

**Coppice Primary  
Partnership**

*An Ethic of Excellence*



## **Attendance Policy**

**Approved: April 2023**

**Next Review: April 2026**

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteachers/heads of school to account for the implementation of this policy

The Education and Curriculum Committee will review the attendance details from across the Trust. Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) will review individual school attendance data.

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The Trust Leader**

The Trust Leader is responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the trust
- Working more intensively with schools who require support with attendance improvement
- Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries

### **3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at each school**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

### **3.5 The school attendance officer**

The school attendance officer at each school is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **3.6 Class Teachers**

All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office twice a day (morning and afternoon).

### **3.7 School admin/office staff**

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Pass on individual attendance information to relevant staff members to support improving attendance.

### **3.8 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance impacts their education and social and emotional needs.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Inform the school if their child who is due to attend a pre-school/after school club is unable to attend for any reason.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register twice a day – in the morning, and in the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. You can find the specific timings for each school as Appendix 2.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carer will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers should notify the school office as soon as practically possible when their child has an appointment.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. This will be monitored and referenced where a pupil's attendance is below that which is expected.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Lateness and punctuality will be monitored through regular reporting from the attendance officer. It will be followed up, where appropriate, by the relevant senior leader.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If we cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, we will escalate matters, contacting appropriate agencies based on the individual circumstances.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteachers' discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances that would rarely happen, are unavoidable and where there is no reasonable alternative.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

### **6.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

The Trust will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the board of trustees and the LGBs through the Education and Curriculum Committee.

### **6.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns



### **6.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2 – School times

### Coxheath Primary School

#### School Times

Year R, 1 & 2            8.50 am – 3.10pm. (Doors open from 8.40am)

Years 3 – 6            8.50am – 3.15pm (Doors open from 8.40am)

It is important that children are punctual so that they are able to start the school day at the correct time. Children can choose to 'trickle in' to school any time during the 10 minutes prior to the start of the school.

School Crossing Patrol is on duty from 8.30 – 9.10 am and 3.10 – 3.45 pm each day

**All pupils** that arrive late must report, with their parent/carer, to the school reception where the reason for lateness is recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed using Code 'L'.

**Registers close at 9.15am.** Pupils arriving after this will be marked as late using Code 'U' and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

**Any concerns regarding attendance, please contact our Family Liaison Officer.**

## Loose Primary School

### School Times

Year R, 1 & 2            8.55 am – 3.20pm. (Doors open from 8.45am)

Years 3 – 6            8.55am – 3.20pm (Doors open from 8.45am)

It is important that children are punctual so that they are able to start the school day at the correct time. Children can choose to 'trickle in' to school any time during the 10 minutes prior to the start of the school.

School Crossing Patrol is on duty from 8.30 – 9.10 am and 3.10 – 3.45 pm each day

**All pupils** that arrive late must report, with their parent/carer, to the school reception where the reason for lateness is recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed using Code 'L'.

**Registers close at 9.15am.** Pupils arriving after this will be marked as late using Code 'U' and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

**Any concerns regarding attendance, please contact our Families and Community Manager Mrs Ingrid Dutch.**

## **St Katherine's School & Nursery**

### **School Times**

**8:25** - Gates open.

**8.30** – Classrooms and 'The Hive' open for wellbeing time.

**8:40** – All children should be in class for registration and learning will begin.

**8:40** – Gates will close and children will have to go to the office and will be marked in late (L).

**9:00** – Register closes, if your child arrives after this time their mark will be recorded as a U, which is an unauthorised mark. 10 or more unauthorised sessions on your child's attendance record, could result in a fine from Kent County Council.

**3:15** – Gates will open.

**3:20** – Children to be picked up from class.

**3.20 – 3.30pm** - these 10 minutes will be allocated to well-being time for those who would like it.

**3:30** – Gates will shut and any uncollected children will be taken to the office to be collected.

**3.40** – If any child is not picked up by this time they will automatically be put into our After-School Club where they can remain until 6pm. This will be subject to a £10 charge as per our Extended Day Policy.

**Any concerns regarding attendance please contact our Family Liaison Officer Miss Vicky Abbott**

### APPENDIX 3 (Late Code U causing concern)

Dear

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that **child** has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the day they were late (Code U):

Dates of lates

Total lates

At our school the register is taken at **08.50** and is closed at **09.15** for the morning session and taken again at **13.05** and closed at **13.10** for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

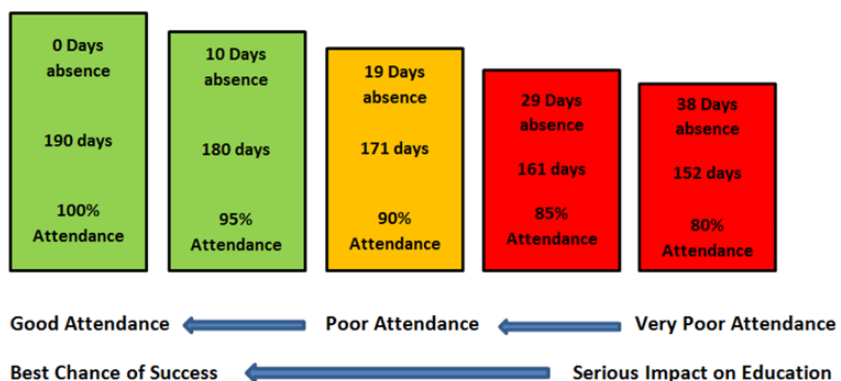
If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

There are **365 days** in a year and **190 days** in a school year.

This leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non-urgent medical appointments.





## APPENDIX 4 (Attendance 95%)

Dear

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that **child** has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the day they were absent.

As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child. On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

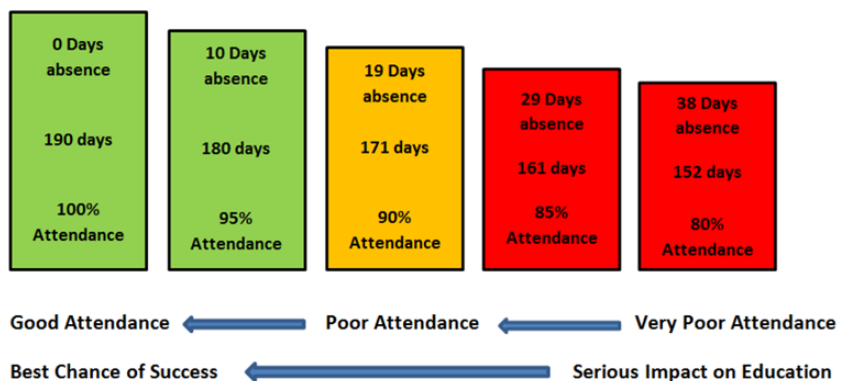
I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve your child's attendance. If we can help in any way please contact our **Family Liaison Officer/Family & Community Manager**.

Yours sincerely

**Headteacher**

There are **365 days** in a year and **190 days** in a school year.

This leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non-urgent medical appointments.



## APPENDIX 5 (Attendance 93% or less request for meeting)

Dear

Despite previous discussions, I note with concern that **child** attendance at school has made no significant improvement. Their attendance at school is currently % which means they have missed «total\_authorized\_absences» half day sessions for authorised absence and «total\_unauthorised\_absences» half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child. On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA

As there has been no improvement in their attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting with my {Family Liason Officer/Family & Community Manager/Senior Leader}}.

The time and date have been set for ?? at ?? It is important that you attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance.

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact us so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting your child's absence continues to deteriorate, further action including involving outside agencies involvement will be required.

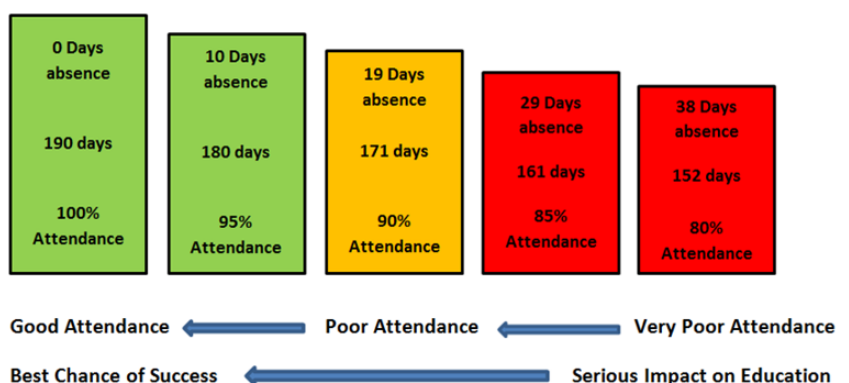
Thank you for your co-operation.

There are **365 days** in a year and **190 days** in a school year.

Yours sincerely

This leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non-urgent medical appointments.

Headteacher



**APPENDIX 6 (Letter confirming authorised absence)**

Dear

**Re: Name of Child**

**Leave of Absence Dates:**

Thank you for your recent letter informing us of leave of absence during this term for your child.

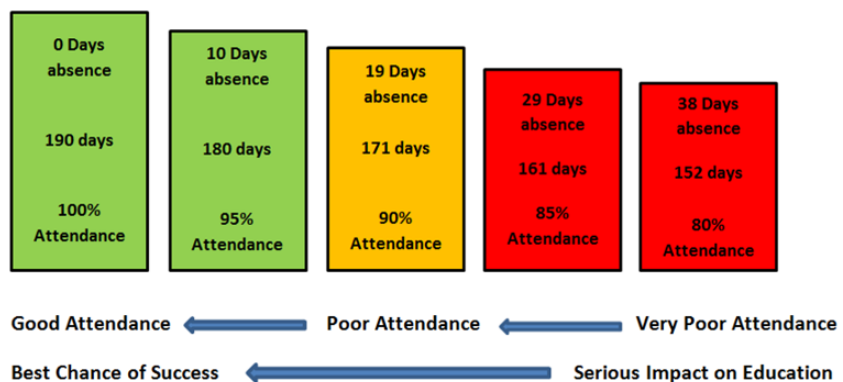
I can inform you that I have concluded that the circumstances you find yourself in are 'exceptional' and therefore leave of absence is granted.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

There are **365 days** in a year and **190 days** in a school year.

This leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non-urgent medical appointments.



**APPENDIX 7 (Letter confirming unauthorised absence)**

Dear

**Re: Name of Child:**

**Date of Leave of Absence Request:**

Thank you for your recent letter informing us of leave of absence during this term for your child.

I can inform you that we have received your letter and that your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

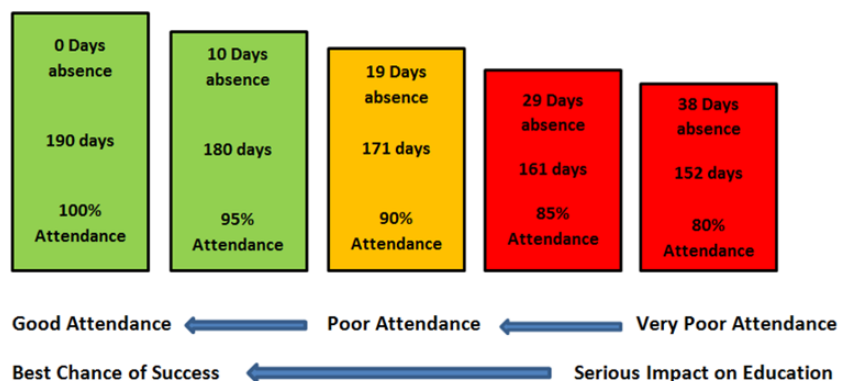
Thank you for letting us know.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

There are **365 days** in a year and **190 days** in a school year.

This leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non-urgent medical appointments.



## APPENDIX 8 (Letter confirming Penalty Notice Referral)

Dear:

### Request for leave during Term-Time

For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

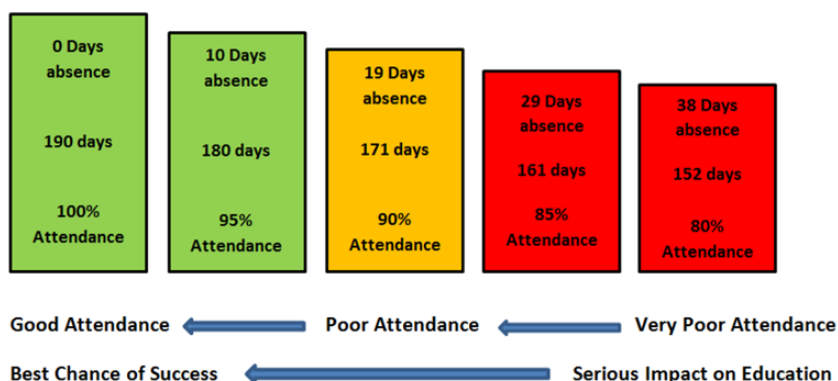
Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

There are **365 days** in a year and **190 days** in a school year.

This leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non-urgent medical appointments.

Headteacher



### Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

