend your child be in class by **8.40am** for Registration at 8.50am.
- Children must not be on the school premises before **8.30am**, (staff cannot accept responsibility for children arriving before **8.30am**).

Q2. What happens if my child is late?

- If your child arrived after **8.50am**, the gates will be closed. You should bring your child to the **main entrance** where their lateness is recorded.
- If your child arrives after 9am they must report to the school office so their attendance can be recorded. This is extremely important as your child will not be entered in the register and in the event of an emergency this could have serious repercussions.
- If your child arrives after **9.15am** they will receive an **unauthorised absence** mark for the morning session instead of a late mark.
- Where children arrive after **9.15am** parents/carers are expected to provide an acceptable reason for lateness. Until such information has been received, and the explanation for lateness accepted by the school, your child's mark will remain as an **unauthorised** absence. This counts as an absence for the morning session and it will be shown on your child's end of year report.

Q3. How can I notify the school that my child is absent?

- You can telephone the school on 020 8346 8826 and leave a message on the first day of absence and update us each day if the absence continues.
- You can email the school at office@sttheresas.barnetmail.net

We would appreciate a written explanation on your child's return to school. **Please also bring any medication that a doctor has prescribed into school.**

If you experience difficulties communicating in this way please speak to the Office Manager.

Q4. What reasons does the school accept for absence?

- Genuine illness. Please note that medical evidence is required after 3 days.
- Unavoidable urgent medical/dental appointments.
- Family bereavement.
- Participation in approved public performance.
- Examinations

In cases of illness medical evidence is required after 3 days. This can be either an appointment card to show that your child has been seen by a doctor or any medication that a doctor has prescribed.

In cases of urgent medical/dental appointments parents/carers are expected to produce an appointment card and children are expected to attend school prior to and after the appointment. Where the appointment is at the beginning of the day you should bring your child to school afterwards. For appointments later in the day your child should be collected early from school.

In cases of **recurring** absences for illness you will need to bring in either an appointment card to show that your child's illness has been assessed by your GP or any medication that has been prescribed for your child. Please note that unless medical evidence is provided recurring/frequent absences treated as unauthorised.

Q5. Can my child attend school when he/she is on medication?

Yes, your child can come back to school as soon as he/she is feeling better. You will need to bring the medication to school if it needs to be administered 4 times a day and speak to the Welfare Team Mrs Sweeny or Mrs McGrath giving permission to administer the medication.

Q6. What is an unacceptable reason for absence?

The school will not authorised absences for:

- Your child is tired
- Day trips
- Holidays
- Birthdays
- Visiting relatives
- Looking after siblings
- Collecting relatives from an airport
- Shopping
- Non urgent medical or dental appointments
- You are ill. We ask that if you are ill, and unable to bring your child to school, you make arrangements for a friend or relative to bring your child to school.
- You cannot collect your child on time. We ask that you make alternative arrangements or register your child for the after school club that day.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive

Q7. What is an unauthorised absence?

These are absences where:

- We do not receive an explanation.
- Your child has frequent absences without medical evidence.
- The explanation is unsatisfactory (see Q6 for list)

This will show up on your child's end of year report.

Q8. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

We will make every effort to telephone you if your child fails to attend school in time for morning registration. However, it should be noted that you are expected to contact the school yourself on the first day of your child's absence by calling 020 8346 8826. This will be an answering phone service if it is not answered by a member of staff.

Certificates for excellent attendance will be awarded at the end of each term, and at the end of the academic year.

The school will communicate with you regarding attendance issues. These follow Government guidelines stating that a child's attendance at school should be **96%** or above if they are to achieve their full potential.

Q9. Will the school monitor my child's attendance?

The school monitors attendance for all children closely and the name of any child whose attendance is below 96% is entered on a monitoring list. Parents/carers receive a courtesy letter notifying them that their child's attendance is below 96%.

Q10. Can we take family holidays during term time?

Family holidays must be taken during school holidays and **NOT** during term time. If you take your child out of school to go on holiday you will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Q11. What are exceptional circumstances?

An example of an exceptional circumstance is the death of a close family member. Please note that permission can only be granted for a short period of time and you are required to request leave of absence **PRIOR** to booking any tickets or you will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. You also need to provide evidence when your child returns to school.

Q12. What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a fine issued by the Local Authority to parents/carers who take their child on holiday, or out of school, during term time without the express consent of the school. Such absences are referred to the Education Welfare Team who may impose a fixed penalty fine of £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 per parent for each child if paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2006/2013).

If the notice remains unpaid after the 28th day, the Local Authority prosecutes the parent in the Magistrates' Court for the original non-attendance offence under The Education Act 1996, section 444, and not for non-payment of the penalty notice. If found guilty, parents will have a criminal record, possibly receive a fine of up to £1000, for a first offence, and be required to pay costs to the Local Authority. There is no right of appeal against Fixed Penalty Notice.

Q13. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning to have breakfast before coming to school. Ensure that they leave home in school uniform and any items they need for the day e.g. homework, PE kit, swimming kit. Look in their school bags, read the newsletters and communicate with your child's teachers. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education.

Q14. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact a member of staff immediately and discuss your concerns. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons:

- Difficulties with school work
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Family difficulties

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with the Education Welfare Officer. **The Education Welfare Officer's name is Aneesa Aslam-Latif**, and she is based at:

**Education Welfare Team
Building 4
North London Business Park
Oakleigh Road South
London
N11 1NP
(Tel: 020 8359 4193)**

APPENDIX A

**St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School
Attendance Referral Form**

Name	DOB	Class
Home language:		
Reason for referral (tick box(es) as appropriate)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> Punctuality	<input type="checkbox"/> Both
Social / Emotional Impact		
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> Standard of work	<input type="checkbox"/> Low self esteem
<input type="checkbox"/> Social skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor concentration	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Please give a brief summary of concerns. 		
What action has already been taken to support the child / family to improve attendance / punctuality? 		
Attainment in the last termly test. Please tick appropriate box		
Autumn term <input type="checkbox"/>	Spring term <input type="checkbox"/>	Summer term <input type="checkbox"/>
Maths Score <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	Reading Score <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	Writing Score <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Strengths and achievements 		
Are parents/carers aware of your concern(s) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, level of involvement:		Are outside agencies involved with the child? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please state agency(cies):
Date referral received:		Action taken:

APPENDIX B

ST. THERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Independent Traveller Form

My child _____, in class _____ is a lone traveller.

I will ensure that he / she does not arrive at school unaccompanied before 8.30am. I agree to keep my contact details up to date and will contact the school by 9.00am if my child is not able to attend school. My contact details are as follows:

Home phone number _____

Mobile number _____

Work number _____

Address _____

My child's journey to school is as follows:

If my child fails to attend school and I have not contacted the school I understand that the school will make every attempt to contact me to confirm the whereabouts of my child. I understand that the school may contact the police if they are unable to contact a responsible adult.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

ST THERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

As a parent / carer you should fill in this form if, in the case of an **emergency**, you need to take your child out of school for a period during term time. **The form should be completed prior to you booking any tickets.** Please note **family holidays during term time will not be authorised** and the Local Authority will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. **Where there are no extenuating urgent circumstances with supporting documentation the absence will be treated as unauthorised absence.**

Where permission is granted due to exceptional urgent circumstances the Headteacher will want to discuss with you the arrangement in respect of documents which will need to be produced upon your child's return to school. You will be requested to show your travel documents when submitting the leave of absence application.

You should be aware that if the school approves this absence, because of the evidence of urgent exceptional circumstances you have provided, your child will be expected to return on the date specified on the form. Failure to do so will result in any extra time being classified as unauthorised absence. It is also possible in certain circumstances that your child could be removed from the school roll.

If you take your child out of school without authorisation the Local Authority has the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices of £60 per parent if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent if paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2006/2013). If the notice remains unpaid after the 28th day, the Local Authority prosecutes the parent in the Magistrates' Court for the original non-attendance offence under The Education Act 1996, section 444, and not for non-payment of the penalty notice. If found guilty, parents will have a criminal record, possibly receive a fine of up to £1000, for the first offence, and be required to pay costs to the Local Authority. There is no right of appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice.

I request that _____ in class _____ be granted special leave of absence.

From (Date) _____ To (Date) _____

My child will return to school on : _____

Reason _____

My child will access education during the visit: Yes / No (Please circle)

If you have circled yes, please provide details:

Signature of Parent / Carer _____ Date _____

Address _____

Contact telephone number/s _____

.....
For office use only

Leave approved / Leave refused Evidence obtained: Yes / No Date: _____ Code: _____

Signature of Office Manager _____ Date _____

Notes: _____

ST THERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Medical Consent Form

To Dr

Address:

.....

Tel:

Re: (Child's name)

Date of Birth: / /

Home Address: (Child's address)

.....

.....

.....

Name of Parent / Carer:

As the parent / carer of I give permission for you to discuss his/her health details with the Headteacher / Office Manager In respect of issues that could affect school attendance.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

End of Day Procedure

Dear Parent / Guardian,

- St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School closes at 3.30pm every day.
- If you know you are going to be late to collect your child contact the school immediately. Steps can then be taken to ensure your child is cared for until you arrive. Upon arrival you will be asked to explain why you were late collecting your child.
- If you are aware that you may periodically be late collecting your child you can register him/her in the Jelly Beans After School Club and notify the school, that you would like your child to attend Jelly Beans, as soon as you know that you cannot collect your child at 3.30pm.
- If you fail to collect your child more than three times in a term you will be contacted by the school office advising you that if this continues the matter may be referred to the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) in Barnet.
- If your child is not collected at the end of the day, and you have not contacted the school to advise us, the office will endeavour to contact you at home or at work. If this is unsuccessful, a senior member of staff will be informed of the situation. To comply with legal regulations, a decision may then be taken to contact either the duty social worker or the **Police**.
- **If your child is to make his or her own way home, or is to be collected by a different person you must inform the school of this ahead of time, and in writing. The school does not allow children to be collected from school by children below the age of 16.**
- *Please remember that children worry about their parents/carers' welfare and can become quite distressed when they realise that no one has come to collect them. If you need support in arranging after-school care for your child, please talk to the Office Manager who can offer advice. Alternatively, your local library should have a list of useful contacts within Barnet Council.*

Miss M Kelly
Headteacher

BARNET LONDON BOROUGH

Exceptional Leave of Absence from Schools (ELAS)

This guidance is based on the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, regulation 7 as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**.

It incorporates advice on absences codes to be used in registers and is used by Education Welfare Officers in response to enquiries from parents, school staff and other agencies. It replaces the document Special and Exceptional Leave of Absence (SELAS) from 2012.

The governing body of a school – the proprietor – delegates responsibility for authorising absence to headteachers and others, as appropriate. Schools should make clear their expectations on requests for leave of absence in their attendance policy.

Parents have no right to remove their children from school for the purpose of a holiday.

Parents may request permission for an absence in *exceptional circumstances*.

A generic ELAS form is appended to this guidance as Appendix 1.

Parents should be aware that failure to request leave of absence or defying the decision of the Headteacher could lead to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) of up to £120 per parent per child).

The Definition of Exceptional Circumstances

The Department for Education has removed all reference to holidays from the registration regulations and requires Headteachers to restrict leave of absence to exceptional circumstances only. No direct guidance is given on this but the inference is clearly that holidays should not normally be considered exceptional.

Headteachers should require proof of the exceptional nature of any requests and also bear in mind the elaborate nature of some requests. Parents who make no request should be subject to fixed penalty notices.

Absence for economic reasons

Under no circumstances should schools authorise absence for holidays or other circumstances on the ground of cost. This includes cases where families seek to visit family for longer periods for value-for-money reasons.

Service Personnel

Requests for pupil absence from military parents on active service **must** be accommodated.

Special Leave of absence

Each request for leave of absence should be considered on its own merits, bearing in mind elements such as family crisis or special occasions. This does not include economic factors or convenience.

There is no reason why Headteachers should authorised long absences for family occasions such as weddings, baptisms, funerals etc. Such occasions are not an opportunity to take a holiday. The cost issue is a matter for families, not the school.

The essential points are:

- Parents must seek leave of absence from the Headteacher.
- Parents must be made aware of this requirement in the school's attendance policy.
- The attendance policy can give firm guidance on the school's expectations but must not include a "blanket ban".
- **Each request for leave must be assessed on its own merits.**
- The school's policy should make it clear that families leaving the country without requesting leave or failing to return on an agreed date risk the loss of their child's school place.
- Leave of absence for any child taking national examinations such as Y1, Y2, Y6 or Y9 pupils (SATs) or any pupil taking GCSE, GCE or NVQ examinations should not be given **other than in an emergency.**

In assessing a request, Headteachers must consider the:

- Impact on a child's progress, especially in terms of SEN and attendance record.
- Compassionate grounds.
- Previous applications: frequency and length.

Extended Leave

In **exceptional** circumstances, Headteachers may allow extended periods of absence. Such arrangements must follow detailed discussion with the parents including an agreed return date. **This task must not be delegated.**

If authorised by the Headteacher, this absence should not be described as a holiday but as exceptional circumstances, and be recorded in the register as a **C** (authorised absence). **The symbol C should not follow a period marked as H: the whole period of extended leave is coded C. (An explanation must be entered in the attendance registers).**

Where a family seeks extended absence from school within the UK for any reason, the child must be registered at another school. This also applies to Travellers where the parents are not travelling as part of their trade. Enrolment at another school must be verified and for an agreed period only. Temporary registration procedures apply and the register code **D**, dual registration, must be used. This provision does not apply to pupils outside the UK.

The Local Authority advises that no place should be kept open for a child for more than a half-term. Any arrangement in excess of this should be discussed with **Alison Dawes, the Head of Access to Schools.**

Registration Codes

An authorised period of leave from school of up to ten days is coded H, and is an authorised absence. Leave of absence of more than 10 days, is coded F (for the whole period).

In the event that an agreed absence continues without good cause beyond the period agreed, the unauthorised element is coded as G, (unauthorised absence), and can incur a Fixed Penalty Notice for each parent.

All the above are absences. Children enrolled temporarily in a UK school, are recorded as D. D is neither an attendance or absence, statistically.

Record-keeping

Schools should ensure that records of leave are maintained in order to monitor their effect on school attendance levels. It is advisable that records of authorisations or refusals are kept on file for future reference in the event of complaint or, indeed, further requests.

September 2015

Application for Exceptional Leave of Absence

Sample responses

Dear Parent name(s)

Your application for exceptional leave of absence has been granted.

Child name is expected back in school on (date).

If there is any alteration to your plans, you must advise me immediately.

Failure to return in good time could lead to a financial sanction from the Education Welfare Team or the loss of your child's school place. You would have to provide documentary evidence of unavoidable cause for delay.

Absence from school is governed by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, and as amended, 2010.

Dear Parent name(s)

I have carefully considered your application for exceptional leave of absence for child name but I do not believe the circumstances merit my permission.

Child name should therefore attend school as usual.

I am happy to discuss this further with you and invite you to make an appointment to see me.

REFUSAL OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Date:

Dear

Re: *Child name & Class*

I write with reference to your request for leave of absence from to Having considered the reasons given, I regret that I am unable to authorise this absence. I would therefore ask you to make alternative arrangements to avoid disruption to your child's education.

If you decide to go ahead with the planned trip, your child's absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Please note that if this happens, each parent is likely to receive a Fixed Penalty Notice issued by the Education Welfare Team. Penalty Notices require payment of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay within 28 days could lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2004/2012).

I trust that I have your support and cooperation on this matter and that the issue of fixed penalty notices should not arise.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

BARNET LONDON BOROUGH

Request to issue Penalty Notice

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Name of School / Agency:	
Person Making Referral:	
Telephone Number:	
Fax Number:	
E-Mail Address:	

Parents to be issued with Penalty Notice	Parent 1*	Parent 2*
Parent's* First Name:		
Parent's* Family Name:		
Address of Parent(s):		
Post Code:		
Telephone number(s)		
Address of parent not living at main address: <i>(provide only if parent is to be issued with fine)</i>		
Telephone number(s):		

Name of Child:	
Date of Birth of Child:	
Year / Class Name:	
Reason for Penalty to be issued:	

Checklist (Please tick)	
Full names and address of all parents*:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copies of correspondence sent to/from the parents relating to incident attached (if applicable):	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attendance printout showing unauthorised absences (schools only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dates of Absences in reason for Penalty to be issued:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed:	
Date:	

Complete and return to Helen Fraser email: Helen.fraser@barnet.gov.uk Fax: 0870 889 6799
**for definition of Parent see Local Code of Conduct*

Statement of Witness

(Section 9 Criminal Justice 1967, Sections 5A(3)(a) and 5B, Magistrates Court
Act 1980, Rule 70 Magistrates Court Rules 1981

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

In the Petty Sessional Area of Barnet

Statement of:

Age of Witness: **Over 21**

Occupation of Witness:

Address:

This statement is consisting of 2 pages signed by me true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I make it knowing that if it is to be tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything, which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated:

Signed:
(Position / Occupation)

1. I am employed as(*position/occupation*) of (School).

2. (*child name*), whose date of birth is (*dd/mm/yy*) is a child of compulsory school age and is a registered pupil at (*school*). He/She lives with (*full names of parents*).

3. On (*dd/mm/yy*), (*name of parent*) completed an application form requesting permission to take(*child name*) on a family holiday from (*dd/mm/yy*) to (*dd/mm/yy*) inclusive. (Exhibit [author initials]1).

OR

..... (*name of parent*) is the parent of (*child name*). On (*dd/mm/yy*), his wife/husband/partner (*name*) completed an application form requesting permission to take their (*child name*) on a family holiday from (*dd/mm/yy*) to (*dd/mm/yy*) inclusive. (Exhibit [author initials]1).

4. On (*dd/mm/yy*), I wrote to (*parent name*) stating that permission for the leave of absence would not be granted. I advised *him/her* that if (*child's name*) did not attend school during the period requested for the holiday this would be treated as an unauthorised absence and could lead to the issue of Penalty Notice. (Exhibit [author initials]2).

5. (*child name*) failed to attend school during the period (*dd/mm/yy*) to (*dd/mm/yy*) inclusive.

6. On (*dd/mm/yy*) I completed a Request to Issue a Penalty Notice under The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and sent it to the Education Welfare Team at London Borough of Barnet. (Exhibit [author initials]3).

7. Exhibited to my Statement is a copy of (*child name*) attendance record. (Exhibit [author initials]4).

8. I, (*name*), maker of this statement, believe it to be true and understand it may be placed before the Court.

Dated:

Signed:

Role:

BARNET

LONDON BOROUGH

Education Welfare Team

Penalty Notices for School Attendance Issues

Code of Practice

This Code of Practice governs the application of penalty notices issued to parents for school attendance matters. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority, schools, academies, parents, the police and other agencies, laying down the basis for the use of penalty notices as a legal sanction and as a deterrent, in accordance with **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 with amendments as per The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2012 and 2013**. This Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with guidance on **Special and Exceptional Leave of Absence from School (SELAS)**, and Exclusions.

The penalty notice is intended as a quick-response disposal in cases where parents either fail to ensure the full school attendance of their children, show disregard for the authority of the head teacher (unauthorised holidays) or fail to supervise a child excluded from school, as in Table 1 below.

This Code of Practice bears in mind the expectations of the Department for Education on the improvement of attendance, and the provisions of Ofsted's school inspection framework, in which there is an expectation that schools use all available means in their attendance strategy to secure best outcomes for pupils, including the use of legal sanctions.

Information for Parents

A parent is defined by **Section 576 of the Education Act 1996** as any natural parent, person with Parental Responsibility under the **Children Act 1989** or a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of his or her relationship with the child.

All parents whose children attend a maintained school or academy in Barnet are subject to the rules in respect of penalty notices, regardless of where they live. The borough of residence is notified of the action being taken.

Parents can be issued a maximum of 3 penalty notices each in respect of the same child in any one calendar year. Thus, where two parents take three children on an unauthorised holiday, a total of six notices are issued for the single episode.

Each penalty notice is £60 if paid within the early-payment period, up to the 21st day after issue, otherwise the penalty notice will be £120. If the notice remains unpaid after the 28th day, the Local Authority prosecutes the parent in the Magistrates' Court for the original non-attendance offence under The Education Act 1996, section 444, and not for non-payment of the penalty notice. If found guilty, parents will have a criminal record, possibly receive a fine of up to £1000, for a first offence, and be required to pay costs to the Local Authority.

On payment of a penalty notice, the parent can no longer be pursued legally for the same period of evidence (Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) and does not have a criminal record arising from the penalty notice itself.

As with prosecution in a magistrates' court, penalty notices can only apply to offences relating to a child of statutory school age enrolled at a maintained school or a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

Parents whose children are the subject of Education Welfare action who take the children on holiday without permission from the school may face the possibility of receiving a penalty notice at the school's request and another arising from a Court Assessment Meeting for other absences under investigation.

Parents have no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

There is no right of appeal for parents but the Local Authority will examine any evidence provided that would show that a mistake had been made. Parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support an argument and must deal directly with the Local Authority as the matter will not be the responsibility of the school.

Penalty notices can only be withdrawn if they are issued in error. The Local Authority must refund any payments made in respect of a wrongly-issued penalty notice.

Parents with a credible claim not to have received a penalty notice may have the original replaced by a new notice, allowing time to pay the initial lower, amount. Generally, however, a notice issued by first-class post is deemed to have been received within two days.

The Power to Issue

By local agreement between schools, the police and the London Borough of Barnet, the Education Welfare Team is the only agency administering penalty notices in respect of school-related issues. Schools, academies and the police can request that a penalty notice be issued (See Table !).

The Regulations allow head teachers to delegate the power to issue penalty notices to deputy and assistant head teachers. For the purpose of this Code of Practice, in which the Local Authority issues all penalty notices, the power to **request** a penalty notice is similarly delegated to deputy and assistant head teachers. The authority to request a penalty notice cannot be delegated to other school staff. In the case of academies, the Principal may delegate this function to his or her deputy or assistant principals, however described.

Method of Issue

All penalty notices are issued by post only. It is impossible for any council officer, police officer or other official to issue on-the-spot penalty notices or accept cash from clients. Schools must also refuse payment of penalty notices. Customers must follow the payment instructions on their invoice.

Recipients are advised to contact the Education Welfare Team and not their child's school with any queries about payment or the reason for the penalty notice.

The Education Welfare Team maintains a record of penalty notices issued within the London Borough of Barnet's finance system. Pupil case files will include a record of the issuing of a penalty notice to the family. Schools must not keep records of penalty notices on children's academic records.

Declining to Issue

The Education Welfare Team expects to accede to requests from head teachers and other authorities as in table 1 but may decline to do so if it feels there is a need to explore a case further or in the case of significant delay in making the request. This provision is in place to deal with instances where the school makes decisions in good faith but may lack pertinent information when making the request.

Income

Income from penalty notices is used to fund their enforcement. In the event that income exceeds costs, surplus income passes to the Council's general account. Schools receive no income from penalty notices.

Good Practice for Schools

Head teachers should ensure that:

- Parents are aware of the school's policy on leave of absence.
- Each request for leave of absence is considered on its merits.
- Due regard is paid to religious issues, and family situations requiring special consideration.
- Parents are informed of the reasons for refusal.
- Exclusion correspondence reminds parents of their duty to supervise their excluded child during the first five days of exclusion.
- Only they, or those authorised by them, may sign the request form.
- School registers have the appropriate registration absence code as an extract from the register may be required in the event of court action.

Penalty notices are used in the following circumstances at the request of the relevant party, as described below.

Table 1

		Reason		Requesting Party
1	Absence without the school's or academy's permission	<p>A parent removes a child from school for the purpose of a holiday of any duration either without seeking the Headteacher's permission or in defiance of the Headteacher refusing such permission.</p> <p>A parent takes a child out of school to visit a home country for personal reasons.</p> <p>Registration code G</p>	<p>Headteachers must decide whether or not to authorise requests for leave of absence on a case-by-case basis. There must not be a blanket ban on leave of absence. A decision not to give leave of absence should be explained by letter to the parent.</p> <p>Parents taking their children to countries of origin have no right to do so. While being mindful of cultural differences, headteachers should consider those parents' legal responsibility to ensure their children attend fully.</p> <p>Headteachers are not compelled to request the issuing of a penalty notice even if they have refused to give leave of absence but should be mindful of the need for a consistent approach across all schools to support colleagues for whom attendance issues are of significant concern.</p> <p>Where a penalty notice is requested by a school is unpaid and the case is referred to the Magistrates' Court, the requesting colleague would be the relevant witness and could have to write a statement and/or be required to attend court.</p>	

2	EWT or TYS casework	A parent fails to improve his or her child's school attendance following casework carried out by an Education Welfare Officer.	A penalty notice may be used as a disposal by the Chair of a Court Assessment Meeting in place of prosecution or the use of an Education Supervision Order.	Chair of Court Assessment Meeting. (member of the Education Welfare Team or Targeted Youth Service) Education Welfare Officer
3	Casework from Academy attendance personnel	A parent fails to improve his or her child's school attendance following casework carried out by the Education Welfare Officer or equivalent member of staff appointed by the principal of an academy	<p>A penalty notice may be used as a disposal in place of prosecution or the use of an Education Supervision Order.</p> <p>There must be a meeting equivalent to a Local Authority Court Assessment Meeting with the parents and child (secondary-aged) where the Chair of the meeting is either the Principal, who hears the evidence of the Education Welfare Officer or equivalent.</p> <p>The minutes of this meeting and a record of the officer's intervention with the family must be provided to the Education Welfare Team.</p>	Principal, Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal
4	Inadequate parental supervision of excluded pupil	A parent fails to ensure that his or her child is adequately supervised during the first five days of an exclusion	<p>The Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 103 permits the use of penalty notices where an excluded pupil is found in a public place unsupervised by a parent during the first five days of an exclusion. A public place includes school premises. Exclusion correspondence should include reference to the possibility of this sanction.</p> <p>If an excluded pupil is encountered by more than one agency on the same day, only one offence will have been committed.</p>	

			<p>Police Officers and Community Police Support Officers use their own recording procedures, generating reports that the Education Welfare Team will check against the relevant school register. Penalty notices will be issued once these details are verified.</p> <p>Where a penalty notice is requested, the Headteacher must ensure that the school's register is coded E for the period of exclusion.</p>	
5		<p>A parent fails to ensure that his or her child is not stopped without valid excuse in a public place by police officers and Education Welfare Officers conducting a truancy sweep under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act</p>	<p>Where a pupil is stopped on a truancy sweep and is absent from school without just cause, the parents will each be issued with a penalty notice if that child's school attendance record is below 90% and there are other unauthorised absences recorded in the school register. An absence dealt with by way of a penalty notice cannot be used in evidence in any other legal action in respect of school absences that may be pursued by an Education Welfare Officer</p> <p>Where a pupil is stopped for a second time in any calendar year on a truancy sweep and is absent from school without just cause, the parents will be issued with a penalty notice regardless of the overall attendance percentage.</p> <p>If the parent is with the child and the Education Welfare Officer or police officer establishes that there is no reasonable excuse for absence from school, the parent will be issued with a penalty notice for the child's non-attendance.</p>	<p>Education Welfare Officer</p> <p>Police Officer</p>

Unauthorised absence from school

Most penalty notices are issued in respect of permission not being given for exceptional leave. In effect, this relates largely to term-time holidays, parents' plans to extend the school holidays, often to purchase cheaper flights, or to justify the expenditure.

In deciding whether to authorise a request for a term-time absence, head teachers refer to their attendance policies, the Local Authority guidance on Exceptional Leave of Absence from School (ELAS), and **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.**

EWT Casework

A penalty notice may be used as a disposal by the Chair of a Court Assessment Meeting (CAM) in place of prosecution or the use of an Education Supervision Order. No consideration is given in respect of an individual school's policy in this case.

Casework from Academy attendance personal

A penalty notice may be used as a disposal in place of prosecution or the use of an Education Supervision Order. Academy staff are not supervised by the Local Authority but are expected to perform similarly to their LA colleagues. Academies are entitled to use the enforcement system of the LA.

Inadequate parental supervision of an excluded pupil

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 103 permits the use of penalty notices where an excluded pupil is found in a public place unsupervised by a parent during the first five days of exclusion. A public place includes school premises. Exclusions correspondence should include reference to the possibility of this sanction.

If an excluded pupil is encountered by more than one agency on the same day, only one offence will have been committed.

Police Officers and Community Police Support Officers use their own recording procedures, generating reports that the Education Welfare Team will check against the relevant school register. Penalty notices will be issued once these details are verified.

Inadequate parental supervision in respect of a pupil stopped on a truancy patrol

Where a pupil is stopped on a truancy sweep and is absent from school without just cause, the parents will each be issued with a penalty notice if that child's school attendance record is below 90% and there are other unauthorised absences recorded in the school register. An absence dealt with by way of a penalty notice cannot be used in evidence in any other legal action in respect of school absences that may be pursued by an Education Welfare Officer.

Where a pupil is stopped for a second time in any calendar year on a truancy sweep and is absent from school without just cause, the parents will be issued with a penalty notice regardless of the overall attendance percentage.

If the parent is with the child and the Education Welfare Officer or police officer establishes that there is not reasonable excuse for absence from school, the parent will be issued with a penalty notice for the child's non-attendance.

Legal references

Children Act 1989

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

Education Act 1996

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended by The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2012 and 2013

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013

Education Welfare Team, May 2013

Attendance policy agreed by the Governing Body on 20th November 2014

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____ **Date** _____

Signed by Headteacher _____ **Date** _____