

# Attendance Policy 2021-22



## Aims and Targets

The Governing body of New Hall Primary School places a high priority on achieving standards and feel that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential. In order for children to achieve their potential, pupils must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school. Regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 97% attendance throughout the school.

The Government expects us to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%);
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled; and,
- act early to address patterns of absence.

To achieve these aims for our pupils, we are committed to the following:

- to provide an environment that complies with DFE and Public Health England Guidance regarding coronavirus (COVID-19)
- a welcoming, stimulating and safe learning environment;
- for all staff to feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential;
- high expectations of our pupils and all staff;
- a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;
- recognise and celebrate achievements in all areas of school life;
- equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life;
- high quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies;
- a range of resources that are effectively used to support and challenge learning;
- provide experiences, which will develop our pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding;
- support, guidance and training for all those who teach and work with our children;
- foster and maintain links with our wider community

## Strategies used at New Hall for Monitoring Good Attendance

- Individual certificates are presented termly where 'target' attendance (97%) has been gained.
- Badges and prizes are presented termly where full attendance (100%) has been gained
- ALL children who achieve 100% attendance for the whole school year are rewarded with a certificate and a special event.  
(Please note the above three bullet points may be amended due to COVID guidance/restrictions)
- A Golden Ball to be awarded each week to any Team achieving 97%+ and two balls to the best attending Team/s. (Part of Behaviour Policy reward system) Three balls awarded to any team achieving 100%
- Weekly attendance shared with all Teams in a Monday morning Assembly and written on classroom doors.
- Deputy Head Teacher will monitor attendance and any child with below 95% attendance will trigger concern and an action plan put in place.
- Children with attendance below 90% (Persistent Absenteeism) will be monitored by the Deputy Head Teacher, CSAWS and Court Section, as necessary.

## Legislative Framework

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

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All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

### **Procedures and expectations**

#### **PARENTS will:**

- ensure that their children attend school, on time (in line with current start time for year group, see below) regularly
- notify school on the first day of absence before 8.30am by phone
- complete a request form for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances
- hand in medical evidence for appointments taken within the school day
- provide medical evidence when requested to in-line with 'Fast-track procedures
- meet with the Deputy Head Teacher to discuss their child's attendance when necessary
- ensure up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school.
- provide more than one emergency contact to school ( KCSIE 2021)
- ensure emergency contact numbers are provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

#### **CLASS TEACHERS will:**

- complete e-portal register at the start of each session (morning and afternoon)
- monitor daily patterns of attendance and report any concerns that arise to the SLT
- provide work for children to do at home if an absence is due to a long illness, disability or other circumstances
- make parents aware of concerns over good attendance

#### **OFFICE STAFF will:**

- input attendance data on CMIS system
- print off official reports for monitoring purposes at least fortnightly
- complete the absence record book
- monitor alongside the Deputy Head Teacher, patterns of attendance and lateness
- make first day absence calls/texts and record reasons for absence
- endeavour to ensure up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school
- aim to ensure more than one emergency contact per child is held in school ( KCSIE 2021) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.
- Support Fast-track procedures with parents of children whose attendance is of a concern.

#### **DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER will:**

- monitor official registers and take actions where concerns have been identified
- inform Governors of attendance records
- inform parents of individual pupils' attendance record, each term at Parents' Evening and in the end of year schools report
- inform/Meet with parents whose children's attendance causes concern
- make referrals to the Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd (CSAWS).
- make referrals to the School Nurse team.

#### **ATTENDANCE AND WELFARE OFFICER (CSAWS Ltd) will:**

- support the school in achieving its targets and addressing concerns.
- support families in ensuring their child/ren attend school regularly.
- prepare and facilitate school attendance review meetings for punctuality
- contact you by phone, letter or home visit to discuss the schools concerns and how attendance and punctuality can be improved

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- carry out Fast-track procedures with parents of children whose attendance is of a concern. (See Appendices for Procedures of Fast-track, Attendance Letters and Penalty Notice- Code of Conduct from Birmingham City Council)

**GOVERNING BODY will:**

- monitor whole school attendance termly and take appropriate action should it affect standards
- nominate a named Governor for Attendance

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated. (DFE Attendance guidance 2020)

**Late Procedures**

Children who arrive late after the doors close at **8:55am** must wait at the school office gate until a member of staff is available to admit them. Parents/carers must wait with their child/ren. A reason for the lateness will be requested so the CMIS system can be updated with the appropriate attendance code.

Children who frequently arrive late will be monitored; parents will be contacted and a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (CSAWs) considered. Children who arrive late after the registers have closed due to a medical appointment will be marked M (in). For regular (e.g. once a week) medical issues causing lateness the child will have their code move from M to / (present).

Any child arriving **15 minutes** after the doors close for any reason other than medical, will be marked U (late after registers closed).

Children who have to leave for any reason throughout the day will be signed out by a member of staff and handed over to their parent/carer or appropriate adult at the outside school gate. Pupils leaving within the school day is strongly discouraged. Parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours.

**Illness**

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' explanation that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern (we expect medical evidence to be provided when attendance falls below 92% see flow chart attached). In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

Children should not attend schools if:

- They have Covid 19 symptoms or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test (Pupil's should self-isolate and as soon as possible get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. If the result is negative, children may attend school)
- They have had a positive test PCR result.
- There are other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 in line with legislation or current guidance (for example, they are required to quarantine)

In these circumstances parents must follow government advice on test and trace and self-isolating. Parents must keep school informed of the results of any testing.

**Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.**

Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the school should record the pupil as code X in the register.

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Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes.

If you are unsure if your child should attend school, please contact the school who will offer advice and guidance or signpost you to the relevant service.

Where children are absent from school because their travel to or presence at school would conflict with guidance on self-isolating (issued by Public Health England or the department for education) or legislation related to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) they will be marked in the register as a X code this is not counted as an absence in school census (with the exception of absence due to diagnosed Covid-19 which is absence due to illness).

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

School will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

### **Medical appointments**

Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.

Where appointments have to be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment. If it is necessary to attend a medical appointment within the school day, a copy of the appointment letter or card should be presented at school prior to the day of the appointment.

### **Other reasons for absences:**

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

### **Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school**

We are aware that many pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school especially if they have been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary. Parents should contact school to discuss concerns and school can give you more details regarding the measures we have put in place to reduce the risk in school. School will be working closely with other professionals as appropriate to support all our pupils return to school, this includes CSAWS who may contact you if there are attendance related issues.

### **Religious Observance**

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 this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. However, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. Religious bodies maybe contacted to verify these occasions.

## **Traveller Absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must advise school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and inform the school regarding proposed return dates

School will authorise absence of Traveller children if their parent(s) are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to and has given indication that they intend to return.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

## **Holiday in Term Time Procedures (Leave of Absence)**

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

A 'Leave in Term Time' letter is sent to all parents/carers at the start of every academic year to inform them that the Headteacher is unable to authorise leave during term time except where there are exceptional circumstances. Parents may choose to complete an 'Exceptional Circumstances Form' stating why they are removing their child during term time. This is given to the Head Teacher. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised. (For a list of examples of exceptional circumstances - See Appendix A). Any absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention, will be coded as Unauthorised (G) - Family holiday not agreed or (O) Unauthorised.

If an 'exceptional circumstance form' is rejected, then the absence; should the parent still proceed with the removal of their child during term time; is dealt with under the Unauthorised Leave in Term Time process. (See appendix H). As usual parents should plan to take their holidays in school break, and should consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips abroad that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to Quarantine on arrival in or return to the UK code X will be recorded in the register. Any legal action required will be taken by the Education Legal Intervention Team.

## **Reintegration of Long Term Absentees**

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of students learning, and positive strategies should be employed to minimise such effects.

### Key Principles

- We should always keep in touch with a student/and his/her family during a long absence
- We should always make sure he/she is welcomed back
- We should never make sarcastic comments about an absence - a thoughtless word can destroy hours of work by staff

Head Teacher and SENCO to consider a phased return where appropriate. This needs to be considered in line with the Birmingham LA process and procedure, which includes seeking expert advice from relevant professionals and co-ordinating a multi-agency meeting. Consideration needs to be given to any special needs the pupil may have and appropriate support identified. Consideration must be given to a package of support which may include providing a mentor (staff member/student)

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Class Teachers should ensure that the pupil feels welcomed back to school in an appropriate way and take any necessary steps to support their re-integration.

### **Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education**

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12). Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), subparagraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties. In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the [statutory guidance](#) to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

### **Alternative Education Providers**

On rare occasions, a small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at New Hall Primary School. Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored and reflected on school registers. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with New Hall Primary School.

### **Registers**

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions. The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the head teacher has either approved in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the head teacher [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No.2006/1751) - reg 7(1)].

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There are procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks. School complies with and uses the DFE Compulsory National Attendance Codes to categorise absence (Appendix B).

### **Use of Attendance Data**

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you from your previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

Where there is cause for concern, this information is shared with CSAWS during regular attendance meetings held at school. CSAWS then follow up attendance concerns with parents and carers on school's behalf.



# Appendices

Appendix A - Guidance from NAHT on authorised term time pupil absence

Appendix B - Codes

Appendix C - Flow chart of late procedures

Appendix D - Late Letters

Letter 1 - Late warning letter

Letter 2 - Referral to CSAWs

Appendix E - Flow chart of attendance procedures

Appendix F - Attendance Letters

Letter 1 -Whole School Attendance Letter

Letter 2 - Head Teacher concerns letter

Letter 3 -Medical evidence/request letter

Letter 4 - Referral to CSAWS - invitation for informal meeting

Letter 5 - FAST-track to Attendance - Invitation to a School Review Attendance Meeting (SARM)

Letter 6 - FAST-track to Attendance - Formal Warning Notice

Appendix G - Medical Request Form

Appendix H - Leave in Term Time Letters

Request for leave refused (LD1)

Leave taken (LD2)

Appendix I - Term Time Leave Request Form

Appendix J - FAST-track to Attendance Parent Information Sheet

## Appendix A - Guidance from NAHT on authorised term time pupil absence



### Guidance on authorised term-time pupil absence

A little background to term-time pupil absences On matters relating to term-time pupil absences, the Education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, removed all references to ‘family holidays’ and ‘extended leave’ as well as the ‘notional threshold of ten school days’.

The 2013 amendments made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless ‘exceptional circumstances’ prevail. The regulations also state that head teachers should determine the number of school days a pupil can be away from school in the event that leave is granted for ‘exceptional circumstances’.

We believe the guidelines in this document are compatible with the amendments and help to clarify the meaning of ‘exceptional circumstances’; they do not change it.

It’s generally held that head teachers can authorise a pupil’s absence during termtime but the merits of such a request are now required to be exceptional.

#### NAHT’s approach and advice to managing term-time pupil absence requests

There continues to be some debate about what ‘exceptional circumstances’ mean when deciding whether to grant absence for pupils during term-time. We think we can help in this respect.

The NAHT believes it is valuable to have some guiding principles to back schools in their decisions to grant term-time pupil absences and to provide some consistency.

These guiding principles have no statutory authority; schools are at liberty to adopt them nonetheless as part of their overall approach to granting pupil term-time absence.

The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional circumstances’ are that they are ‘rare, significant, unavoidable and short

## Guiding principles

1. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Head teachers will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy should be that absences will not be granted during term-time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
2. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.
3. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances'.
4. Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member are usually considered to amount to 'exceptional circumstances', but for the funeral service only, not for extended leave.
5. Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, again, not for extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
6. Schools may wish to take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
7. Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
8. Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or a crisis.
9. It is acceptable to take a pupil's record of attendance into account when making absence-related decisions.
10. It is important to note that head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether a particular absence is authorised. Where schools serve communities whose patterns of work create a regular barrier to attendance and family life, schools could consider changes to term times; we strongly recommend this approach is co-ordinated across schools in a designated area or region.

## Appendix B – Codes

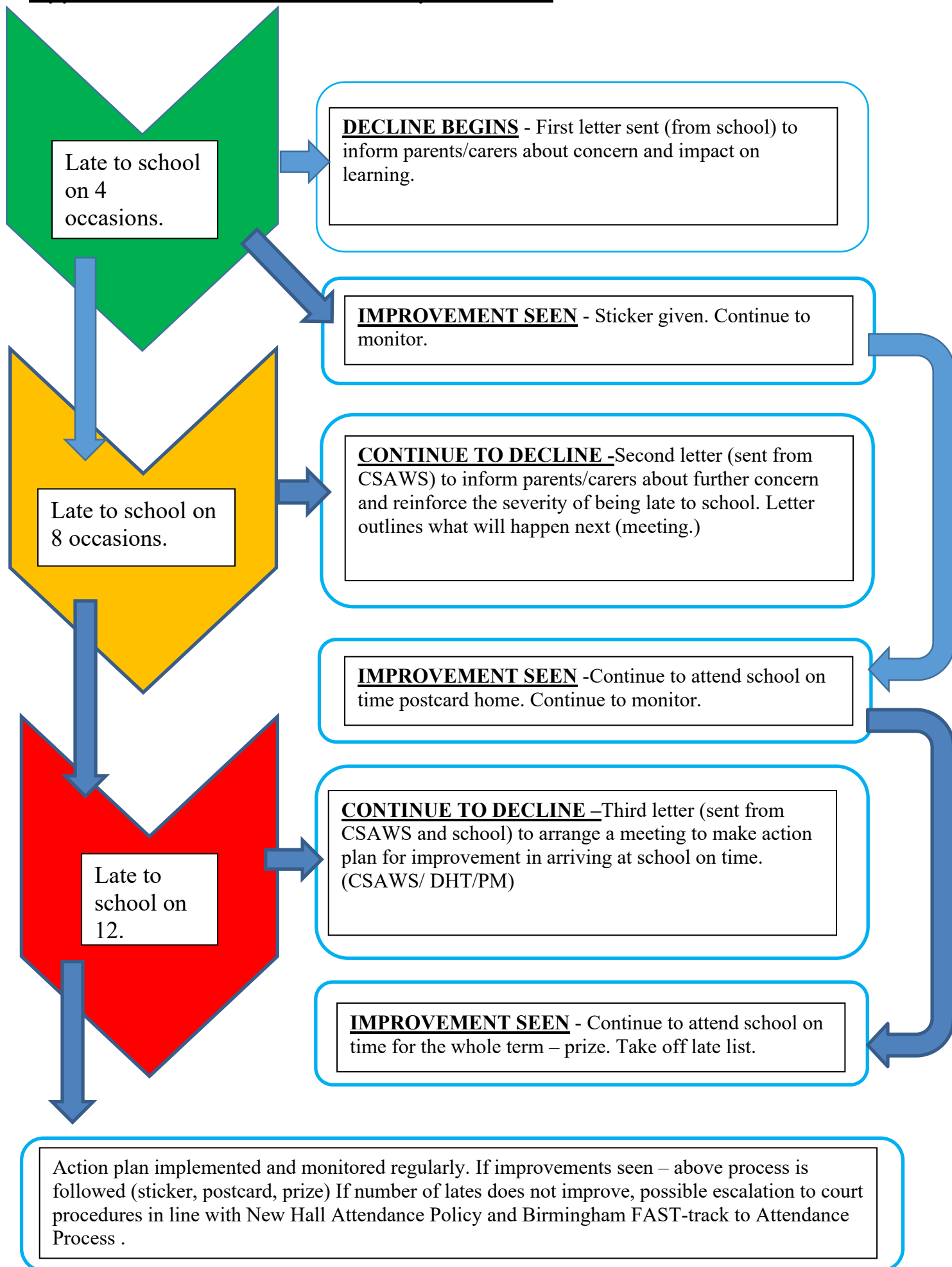


### ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Present
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Not counted in possible attendances

## Appendix C Flow chart of late procedures



# Letter 1

## Late Warning Letter

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»  
«AddressLine1»  
«AddressLine2»  
«City»  
«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName»

Your child, «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» has been identified as having poor punctuality at «School\_name» School.

As you may be aware, the law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if late arrival is not resolved.

***I have to advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. (Education Act 1996)***

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equals days worth of teaching lost in a year
5 mins	3.4 days
10 mins	6.9 days
15 mins	10.3 days
20 mins	13.8 days
30 mins	20.7 days

Poor punctuality can lead to your child...

- Feeling embarrassed in front of their friends
- Missing the beginning of vital lessons
- Missing important instructions for the rest of the school day
- Learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future

If your child is having any difficulties that you wish to discuss, contact me immediately. If you have other concerns about your child or other difficulties you would like support with, please contact the school who may be able to assist in the form of an Early Help Assessment.

Your child's punctuality must now improve or the school may have no option but to take further action against you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Hanks  
Headteacher

Mrs Hemming  
Deputy Headteacher

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## Letter 2

### Late letter from CSAWs



Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd  
(CSAWS)

Attendance and Welfare Officer: Victoria Holloway

Call: 07506 904 829

NAME  
ADDRESS  
ADDRESS

DATE

Dear NAME

#### **RE: Punctuality**

CSAWS and New Hall Primary School are working to raise levels of punctuality across the school. School have been promoting positive punctuality with those students whose punctuality has improved with stickers and post cards home. School have identified **Student Name** punctuality as a concern and have written home to you previously.

I am now writing to you as your child's punctuality has continued to raise concerns, as they have arrived late into school on 0 occasions.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain the importance of your child attending school on time each morning.

#### **Being at school on time every day means:**

- Your child gets the best possible start to their day.
- Your child doesn't miss any important lessons or instructions.
- Your child will be able to walk into school with all the other children and take part in the important routines at the start of the day.
- Your child won't feel embarrassed or self-conscious because they have arrived at a different time or have to walk into a full classroom.
- Your child is establishing good routines and habits that will help them as they progress through school and eventually into the workplace.

I will continue to monitor **Student Names** punctuality over the remainder of the school year and should they receive any further late marks then you may be invited into school to discuss this further.

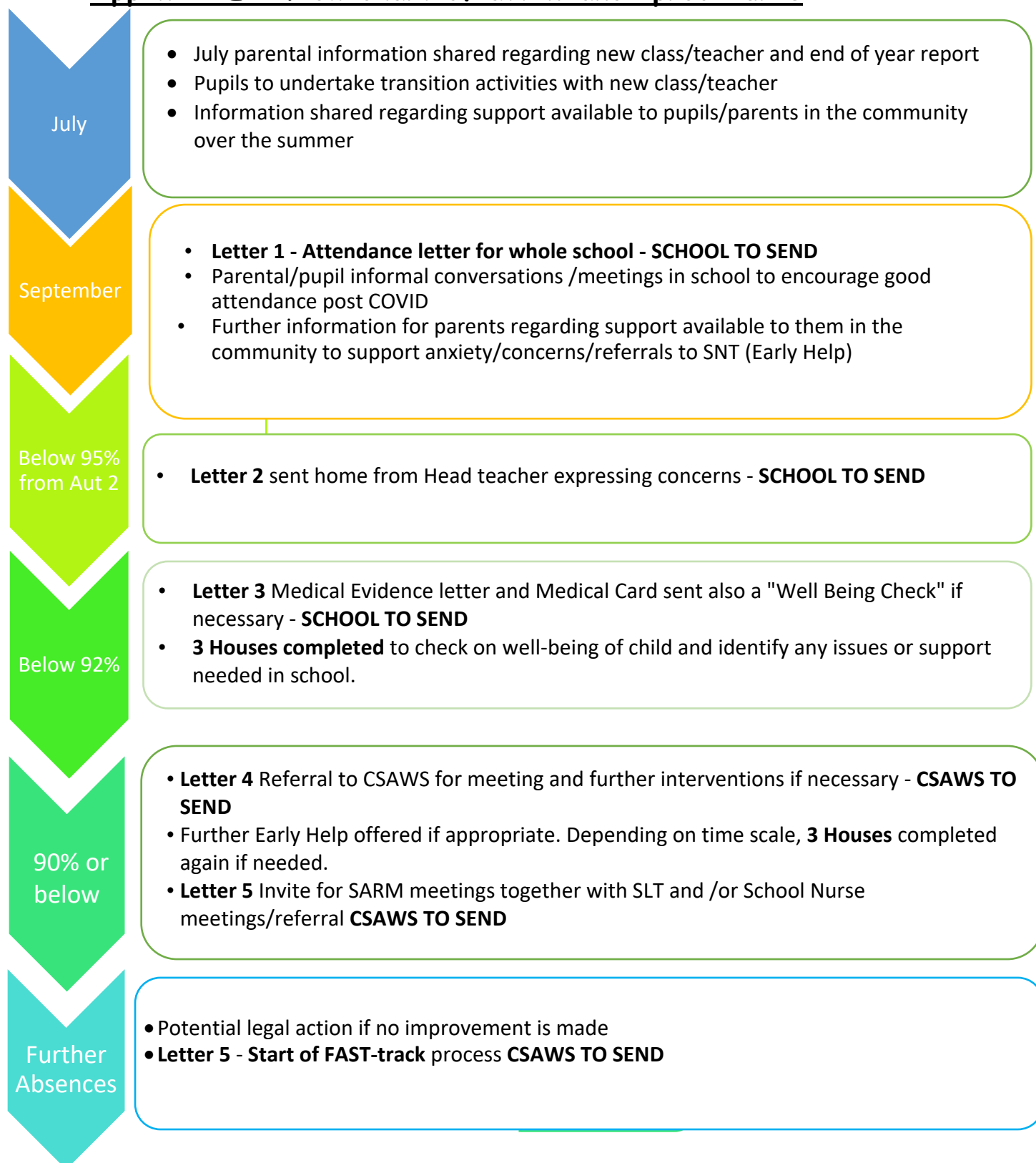
If you need further support with this matter, then please do not hesitate to contact us at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely  
Victoria Holloway  
Attendance and Welfare Officer  
Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd

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## Appendix E - Flow chart of attendance procedures





## Appendix F – Attendance Letters

### Letter 1 -Whole School Attendance Letter



# School Attendance – a very important message for all parents/carers

## September 2021

*Please Read*

### Insert Date

Dear Parent/Carer,

This is an important update about school attendance for the 2021/22 academic year.

..... Academy/School is working in partnership with parents and Birmingham City Council to ensure all children return to school following a difficult previous year. We would like to thank parents for the work you have done in ensuring your children received education during that time.

It is now vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development. We also know that when not in school, children missed being with their friends and the wider social aspects of school.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. ***Therefore, the government has confirmed that school attendance continues to be compulsory.***

This means that (unless parents are formally notified of new lockdown arrangements where schools are closed or a child is required to self-isolate), the usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to send their child/children to school regularly where they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the option for local authorities to again consider the use of legal sanctions, including penalty notices and prosecution in court.

If you are worried about your child/children attending school the first port of call is to discuss your concerns with the school directly. The school has specialist staff who may be able to help, and all schools work closely with health and council teams who may also be able to help if needed.

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***Please note that, given the disruption to children's education caused by the pandemic, requests for leave during term time are unlikely to be authorised by the Head Teacher.***

Family emergencies also need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members.

No school or local authority wants to take legal action. Every attempt to resolve parents' concerns and improve a child's attendance will be made before any formal legal action, which may include a penalty notice or court action, is instigated.

***However, where all efforts fail and parents fail to ensure their child attends school regularly, legal action may be considered.***

After so much disruption to children's education over the past year, the most important thing is that the school and parents work together to get children back into school. The school is ready to listen so please contact them if you have any worries and they will try to help you. There is also information for parents and carers on attending school during the pandemic here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Additionally, Birmingham City Council provides online information and guidance to parents on school attendance which you can access here:

[https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20014/schools\\_and\\_learning/1502/school\\_attendance\\_advice\\_for\\_parents](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20014/schools_and_learning/1502/school_attendance_advice_for_parents)

We wish you and your child/children all the best for the new academic year.

Kind regards

Education Legal Intervention Team  
Birmingham City Council

Mrs Hanks  
Head Teacher

## Letter 2 - Head Teacher concerns letter

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»  
«AddressLine1»  
«AddressLine2»  
«City»  
«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

**Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB» Yr «YearGroup»**

I'm writing to you to express concern about **«ChildFirstName»** attendance in school. As you may be aware, it is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure children attend school regularly.

We work with parents/carers to help improve school attendance. Good attendance will mean that your child is able to achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- miss out on social events
- are more likely to become involved in crime

If you feel your child has ongoing or unresolved medical issues you are advised to approach your doctor urgently and to inform the school. If your concerns relate to Covid-19 we can provide support and advice. If there are other difficulties affecting your ability to ensure your child attends school regularly that you would like support with, we may be able to help and offer an Early Help Assessment so please contact us urgently to arrange a meeting.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or your child's attendance please contact the school. If you call and there is no one available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Hanks  
Headteacher

Mrs Hemming  
Deputy Headteacher

## Letter 3 -Medical evidence/request letter

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»  
«AddressLine1»  
«AddressLine2»  
«City»  
«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

### **Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB» Yr «YearGroup»**

Your child's poor attendance at school this year is causing serious concern as **he/she** has been absent for **number** of sessions out of a possible **number** of sessions. This will make it much harder for your child to achieve good results in their school work. **Most/All** of the absence has been due to illness or for medical reasons.

Unfortunately, due to the high levels of absence from school, **the Head Teacher can no longer authorise any absence for medical reasons unless supported by medical evidence.** If you have concerns about your child's health and wellbeing, we are able to make a referral to the School Nurse with your consent if we haven't done so already. High levels of illness absence may also warrant a discussion with your GP to rule out any underlying medical conditions and we would urge you to make an appointment at the earliest opportunity.

Should **Pupil's name** have any further sessions of absence because of illness or medical reasons you are strongly advised to provide one of the following which may enable the Head Teacher to authorise your child's absence:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital Consultant or Psychologist
- Evidence of a consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes
- Letters concerning hospital appointments
- Slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist

**Doctors or GP 'sick' notes are not required. Please do not request these from your GP as s/he will not be able to provide one.**

Please be aware that telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent/carer are **not** acceptable as medical evidence when attendance is of serious concern.

I have to advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996 Section 444).

**Date of Policy: September 2021**

**Date of Review: September 2022**

We work with parents to improve school attendance. Good attendance will mean that your child is able to achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- miss out on social events
- are more likely to become involved in crime

If you have other concerns about your child or other difficulties you would like support with, please contact the school who may be able to assist in the form of an Early Help Assessment.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or your child's attendance, please contact us. If you call and we are not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs B Hanks  
Head Teacher

Mrs K Hemming  
Deputy Head Teacher

## Letter 4 - Referral to CSAWS

Date:

PARENT'S NAME & ADDRESS

Dear PARENT'S NAME

RE: Attendance - CHILD'S NAME CHILD'S DOB

Government guidance has changed, which means that any pupil whose attendance is under 90% is classed as a **persistent absentee**, and there is a clear expectation that efforts are to be made to improve attendance. As you can see CHILD'S NAME attendance is below this level.

Here at New Hall Primary we work in partnership with CSAWS, our Attendance and Welfare service, to raise attendance across the school. As CHILD'S NAME'S attendance has not improved, a referral will now be made to our Attendance and Welfare Officer. CSAWS will continue to monitor CHILD'S NAME attendance and consider legal action where appropriate.

As a parent/guardian, it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time every day.

We want to work with you and your child in raising levels of attendance, therefore if you need support with this matter please contact us as soon as possible.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs B Hanks  
Head Teacher

# Letter 5 FAST-track to Attendance Invitation to a School Attendance Review Meeting (SARM)

## Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»  
«AddressLine1»  
«AddressLine2»  
«City»  
«PostCode»

## **FAST-track to Attendance Invitation to a School Attendance Review Meeting**

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

**Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB»  
Yr «YearGroup» at «SchoolName»**

There have been continuing difficulties concerning the attendance of your child «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» at «SchoolName».

To assist you, the school have tried to engage with you to offer additional support such as Early Help to improve «ChildFirstName»'s attendance and prevent the need for legal action.

In an attempt to resolve issues regarding attendance, a formal School Attendance Review Meeting has been arranged at **«SchoolName» on «AppointDate» at «AppointTime»**.

**It is very important that you attend. Your co-operation is essential.**

This meeting is an opportunity for you to discuss any matters of concern. If you now require Early Help, you must attend the meeting after which an assessment can be arranged.

Failure to attend this meeting and further unauthorised absence could result in you being prosecuted in court or a penalty notice being issued.

**I have to advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Section 444, Education Act 1996).**

Please contact me urgently on the telephone number provided if you are unable to attend. If I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely

«School\_Representative»  
Job Title

# Letter 6 - FAST-track to attendance Formal Warning Notice

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»

«AddressLine1»

«AddressLine2»

«City»

«PostCode»

## Fast-track to Attendance Formal Warning Notice

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

**Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB»  
Yr «YearGroup» at «SchoolName»**

### **DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER. TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION**

Your child/ren, «ChildFirstName» has/have been identified as having poor attendance at «SchoolName».

To assist you, the school have tried to engage with you to offer additional support such as Early Help etc.; have invited you to attend a formal School Attendance Review Meeting; and have provided you with advice to improve your child's attendance.

Despite this, there is now a significant amount of unauthorised absence. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: *'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence'*.

**This is a formal warning notice advising you that the Local Authority may consider issuing a penalty notice/taking legal action against you should there be any further unauthorised absence.**

To avoid this you **must** prevent any further unauthorised absence. You are reminded that you need to provide medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any illness absences. Details of the medical evidence required is included on the attached leaflet.

I would strongly advise that you read the attached leaflet which will provide further guidance on getting your child to school and advice as to your legal responsibilities.

Most attendance problems can be sorted out by parents. **If your child/ren is/are having any difficulties please contact the school immediately and ask for an Early Help assessment.**

Yours sincerely,

«School\_Representative»

Job Title



# Appendix G - Medical Request Form



New Hall Primary School

Langley Hall Drive

Sutton Coldfield

B75 7NQ

Tel No. 0121 464 5170

## MEDICAL CARD

To Whom It May Concern - The child named below needs proof of attendance of a doctor's appointment. Please would you date, sign or stamp the card.

**Student Name**.....**D.O.B** .....

**Doctor's Name**.....

**Surgery Name/Address**.....

**Telephone No**.....

Many Thanks

Mrs Hemming, Deputy Head Teacher/Attendance Leader

Date	Surgery Stamp/Doctor's signature
Description of illness/medical issue	

See over for more

Date	Surgery Stamp/Doctor's signature
Description of illness/medical issue	

Date	Surgery Stamp/Doctor's signature
Description of illness/medical issue	

Date	Surgery Stamp/Doctor's signature
Description of illness/medical issue	

## Appendix H - Leave in Term Time Letters

### Request for Leave Refused (LD1)

#### Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»  
«AddressLine1»  
«AddressLine2»  
«City»  
«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

**Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB»  
Yr «YearGroup» at «SchoolName»**

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request.

On this occasion I am not able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

*'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence'.*

If you decide to take the leave the absence will be marked as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued or legal action taken.

**If the request is due to a family emergency, careful consideration is required as to whether it is appropriate or in the best interest of the child to miss school for emergencies being dealt with by adult family members. If you travel abroad the children may also have to miss even more lessons due to Coronavirus quarantine.**

It is essential for your child to be in school regularly to benefit fully from their educational opportunities. Good attendance will ensure that your child can reach their full potential. To achieve this, your child needs to attend school every day. For example, two weeks absence is equivalent to around 50 lessons missed which will never be repeated. A further two weeks of quarantine would mean that a total of 100 lessons would be missed in that instance.

We are sure you would not wish to jeopardise your child's academic progress by taking them away at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs B Hanks  
Head Teacher

Enclosure: copy of 'Leave of Absence Request Form'

## Leave Taken (LD2)

### Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»

«AddressLine1»

«AddressLine2»

«City»

«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

**Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB»**

**Yr «YearGroup» at «SchoolName»**

This letter is sent to parents/carers whose child is/has been absent from school due to possible unauthorised leave in term time.

Although you may have contacted school after the leave commenced to explain the circumstances, or, asked a friend/relative to notify the school, please be aware that the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment) 2016 do not allow for retrospective authorisation of leave in term time. In addition, if you asked a friend/relative to contact the school on your behalf, their explanation could not be accepted as parents must contact the school directly themselves.

If it was not unauthorised leave but illness which caused your child's absence you will need to provide medical evidence to the school in order for it to be authorised. This could include:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital Consultant or Psychologist
- Evidence of a consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes
- Letters concerning hospital appointments
- Slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist
- Evidence of a positive Covid-19 test

**Doctors or GP 'sick' notes are not required unless the child has been treated abroad.**

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

*'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence'.* Unauthorised absence may result in a Penalty Notice being issued or legal action being taken against you.

I would also advise that if your child is still currently absent, you must return the child to school with immediate effect unless the child is self-isolating because of:

- symptoms of Covid-19 (you must seek a Covid test and provide the evidence of the result to the school);
- a positive Covid test (you must supply evidence of the test result to the school);
- or is in quarantine due to returning from a country not in a Coronavirus (COVID-19) UK travel corridor. You can find details of countries currently in the travel corridor list via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>

If you haven't already done so, please contact the school urgently regarding the circumstances of your child's absence.

Yours sincerely,  
Mrs B Hanks  
Head Teacher

**Date of Policy: September 2021**

**Date of Review: September 2022**

# Appendix I Term Time Leave Request Form

School logo

## **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES – PUPIL TERM TIME LEAVE REQUEST (to be completed by parents/carers only)**

Pupil's Name ..... D.O.B ..... Form .....

Pupil's Name ..... D.O.B ..... Form .....

Pupil's Name ..... D.O.B ..... Form .....

I request permission for the above named pupil(s) to be granted leave during the school term.

### Reason for request

.....  
.....  
.....

### Dates of absence

From ..... To ..... No of school days .....

Address where we will be staying.....

Email address.....

### I/We understand that if leave is agreed:

- if travelling abroad, I / we will supply a copy of the return travel documentation.
- I / we will supply the name and phone number of a contact person whilst abroad.
- if I / we do not return at the agreed time; I / we am / are aware that I / we may be issued with a penalty notice. If I do not pay the fine, the case may be referred to Court which could result in a fine of up to £1000 per child and a criminal record.
- In exceptional circumstances penalty notices may not be issued and cases may be taken straight to Court.

<b>Parent/Carer Name</b> .....	<b>Parent/Carer Name</b> .....
<b>DOB</b> .....	<b>DOB</b> .....
<b>Address</b> ..... .....	<b>Address</b> ..... .....
<b>Signature</b> .....	<b>Signature</b> .....
<b>Date</b> .....	<b>Date</b> .....

Request **agreed / denied**

Signed ..... Head Teacher      Dated .....

**Date of Policy: September 2021**

**Date of Review: September 2022**



## FAST-track to Attendance

### Legal Action Information for Parents

This leaflet is for only parents/carers whose child/ren's attendance has not improved following offers of support from their child's school, including a formal meeting. **To avoid Legal Action being taken against you for failing to ensure your child/ren attend school regularly, you are advised of the following:**

- Ensure your child attends school every day it is open, on time, escorting them into school if necessary and handing them over to a member of staff. **(Please be aware your child may get an unauthorised absence mark when they arrive after registration closes).**
- Contact school on the first day of every absence by 9.30am stating the reason for absence and the likely return date.
- Take your child to the doctor if unwell and provide the school with: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. **The Head Teacher will not authorise medical absence without evidence.**

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

## Legal Information and outcomes in respect of poor attendance

### Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school for first offences. (In cases of excessive absence, or repeat offences, whether for ongoing absence or leave in term time, the matter may be referred straight to Court.) **The amount of the penalty is £60.**

- **If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.**
- **If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute** under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

### Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

- **The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a victim surcharge, and/or make a Parenting Order.**

### Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996:

"If in the above circumstances you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence."

- **The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months, impose a victim surcharge and order payment of the prosecution costs.**

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- 'Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.