

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

A place where everyone belongs

Our vision: Templars - a place where everyone belongs; where everyone is proud to belong; and where everyone is welcomed, feels safe and strives to achieve their full potential.

Our mission: Every child. Every day. Every chance.

Our values: Care, Respect and Honesty.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Operational lead	Relevant senior leader
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Safeguarding and equality are considered throughout the implementation of this document.



Templars, a place where everyone belongs. A place where everyone is proud to belong. A school where everyone is welcomed, feels safe and strives to achieve their full potential:

Every child, Every day, Every chance

At Templars Primary School we value the attendance of all pupils. There is a strong relationship between good school attendance and achieving positive outcomes for children. It is recognised that attending school regularly can be a protective factor for children and young people. It is important that as a school we offer a safe environment, positive relationships, high quality teaching and learning opportunities to develop social and emotional skills.

Ensuring that children attend school every day will help achieve this ambition by maximising their education and social achievements as well as developing self-discipline, organisation and preparedness for the work environment. Improving attendance and reducing absence, especially persistent absence is a priority for our school and Coventry City Council.

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences.

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- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying and behaviour.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

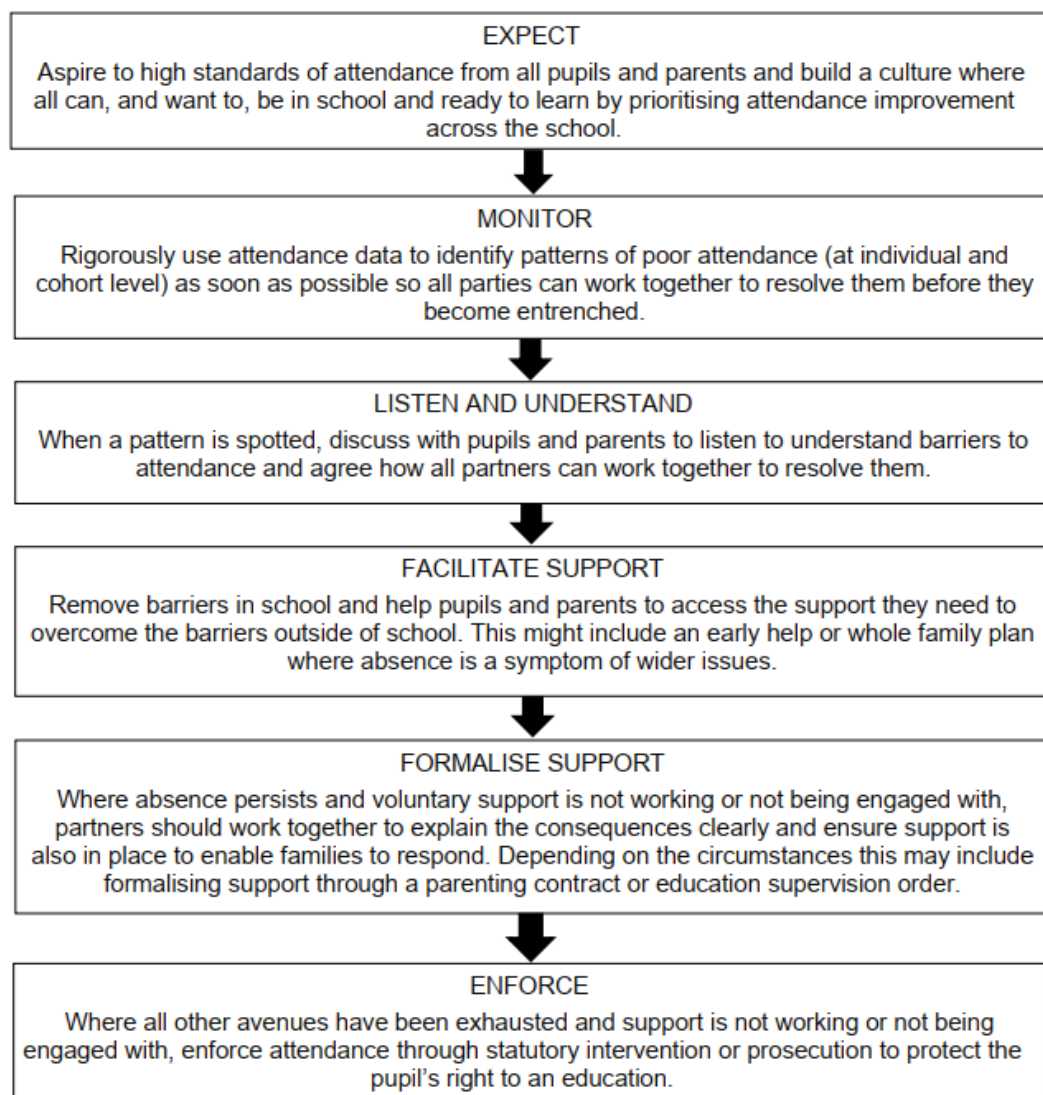
A “Parent” is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

3. Attendance Objectives

Our school attendance policy:

- Is easy to understand by pupils, parents and staff
- Is clear and consistently applied, transparent and fair
- Considers the individual needs of pupils and their families
- Is easy to find so that the whole school community is aware of our attendance expectations
- Includes the contact details of key staff to make it easy for parents to get in touch
- Is reviewed by staff regularly and involves pupils and parents because school attendance matters to everyone
- Is followed in accordance with the procedures in the flowchart below



4. Roles and Responsibilities

At Templars Primary School we believe that school attendance matters to everyone. School attendance is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Lead	Helen Benarous	Headteacher@templars.coventry.sch.uk
Attendance Officer	Jemima Ross	Attendance@templars.coventry.sch.uk
Early Help Family Support Worker	Julia Swallow	Admin@templars.coventry.sch.uk

The Local Governing Board/Trustee Board of Templars Primary School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. The governing board receives termly attendance reports, including analysis of persistent and severe absence, broken down by vulnerable groups. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Supporting the school to prioritise attendance and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensuring school staff receive training on school attendance.
- Use data to understand patterns of attendance, identifying areas of progress and where greater focus is needed
- Regularly reviewing attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Designating a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the education achievement of looked after and previously looked after pupils.
- Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.

Templars Primary School will:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support access to any required services where out of school barriers are identified and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or threshold for formal early help is not met.
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners and if the case meets threshold for formal early help/family support, including conducting an early help assessment and acting as lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers where absence becomes persistent.
- Hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future where there is a lack of engagement.
- Work with the local authority on legal intervention where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate.
- Intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils with SEND and/or medical conditions and their parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals for children with SEND and medical conditions.
- Regularly monitor data for children with SEND and medical conditions, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
- Know who the pupils who have, or who have had a social worker are.
- Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues these pupils are experience, or have experience, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration.
- Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help pupils who have a social worker, recognizing that even when statutory social care



intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

- Informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences.
- Work in partnership with local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked after children that support good attendance.
- Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance including discussion on the use of Pupil Premium Plus for previously looked after pupils.

Templars requests that parents:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher/tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or guardians to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

5. Recording Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department of Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

5.1 Leave of absence

The headteacher can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. The headteacher will restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstance set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances*

The headteacher can also allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings.

*The headteacher will consider a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. This must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. The headteacher will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or leave of absence for the purposes of leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

All absences associated with a family holiday (without exceptional circumstances) during term time will be marked as unauthorised on the register. Any parents known



to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority by the headteacher and be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

If you wish to request a leave of absence from Templars then you will need to request an Application for Leave of Absence from the attendance officer at attendance@templars.coventry.sch.uk or go to the main office where you can collect a form. You need to provide us as much information as possible on the form. If additional information is required then we will be in touch with questions. Parents should provide as much notice as possible, ideally at least 20 days' notice, when requesting leave.

A penalty notice request may be submitted to the Local Authority by the headteacher should:

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not authorised by the headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the head teacher, the parent will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in a possible children missing from education procedure being instigated.

5.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must notify us as far in advance as possible via the following methods:

- Notification on Studybugs with information about what time the appointment is and when we will expect the pupil to return to school.
- Email with evidence of the appointment (booking confirmation) and additional information as to when the pupil will be collected and returned to school.

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- Letter of appointment given to front Office with details of when the pupil will be collected and returned to school.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. We will not ask for medical evidence such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence, unnecessarily, but may request it where there is genuine concern. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

5.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Templars Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

5.4 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- Family holidays taken during term time due to the cost.
- Family holidays taken during term time due to it being a quieter time of the year.
- Pupils/Family members birthdays.
- Closure of a siblings school due to INSET days.
- A temperature that is below 37.9.
- A cough or cold – these are unavoidable in a school environment and if your child is well enough to attend school they should.
- A late night the night before a school day; it is your responsibility to ensure that your child is rested enough to attend school.
- Weddings where your child is not involved in the wedding party.



6. Our Procedures

6.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session.

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed on the admission register at the time.

Registers are taken each morning between 08:45 – 08:55 where your child also chooses their lunch or informs us if they have a packed lunch. Registers are taken on Studybugs and long term records are held on Bromcom.

6.2 Late Arrival at School

At Templars all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 08:55. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this, the school gates are open from 08:40. The school register will be taken at 08:55. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents and register at the front office with the Attendance officer. If their arrival is after 08:55 it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register) and include the number of minutes they are late.

The school register will officially close at 09.25. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival.



Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

If a pupil has more than 5 lates in a rolling three-week period a letter will be sent home highlighting how many times they have been late, how many minutes of learning has been lost and a clear expectation of improvement in the following 3 weeks

Following this letter and a monitoring period, if a pupil's lates do not improve, parents will be issued a request for a meeting with the Attendance Officer to discuss the reasons for ongoing lateness and to identify any support we can offer to improve punctuality going forwards.

Additional monitoring for three weeks will then take place and if a pupil continues to be regularly late a further meeting will be put in place with the Family Support Worker or the Headteacher.

Ongoing issues, will result in advice being sought from the Local Authority and more stringent measures will be considered, including a Fixed Penalty Notice.

6.3 Expected absence procedure for parents

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by the Studybugs app or a telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 09.25 and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned.
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out, however if on the third day of absence there has been no contact, a home visit will be made and further actions will be considered
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission.

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil.
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Offer support from the family support worker.
- Discuss the pupil at the termly Targeted Support Meetings (with the Local Authority) to seek advice and guidance on additional support strategies.
- Refer to Early Help and/or other external agencies to offer support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures.
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.

6.4 Interventions

At all stages of the term attendance is monitored and when we start seeing trends in attendance or start seeing a drop in attendance we will contact you via a letter. If attendance continues being an issue you will be contacted to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer/Family Support Worker to see what can be put in place to support you and your family/child.

Stage 1: Prevention

Criteria: Attendance is between 91% and 94% - between 10 and 18 days of absence throughout the school year - you will receive an awareness letter highlighting your child's attendance and to discuss what is hindering regular attendance and what additional support you may need. Signposting to support services may also happen e.g. GP, Early Help Services etc. Continued monitoring will take place within school.

Improvements will be recognised with a congratulatory letter to you and your child.

If absences continue the next step of the process will be followed:

Stage 2: Early Intervention

Criteria: Attendance is between 85% and 90% - between 20 to 30 days of absence throughout the school year.



Pupils who have attendance between 85% and 90% will be invited to a meeting to discuss your child's attendance and any support which may be required. This support may involve other services outside of school and universal services at stage 1. Continued contact from the school and Attendance Officer/Headteacher to encourage further access to the support services that may be needed for your child. If we do not see improvements in this area we will begin discussing the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Continued meetings with school to discuss what additional support can be put in place.

If improvements are made we will issue a congratulatory letter to you and your child. If absences continue the next step of the process will be followed:

Stage 3: Targeted Support

Criteria: Attendance is below 85% - more than 30 days of absence throughout the school year.

If your child's attendance has not improved after Step 1 and 2 and is below 85%, with the agreement of school and parents, an Attendance Contract may then be put in place. This will be in place for 6 weeks and any absences need to be evidenced by parents/carers. If this is unsuccessful, the LA may arrange a PACE meeting under caution with parents/carers as part of the legal process. The Attendance Contract may be used in court should it be deemed that an offence has been committed under Section 4441a of the Education Act (1996).

NB: Children Under 5 years old: To ensure school readiness, if your child is in Reception and has not yet turned 5 years old their attendance will also be monitored and Step 1 of the procedure will apply. When your child turns 5 years old Step 2 of the process will also apply as attendance is then a legal requirement.

7. Tailored Support



At Templars we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. This may include a referral to Early Help or an Attendance Contract.

8. Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 40 sessions (20 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

We also monitor severe absence (below 50% attendance) closely and agree joint approaches with the LA for these pupils.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.



Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

8.1 Fixed Penalty Notices

The Headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice, in line with the national framework, to parents or carers if your children are absent from school.

The threshold is 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) for any unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10-week period may span different terms or school years.

The school will prioritise a 'support first' approach offering support to families in cases where it is appropriate. Penalty notices can still be issued where support is not appropriate, such as leave of absence in term time or when support has not been engaged with.

Penalty Notices will be issued by post to your home address to each parent or carer by the local authority at the request of the Headteacher. The Penalty Notice is:

- £80 for each of your children if paid in full within 21 days.
- £160 if paid in full after 21 days but within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent within a rolling 3-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

A national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent of the same child within a rolling 3-year period has been set within the National Framework, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) prosecution will be considered.

9. Staged Reintegration/Reduced timetables

All children of compulsory school age are legally entitled to receive a suitable full-time education and the school and local authority have a statutory duty to ensure that all children in the area receive such an education. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so.

We will not use a reduced timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision where applicable. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carers and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family

We will notify the Attendance and Children Missing Education Team of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

10. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medical needs
- admissions
- anti-bullying
- exclusion
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning

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- behaviour and rewards

11. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with:

- **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**
- **Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, statutory from Aug 2024)**
- **National Framework for Penalty Notices (DfE, Aug 2024)**
- **Children Missing Education (DfE, updated Aug 2024)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, Sept 2024)**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, Dec 2023)**
- Education Acts 1996 & 2002; Children Acts 1989 & 2004

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

**Please note: Parents do not have any entitlement to take their child on
holiday during term time.**

Important Information for Parents/Carers

- From September 2022, the government's guidance for maintained schools, academies and independent schools makes it clear that schools are no longer allowed to authorise leave of absence taken in term time apart from where there are exceptional circumstances.
- Head Teachers may grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- Any absence request over 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) that is not exceptional circumstances and unapproved by the Head Teacher will incur a fine from the Council.
- This form **MUST** be completed by the parent(s)/resident parent/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child and hand in to the office or email to attendance@templars.coventry.sch.uk

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child:

Class:

Dates of Proposed Absence: From:

To:

Date your children will return to school:

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence *(they can only be exceptional circumstances) (see Leave Policy before completing)*

Total Days Requested On This Occasion



Signature of Parent/Carer:

Notes for school use only: