





# Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Policy Review Details	
This policy will be reviewed by the governing body in accordance with the Policy Review Schedule	
Date of Issue: September 2021	
	
Chair of Governors' Signature	Headteacher's Signature
Date of review: September 2024	Date of next review: September 2025

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## Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## **Our Attendance Lead is Miss Ann-Marie Preston.**

### **We aim to ensure:-**

- That children enjoy their time in school and feel happy, safe and valued.
- That children reach their potential in all areas of the curriculum and acquire appropriate and useful skills and knowledge which will prepare them to become independent learners.
- That work is well planned and provides realistic challenges and targets for future progress.
- That children grow throughout school to become responsible citizens who respect others and are becoming ready to take their place in future society.
- That the Christian ethos provides a stimulating, supportive and purposeful environment.

### **As a school we aim to:**

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 96%.
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

### **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school.

### **As a parent you can help us by:**

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return.
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

### **We shall:**

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as soon as possible. You will receive a phone call on the first morning of your child's absence.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance e.g. through certificates and a weekly Attendance Bear for the best attending class in school. Termly attendance badges are awarded to pupils with attendance over 96%. These incentives are reviewed regularly and pupils are consulted.
- Publish your child's attendance rate on his/her annual school report.
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance.
- If we continue to have concerns make a referral to the School Attendance Team from the local authority (Salford).

## **Authorised Absence**

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as 'authorised absences. For example, if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance.

We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that caused you child to be absent. Please let us know as we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as 'unauthorised absences'. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Your child's birthday
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- Unauthorised absences will be reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Team from Salford may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

## **Punctuality**

- Parents and Carers are expected to drop their child off at their classroom door on arrival at school to handover to the class teacher.
- Morning registration is at 9:00am. This is the time your child should be in class.
- Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after 9:00am. All children arriving after 9:00am must report to the office. After 9:30am it is classed as an unauthorised absence.
- Lateness is monitored monthly. Where children have persistent lateness problems, the Attendance Lead will contact parents to discuss the matter.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance.
- You will be contacted to discuss the matter further if your child is regularly late for school.

## **Term Time Leave of Absence**

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time.

### **It is our policy:**

- There is no entitlement to time off in term time. If your child has over 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a 10 week period, the parent/carer will automatically be issued with a fixed penalty notice.
- If your absence is less than 10 sessions (5 days) authorisation may still be refused if your child's attendance in the last 12 months has been below 96%. All absences will be included as part of the 5 days. If your child is away from school without permission for a period of one week (10 sessions) then any further instances of unauthorised absences will trigger the fixed penalty process.
- Try to minimise time out of school by timing holidays at either end of a school break.

- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom.

### **Response to absence**

If school has not been notified about a child's absence, a member of staff will contact the parent/carer on the first morning.

If the parent notifies the school of a child's reason of absence, but the child continues to be absent for more than a week, then an update check will be made by the school in the form of a phone call.

If the child continues to be absent the Attendance Lead will either write to the parent/carer or consider a referral to the School Attendance Team or the school nurse.

If an absence is unexplained the school will write to the parents for an explanation. If no reason is forthcoming a phone call will be made.

Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the Attendance Lead and the School Attendance Team.

Where children have persistent attendance problems the Attendance Lead will invite parents/carers into school to a formal meeting with the School Attendance Team (Attendance Panel).

### **Recording**

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at 9:00am. At 9:00am the register is saved and locked on SIMS. Any late pupils should then enter the school through the main entrance. If any pupil arrives late the time and reason for late arrival will be recorded. All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late MUST register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

Afternoon registration is completed by 1pm.

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education Act which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons of an authorised absence:

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause;
- The child lives over a certain distance from the school and either the LA has failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or the LA has failed to make suitable transport arrangements.
- The child is absent on days exclusive set apart for religious observance in their particular faith.
- The child is absent 'with leave'. This refers to leave being granted by the school, not by the parent, and would normally relate to no more than 5 school days in any 1 year.
- A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason.

### **Attendance Codes**

A set of standard codes is used consistently within the register (see appendix 1). These codes are input into the register as required and are used to give more meaning to the register and provide statistical data.

## **Requests for Leave of Absence**

If parents wish to request a period of leave they are required to complete an absence permission form. From August 2024, the government brought in new legislation for attendance.

- Holidays are no longer authorised.
- Any holidays of 5 days or more will trigger an automatic issue of a fixed penalty notice.
- Penalty notices are as follows:
  - £160 per parent, per child. This will be reduced to £80 if the fine is paid within 21 days.
  - If a second penalty notice is issued (within 3 years), the fine is £160 per parent, per child, and must be paid within 28 days.

## **Monitoring**

The Attendance Lead and School Attendance Team will review the attendance of all the pupils on a regular basis and any pupils identified as a concern having less than 90% attendance more often. A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if after another month there appears to be no improvement the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the Attendance Lead to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending. If the parents do not attend the meeting or after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve a formal referral to the Educational Welfare Officer will be made. The registration system provides reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed and provide information to assist the school to manage attendance issues strategically. The School Attendance Team will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

## **Children Missing Education**

When pupils leave and cannot be contacted then the child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out an investigation into the whereabouts of the child. A referral will be made to the CME team by the Children and Families Officer.

## **Legal Note**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). The Education Welfare Officer aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted or have to pay a Fixed Penalty fine for unauthorised absences.

We value your support in helping us to maintain standards.

## **Penalty Notices**

The Education (Penalty Notices) (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) Regulations 2024

2024 No. 210

Education Penalty Notices for Non-School attendance

New Legislation comes into force on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 regarding the issuing of penalty notices relating to none school attendance.

Schools are required to consider, on a case by case basis, whether to ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to a parent when their child's absence is unauthorised.

Working within a Code of Conduct, Salford Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 10-week period;

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (O coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised holidays (G Coded)
- Persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration (U coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences (O, G and U coded)

You may receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance.

Within the new National Framework, there is a national limit to the amount of Fixed Penalty Notices that can be issued to any parent in respect of an individual child, within a three-year period. Each fixed penalty is issued on the basis of per parent/per child – therefore where a child has two parents, two fines may be issued.

The fixed penalty notice amount has increased to the following:

- Penalty Notice One - £160 discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Penalty Notice Two - £160 with no discount offered.

Should a third absence be taken within the three-year period, a parent may be summonsed to the Magistrates Court for knowingly failing to secure good attendance at school (Section 444 (1A) of Education Act 1996).

*Please note that from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024, schools are not able to authorise any leave of absence for holidays.*

The local authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties, please contact your school and ask for support.

## **Equal Opportunities**

At St George's CE Primary School, all children have the right to achieve to their full potential, regardless of gender, race, culture, language, physical ability, special needs or socio-economic status. Therefore, all pupils are given appropriate support and encouragement to attend school regularly.

## 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>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable



<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil’s travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law

<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>&amp;</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

ADDRESS

DATE

**NOTICE TO IMPROVE: ATTENDANCE.**

We have growing concerns that CHILDS NAME has been absent from school for a number of sessions between the dates [ ] to [ ].

To date no acceptable reason has been given for these absences, therefore they have been marked by the school as unauthorised in the register. **A copy of your child’s registration certificate has been included with this letter.**

**The following support has been offered to you/will be offered to you and your child with the aim of improving attendance:**

- xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

If you feel that you require further support to improve your child’s attendance, please contact xxxxxx to discuss further.

Due to the number of unauthorised absences we need to formally warn you that should there be any further unauthorised absences within the next 20 school days, a Penalty Notice fine may be imposed.

**Please note:** Unauthorised lateness equates to one session of unauthorised absence; this will be shown as **U code** on your child’s registration certificate.

**The Penalty Notice fine will not exceed £160 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is still not paid within 28 days you will be prosecuted under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.** You will be prosecuted for failing to ensure that your child[ren] attend[s] school on a regular basis, i.e., not for the non-payment of the penalty.

It is your parental duty under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure your child is in receipt of efficient, full-time education. The benefits of good attendance at school include improved wellbeing, educational outcomes and a positive impact on their wider life chances.

Should you disagree with this information or have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

HEAD TEACHER

## Appendix Two - Example Holiday refusal letters

Example 1: Request received from parent.

ADDRESS

DATE

Dear

I received your letter/Holiday Request Form on XXXXX to authorise a Leave of Absence for XXXXX from XXX to XXX. In September 2013 the Government amended the policy surrounding holidays being taken during term time. We take attendance very seriously because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's attainment. The second most common reason for absence from school is for a family holiday, the Government agreed that this needed to be addressed. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time.

If you should take leave of absence on the above dates the absences will be marked as unauthorised in the register. Therefore, a Penalty Notice fine may be issued to you by Salford City Council on your return.

**The Penalty Notice fine will not exceed £160 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is still not paid within 28 days you will be prosecuted under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.** You will be prosecuted for failing to ensure that your child[ren] attend[s] school on a regular basis, i.e., not for the non-payment of the penalty.

Also, where there are two parents who both have responsibility of their child(ren), you will receive a Penalty Notice fine each, per child.

Yours sincerely

HEAD TEACHER

Example 2: of a holiday refusal letter (requested by telephone)

ADDRESS

DATE

Dear

I have received a phone call today from XXXXX to inform me that you have taken XXXXX on a family holiday. In September 2013 the Government amended the policy surrounding holidays being taken during term time. We take attendance very seriously because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's attainment. The second most common reason for absence from school is for a family holiday, the Government agreed that this needed to be addressed. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time.

Please be warned that the absences have been marked as unauthorised in the register and a Penalty Notice fine may be issued to you by Salford City Council on your return.

**The Penalty Notice fine will not exceed £160 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is still not paid within 28 days you will be prosecuted under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.** You will be prosecuted for failing to ensure that your child[ren] attend[s] school on a regular basis, i.e., not for the non-payment of the penalty.

Also, where there are two parents who both have responsibility of their child(ren), you will receive a Penalty Notice fine each, per child.

Yours sincerely

HEAD TEACHER

Example 3: Example letter where there has been no request for a holiday

ADDRESS

DATE

Dear

On XXXX XXXX failed to arrive in school, we made attempts to contact you on the following telephone number XXXX however there was an international dialling tone and no answer. We left you a message asking you to return our call but to date we have not heard back from you. Information received in school would indicate you are on holiday.

In September 2013 the Government amended the policy surrounding holidays being taken during term time. We take attendance very seriously because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's attainment. The second most common reason for absence from school is for a family holiday, the Government agreed that this needed to be addressed. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time.

We have received no leave of absence request from you and we have reason to believe that XXXX has been on holiday. You will be required to provide information to prove otherwise. If you do not provide information as requested, then a Penalty Notice fine may be issued to you by Salford City Council.

**The Penalty Notice fine will not exceed £160 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is still not paid within 28 days you will be prosecuted under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.** You will be prosecuted for failing to ensure that your child[ren] attend[s] school on a regular basis, i.e., not for the non-payment of the penalty.

Also, where there are two parents who both have responsibility of their child(ren), you will receive a Penalty Notice fine each, per child.

If you disagree with this information then please contact the school immediately.

Yours sincerely

HEAD TEACHER

Example 4: Parent stating child is sick, school have reasons to believe child is on holiday

ADDRESS

DATE

Dear

On XXXX we attempted to phone you and sent a text message to you enquiring about XXXX being off school. You replied to say that XXXX is absent due to illness.

On XXXX we attempted to phone you to see when XXXX will be returning to school, there was no answer however there was a international dialling tone. We left a message asking you to contact us.

On XXXX we made a home visit to your property, no one was present at the house and a note was posted requesting you contact us urgently. As of the date of this letter you have failed to do so.

Given the information gathered to date as above we have reason to believe that you have taken XXXX out of school for a holiday during term time. You will be required to provide information to prove otherwise. If you do not provide information as requested, then a Penalty Notice fine may be issued to you by Salford City Council.

In September 2013 the Government amended the policy surrounding holidays being taken during term time. We take attendance very seriously because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's attainment. The second most common reason for absence from school is for a family holiday, the Government agreed that this needed to be addressed. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time.

**The Penalty Notice fine will not exceed £160 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is still not paid within 28 days you will be prosecuted under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.** You will be prosecuted for failing to ensure that your child[ren] attend[s] school on a regular basis, i.e., not for the non-payment of the penalty.

Also, where there are two parents who both have responsibility of their child(ren), you will receive a Penalty Notice fine each, per child.

If you disagree with this information then please contact the school immediately.

Yours sincerely

HEAD TEACHER

Example 5 – multiple short holidays within 10-week period

ADDRESS

DATE

Dear

You will be aware from the school's attendance policy, that holidays during term time, will be unauthorised.

Your child has been absent from school on the below dates:

from ..... to .....

from ..... to .....

**Delete/amend as appropriate**

***You requested leave of absence from school which was refused.***

***You did not request leave of absence from school and did not inform school of the intended absence.***

***You advised school that your child was unwell, and we have reason to believe your child was on holiday.***

If you disagree with this information, please contact school at your earliest opportunity.

In September 2013 the Government amended the policy surrounding holidays being taken during term time. We take attendance very seriously because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's attainment. The second most common reason for absence from school is for a family holiday, the Government agreed that this needed to be addressed. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time.

**The Penalty Notice fine will not exceed £160 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is still not paid within 28 days you will be prosecuted under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.** You will be prosecuted for failing to ensure that your child[ren] attend[s] school on a regular basis, i.e., not for the non-payment of the penalty.

Also, where there are two parents who both have responsibility of their child(ren), you will receive a Penalty Notice fine each, per child.

Yours sincerely

HEAD TEACHER



Example 6: Third holiday absence in term time within a three year period.

ADDRESS

DATE

Dear

We have/have not received your request for a holiday in term time. We must inform you that, due to this being the third period of absence over the previous three years, you will now be referred to the Local Authority who may take further action under section 4441(A) of the Education Act 1996. The Local Authority will be in contact with you in due course.

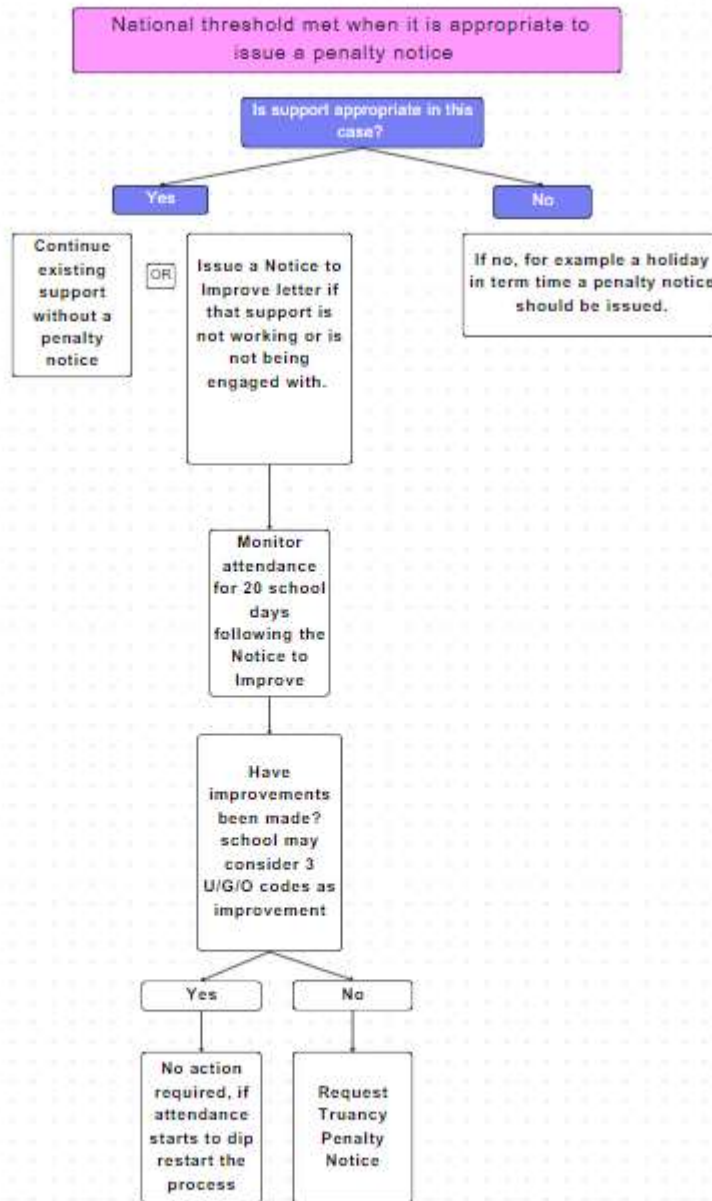
In September 2013 the Government amended the policy surrounding holidays being taken during term time. We take attendance very seriously because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's attainment. The second most common reason for absence from school is for a family holiday, the Government agreed that this needed to be addressed. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time.

If you disagree with this information then please contact the school immediately.

Yours sincerely

HEAD TEACHER

### Appendix Three – Flowchart for Penalty Notices



The National Threshold for issuing a penalty notice is 10 unauthorised absences within a 10-week period.