

Attendance policy

Laleham Gap School



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1. Aims

We are committed to a whole-school culture that values and promotes high attendance and punctuality by:

- Promoting the benefits of good attendance and acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Building strong relationships with families to understand and remove barriers to attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects and complies with:

Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, Statutory Guidance, applies from 19 Aug 2024).

- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (in force from 19 Aug 2024), including the requirement to keep admission and attendance registers electronically and retain entries for at least 6 years.
- Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, requiring schools to provide daily attendance data to the DfE on request.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and DfE National Framework for penalty notices (thresholds and fine levels).

➤ 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](#)

It also refers to:

➤ [School census guidance](#)

➤ [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

➤ [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school'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 school
 - Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Approve this policy and review it at least annually.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implement this policy; monitor school-level data and report to governors.
- Ensure robust systems for first-day response, data analysis, and graduated support.
- Authorise legal intervention requests where appropriate

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance and attendance champion is Ruth Jones and can be contacted via the school office

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
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

3.4 The Wellbeing and attendance officer

The Wellbeing and Attendance officer is Justine Marsh and can be contacted via the school office

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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
- Monitor attendance daily; produce regular reports for leaders; benchmark and flag concerns.
- Ensure correct coding and timely updates to the MIS and returns to the DfE/LA as required.

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9:30am for morning marks, and 1.30pm for afternoon marks.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absences on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to relevant staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Receive and log absence calls, perform first-day calling, and escalate safeguarding concerns.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Book routine appointments outside school hours where possible.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Attendance is recorded both electronically, on Arbor – the school's Management Information System, and manually. In addition, Teachers complete a class register during every lesson (using Arbor). We will record whether a pupil is :

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

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

Pupils must arrive in School by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am and will be kept open until 9:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15 and in primary at 12.00pm in secondary.

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 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

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

Where the absence is longer than days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for 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.

Where absence extends beyond 5 days or where there are concerns about the authenticity of an illness, the school may request medical evidence such as a doctor's note or appointment card. The school will ensure this request is reasonable and sensitive to family circumstances.

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, by contacting the school office.

However, 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.

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

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 the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the pupil's address or contact emergency services.
- 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

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels at Annual Reviews and in reports to parents/carers.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

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 for term-time absence should be submitted at least two weeks before the intended absence to allow sufficient time for consideration.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. 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.
- Other possible exceptional circumstances where the headteacher may authorise absence.

5.2 Legal sanctions

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

From 19 Aug 2024, fines are £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days for a first penalty notice in a 3-year period; a second notice within 3 years is £160 (no discount).

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. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will promote attendance at a whole school level in assemblies on a termly basis by issuing certificates for good attendance and improved attendance. Class teachers/Form tutors may use the school rewards system of merits and commendations on a more regular basis to reward good attendance.

In addition to assemblies and rewards, the school will engage pupils and families through attendance workshops, newsletters highlighting importance of attendance, and personalised attendance support plans where needed.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- We comply with the duty to share daily attendance data with the DfE (and LA/trust) via our MIS.
- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly (operational review); half-termly strategic analysis across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify pupils/cohorts at risk of persistent absence ($\leq 90\%$) or severe absence ($\leq 50\%$).
- Analyse trends by year group, SEND/disadvantage, and subject-level patterns.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

7.2 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the senior leadership team 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

7.4 Escalation pathway and support

Persistent absence is defined as missing 10% or more of possible sessions, and severe absence as missing 50% or more. The school will monitor these thresholds carefully and intervene promptly to support pupils

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers 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

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 90-100% attendance – Will be discussed at the weekly attendance meeting and raised with class/form tutors and parents if necessary
- 80-90% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority attendance service (KPAS) for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification. This may lead to an assessment of the child's and family's needs, or signposting to other additional support, where appropriate.

Children Missing Education

No student should be removed from the school roll without instruction from SEN.

Please see the circumstances below:

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.

- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.



8. Monitoring arrangements

Reviewed annually by the assistant Headteacher and approved by the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Positive Behaviour policy

Appendix 1 - Absent – Authorised or Unauthorised.

For each student the attendance register is marked either:

Present – an oblique stroke records presence, with a stroke in the reverse direction for the afternoon session / \

or

Engaged in an approved educational activity away from school site. The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used:

- Field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas;
- Participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities;
- Interviews with prospective employers or for a place at a further or higher education establishment (Year 11 only)
- Link courses, whereby students attend an FE college for part of the time;
- Franchised students receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location while remaining under overall supervision of the home school (i.e. a flexible arrangement short of formal dual registration). This can include special tuition for dyslexic children and sick children being taught at home but remaining on roll.

Absent: Authorised or Unauthorised. Authorised absence is recorded as O with a supplementary code inside to record the reason. Unauthorised absence is recorded O with no additional code inside. If a student is absent the register must show whether or not the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the headteacher or authorised representative of the school. Parents/carers may not authorise absence, only the school can do this. The following table shows types of absence that the school may treat as authorised:

Illness, medical and Dental appointments	• Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is authorised absence. Students should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Sight of an appointment card is advisable if a student is an irregular attender. • If a student is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or returns home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session. • Laleham Gap School keeps a record of students leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency. • If the authenticity is illness but is in doubt, schools and School Attendance Officers can consult the School Health Service, or the student's GP. • A student receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'
Days of religious observance	• Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. • Parents should be encouraged to give advanced notice.
Interviews with prospective employers, or for a place at another school (including entrance examinations)	• Laleham Gap staff will normally ask for advance notice and proof of the appointment, e.g. a letter of invitation. • If the interview takes place during Year 11 and the school is satisfied it is linked to future education or employment prospects, absence can be recorded as 'approved educational activity'.
Study Leave	• Study leave should be used sparingly and only for Year 11 students during mock and public examinations. • Study leave should not normally exceed 15 school days during Year 11. • If possible the period of study leave should be less than the examination period. Regard should also be paid to the individual student's ability to manage study leave and benefit from it. • Unsupervised study leave is not an 'approved educational activity' –it is authorised absence.
Dual Registration involving Student Referral Units or Special Schools	• The law allows for dual registration of students at both a special school and another local school. This helps, for example, to ease a phased return to mainstream education. • Where a student is dually registered at institution X and Y, institution X marks the student authorised absent, while they are attending institution Y and vice-versa. Both institutions share responsibility for the child. • Failure to attend either institution at the proper time without good reason is unauthorised attendance.
Family holidays during term time.	• Parents should not normally take students on holidays in term time. • Laleham Gap School will not authorise time taken off during term time for holidays. • If a school does not agree absence and the student goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised.
Exclusion	• A student excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school. Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded student is treated as authorised while any review or appeal is in progress.

	• If a permanent exclusion is confirmed, the student's name should be removed from the school roll on the day either: after the appeal committee's confirmation of permanent exclusion; or on expiry of the time allowed for appeals to be made; or, if before that, the student takes up a place elsewhere. Meanwhile absence should be recorded as authorised. • Teachers are responsible for setting work for an excluded student who remains on the school roll.
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller child when the family is travelling	• A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. • To help ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. This means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. • While the Traveller is away, the base school holds the place open and records absence as authorised. • Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.
Family bereavement/s, or child caring for a sick or disabled family member (young carers)	• Laleham Gap School will respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and have discretion to authorise such absences. • Similarly, the school may authorise limited duration absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made
Special occasions	• Laleham Gap School will consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence. For example, attending the wedding of a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or a shopping trip in school hours would not. • Schools should consider: the nature of the event; its frequency (is it one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?); whether the parent gave advance notice; the student's overall attendance pattern.
Public performance/s	• The Local Authority must license a student to take part in a public performance. • Agreed participation should be treated as authorised absence.
Birth of a child	• Support should be directed to keeping the student in school wherever possible, and to her return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth. • A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised.
Lateness	• Laleham Gap School will actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival which could provide grounds for prosecution. • Laleham Gap School will have a policy on how long registers should be kept open.. • In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, schools may keep the register open for a longer period.

Appendix 2 - Attendance Codes

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W	attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I	illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4	unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure

Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)

Unauthorised Absences	
G	holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	prospective pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days)

Appendix 3 – Attendance Letters

Letter 1 – Initial attendance letter

Letter 2 – Invite parents/carers in to discuss attendance – general poor attendance

Letter 3 – second attendance letter

Letter 4 – Concerns about a pupil's high level of absence – invite in for discussion

Letter 5 – Concerns about a pupil's unauthorised absence – invite in for discussion

Letter 6 – Formal notice about unauthorised absence – requesting penalty notice

Letter 7 – Letter regarding poor attendance – Post 16

Letter 8 – Letter in reply to request for leave of absence

Letter 9 – After an unauthorised holiday

Letter 10 – After an unauthorised holiday – requesting a penalty notice

Letter 11 – Accepting a request for absence for religious observance

Letter 12 – Rejecting a request for absence for religious observance

Letter 13 – Congratulations for improving attendance

Letter 1 – Initial attendance letter

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Please find below a summary of attendance[name] for the current school year so far:

Attendance:

Absences:

We understand that most absences are for valid reasons, such as illness. However, it can sometimes come as a surprise to parents when they learn that their child's overall attendance is lower than expected. Even occasional days off can add up quickly, and short periods of absence can begin to have a noticeable impact on both attendance and learning.

As a school, we are committed to supporting pupils and parents with attendance. If there is anything we can do to help you or [name] , please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach me via the school office on 01843 570598, call or text me directly on 07759 137146, or email me at Justine.marsh@lgs.kent.sch.uk.

Kind regards,

Justine Marsh

Wellbeing and Attendance Support Officer

Letter 2 – Invite parents/carers in to discuss attendance – general poor attendance

Use this letter to invite parents/carers in to discuss attendance.

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Invitation to discuss [name]'s school attendance

We would like to invite you to come in to have a chat about [name]'s attendance at school. Our aim is to understand and address any barriers together, and to make sure [name] is fully supported in attending school regularly.

During the meeting, we would like to talk about:

- Whether there is anything happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to attend
- Whether there are any challenges at home that we could help with, or that you would like us to be aware of
- Anything we can do to support you or make it easier for [name] to attend school regularly

Next steps

- Please contact the school office on [number], as soon as possible so we can arrange a time to chat
- We will work together to understand any challenges and put support in place
- If you need any assistance (such as translation services or accessibility support), please let us know when you get in touch
- If you are unable to attend in person, we can arrange a phone or video call

We are here to support you and [name], and we hope to work together to find the best way forward.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Assistant Headteacher

Letter 3 – 2nd attendance letter

Use this letter in situations where a pupil's absence has been authorised, but absence levels are high.

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to follow up on the attendance letter provided by Justine Marsh, our Wellbeing and Attendance Support Officer, regarding (name) attendance for the current school year.

As mentioned, (name) attendance rate was at %. However, her/his/their attendance hasn't improved, and her attendance rate now stands at %. While we understand that absences are sometimes unavoidable due to illness or other valid reasons, we want to emphasise how important consistent attendance is for (name) continued progress and success. Even with a few absences, time away from school can impact both learning and development.

We are committed to supporting (name) and your family in maintaining good attendance. If there are any concerns or if there is anything we can do to support you and (name) in improving her/his/their attendance, please don't hesitate to get in touch. You can contact Justine Marsh directly, or feel free to contact me should you prefer.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring (name) success at school. We look forward to working together to support her in the coming months.

Kind regards,

[Name]

Assistant Headteacher

Letter 4 – Concerns about a pupil's high level of absence – invite in for discussion

Use this letter in situations where a pupil's absence has been authorised, but absence levels are high.

For example:

- A pupil is regularly ill, but doesn't have an identified medical need
- Combined circumstances (such as a family bereavement and pupil illness) means the pupil has missed a lot of lesson time

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Invitation to discuss [name]'s school attendance

We are writing to you because we have noticed that [pupil name] has missed a significant amount of school recently. We understand that every family's situation is unique, and we want to work with you to make sure [pupil name] is able to succeed at school.

Why we are contacting you:

- [Pupil name] has missed [insert number of days missed and over what time period], meaning they have missed out on [insert absence as a percentage] of learning time this [term/year]
- We are aware of the following reasons for these absences: [insert known reasons, e.g., illness, family circumstances]
- We are concerned that these absences may mean [pupil name] is missing out on key parts of their education and may risk falling behind with their learning

How we can work together:

We want to support both you and [pupil name] in any way we can, and to understand if there is anything further happening at home or at school that may be making attendance difficult.

Together, we can:

- Identify any additional support [pupil name] might need
- Explore ways to help [pupil name] catch up on school they've missed
- Discuss any temporary or ongoing circumstances affecting attendance

Next steps:

- Please contact the school office on [number] at your earliest convenience so we can arrange a time to talk
- If you prefer, you can reply to this letter with any information you'd like to share before our conversation

We want to work collaboratively with you to help [pupil name] overcome any barriers to regular attendance and make sure they feel supported and confident at school.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

Yours sincerely, [Name] Head of School

Letter 5 – Concerns about a pupil's unauthorised absence – invite in for discussion

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Invitation to discuss [name]'s unauthorised absence

We are writing to you because we have noticed that [pupil name] has recently taken an unauthorised [absence/absences] from school.

Details of absence

[Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] days on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]

This means they have missed out on [insert absence as a percentage] of learning time this [term/year].

Why regular attendance matters

We want to work together with you to ensure [name] is able to:

- Fully engage in their learning and make good academic progress
- Develop friendships and feel part of the school community
- Build routines and confidence that will help both now, and in the future

How we can support you

We understand that every family's circumstances are unique, and there may be challenges at home or school that make attendance difficult. However, we're here to help.

Please let us know if:

- There is anything happening at home or at school that's affecting [name]'s attendance
- You need support with helping [name] attend regularly
- There are gaps in [name]'s learning we can help to address

Next steps

- Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as possible, so we can arrange a time to discuss these absences
- We will work together to understand any challenges and agree on how we can help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork

Important information about unauthorised absence

We want to be open about the school's responsibilities. Please note:

- Unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days)
- More information about penalty notices and the attendance policy are available on our school website [insert school website URL], or from the school office

We are committed to working with you and [name] to support their learning and wellbeing. Please do get in touch so we can move forward together. Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Assistant Head Teacher

letter 6 – Formal notice about unauthorised absence – requesting penalty notice

A formal notice like this should only be used as an absolute last resort. Use this letter if:

- You have previously tried multiple times to address a pupil's unauthorised absence
- You have tried engaging with the parents/carers in different ways and they refuse to engage or work with you
- The pupil's unauthorised absence has reached the national threshold for the use of a penalty notice (10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10-school-week period) and
- You have decided it's appropriate to issue a penalty notice (see paragraph 182 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) for questions to consider when making this decision)

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Formal notice regarding unauthorised absence – Penalty Notice

At [school name], we are committed to working in partnership with families to ensure every child can succeed in their education. We know that sometimes there are challenges that can make regular attendance difficult, and we want to support you and [name] wherever possible.

Why we're writing to you

On [date], we contacted you to discuss [name]'s recent unauthorised absences. Since then, we have not seen the necessary improvement in [name]'s attendance, and they have missed the following days of school:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This is equivalent to 5 days. Regular attendance is not only a legal requirement, but also essential for [name]'s learning, social development and future opportunities.

What happens next

In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, we have no option but to request a penalty notice be issued. We want to assure you this decision has not been taken lightly and comes after careful consideration.

When you receive the penalty notice, you will need to pay:

- **£80, if paid within 21 days**
- **£160, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days**

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

We want to work together

We are still here to help and want to explore with you any barriers to [name]'s attendance. We would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss:

- Any issues at school that may be affecting [name]'s attendance, or ways we could support you
- Anything at home that you think we should be aware of, or that we could help with
- Ways we can work together to support [name] in attending school more regularly

Please contact the school office on [number], as soon as possible to arrange a time that works for you. Our aim is to support [name] in catching up on any missed work and to ensure their ongoing wellbeing and success at school.

If you have any questions about this process, or need support, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,
[Name]
Head Teacher

Letter 7 – Letter regarding poor attendance – Post 16

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Re: Concerns Regarding [Student Name]’s Attendance

I am writing to express our serious concern regarding [Student Name]’s ongoing absence from school. As a post-16 student with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), regular attendance is not only essential for academic progress but also a legal requirement under the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Department for Education’s statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (updated August 2024) outlines that persistent absence—defined as attendance below 90%—must be addressed through a collaborative and supportive approach. Despite our efforts to engage and support [Student Name], attendance has not improved to a satisfactory level.

Kent County Council (KCC) has made clear in its School Attendance Handbook (January 2025) that persistent absence may trigger an annual review of the EHCP, and if the provision is deemed no longer necessary due to lack of engagement, the EHCP may be ceased. This is a significant step that could affect [Student Name]’s access to specialist support and future educational opportunities.

We fully understand that many students face complex barriers to attendance, and we are committed to working with you to overcome these. Our engagement curriculum offers flexible schooling options, outreach support, and tailored interventions designed to meet individual needs. However, unless we see demonstrable progress in attendance—or receive formal advice from a Tier 4 mental health practitioner indicating that attendance is not currently appropriate—we are obliged to escalate this matter in line with statutory guidance.

We urge you to contact us as soon as possible to arrange a meeting so we can discuss a plan of action. Our priority is to support [Student Name] in re-engaging with education in a way that is both meaningful and manageable.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to find a positive way forward.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Head of P16

Letter 8 – Concern about punctuality

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Concern about [pupil name]'s punctuality

We are writing to you because [pupil name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe]. We know that mornings can sometimes be challenging, and we want to work together with you to support [name] in arriving on time each day.

Details of lateness:

- **Arrived after the register closed:**
 - [date]
 - [date]
 - [date]
- **Arrived late (before register closed):**
 - [date]
 - [date]
 - [date]

Our school day starts promptly at [time], and registration closes at [time]. Afternoon registration takes place between [time slot].

Arriving on time each day is important because it:

- Ensures your child doesn't miss out on essential learning
- Reduces disruption for teachers and classmates
- Helps your child settle into the school routine

We understand that there may be things happening at home or at school that are making punctuality difficult. Our aim is to work in partnership with you to find solutions. However, it is important to be aware that persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice if your child arrives after the register closes **10 times within 10 weeks**.

Next steps:

We would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss how we can support [name] together. In this meeting, we hope to find out whether there is:

- Anything happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to arrive on time
- Anything happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of
- Anything we can do to make it easier for [name] to be on time for school

Please contact the school office on [number] to arrange a suitable time for this meeting.

If you need help with transport, morning routines, or any other aspect, please let us know in advance so we can make sure the right support is available.

We appreciate your support in making sure [name] gets the most out of their school day. If you have any questions before the meeting, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

[Name] Assistant Headteacher

Letter 9 – Letter for Leave of Absence

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

We have received your request for leave of absence for (name) to accompany you on holiday between –

The Department for Education has changed the rules regarding holiday permissions. The document is called the New National Framework for Penalty Notices. The following changes came into force from 19 August 2024.

We want to make you aware that we will no longer be able to authorise any leave of absence requests for pupils. This means any pupil taking holiday during term time will be marked as unauthorised. Our belief and approach to this have not changed but the rules have. If you think this is going to affect you, please let us know.

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. If your child missed 5 days in a year, they would have an attendance of 98%. It becomes even more worrying when a child has a percentage of 85% for the year as this works out to be 6 weeks of school missed in a year (almost a full term). The imposition of penalty fines for parents and carers taking children out of school in unauthorised circumstances will now be imposed more strictly by the Local Authority XXXXX attendance for this academic year is XXXX%.

I appreciate that there are many valid reasons why families take holidays in term time and am sympathetic to these. However, the school has a duty to maximise attendance for all pupils. I hope that you can understand the school's position regarding this matter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

(name)

Assistant Headteacher

Letter 10 – After an unauthorised holiday

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

Re: Unauthorised Holiday During Term Time – [Student's Name]

I am writing to inform you that following [Student's Name] absence from school between [start date] and [end date] due to a holiday taken during term time, this absence has been recorded as unauthorised in accordance with our school attendance policy and national guidance.

Regular attendance at school is vital for every student's educational progress, emotional wellbeing, and social development. Time away from school during term time can have a significant impact, including:

- Interrupted learning: Students miss out on key lessons and structured support, which can lead to gaps in understanding and difficulty catching up.
- Reduced progress: Consistent attendance is closely linked to academic achievement. Missing school can hinder progress, especially in core subjects.
- Social disruption: Time away from peers can affect friendships and social confidence, particularly for students with additional needs.
- Routine and structure: Many students at Laleham Gap benefit from the stability and routine that school provides. Extended absences can disrupt this and affect behaviour and emotional regulation.

We understand that family time is important, but we must prioritise your child's education and wellbeing. In line with Department for Education guidance, holidays during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you would like to discuss this matter further or require support with attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Headteacher

Letter 11 – After an unauthorised holiday – requesting a penalty notice

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Re: Unauthorised Holiday During Term Time – [Student's Name]

I'm writing to you regarding your decision to take [name] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date]. After reviewing the circumstances, we must treat this as an unauthorised absence because [explain the evidence you have].

At [school name], we firmly believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for every child's educational success and wellbeing. We appreciate that family time is important, and we want to work together to ensure your child gets the very best out of their education.

Our approach to leaves of absence

We are only able to grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, and unfortunately, holidays during term time do not generally fall under this category. We ask that families always consult the school before making any plans that would mean a child misses time at school. Absences like these can have a significant impact on your child's progress and confidence in school.

Use the following if the child's absence has reached the threshold for a penalty notice and you have decided it's appropriate to issue one (see paragraph 182 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) for questions to consider when making this decision):

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This is equivalent to 5 days. In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will be issued with a penalty notice.

When you receive the notice, you must pay:

- £80, if it's paid within 21 days
- £160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

Insert the following if the threshold for a penalty notice has not been reached, or you have decided it's not appropriate to issue one:

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are available on our school website [insert the school website URL] or from the school office.

Working together – next steps

We want to support you and [name] to ensure they feel confident, happy and engaged in school.

We would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss this absence and work together to prevent any further disruption to [name]'s learning. Please contact the school office as soon as possible on [phone number] to arrange a convenient time to meet.

If you are experiencing any difficulties that may be affecting [name]'s attendance, please let us know. Our priority is to support your family and your child's education.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

[Name] Head Teacher

Letter 12 – Accepting a request for absence for religious observance

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for letting us know about your request for [name] to be absent from school on [date] for [religious occasion]. At [school name], we deeply value and respect the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of our school community. We understand that religious observance is an important part of your family's life and [name]'s sense of identity.

In this instance, I am happy to confirm that your request has been approved. The absence will be recorded as authorised, and we will support [name] in catching up with any missed work on their return.

Please note:

- Each request for absence due to religious observance is considered individually, based on the information provided at the time
- While we are pleased to support your family on this occasion, this decision does not automatically set a precedent for future requests, either from your family or others

If you have any other requests or questions about absences for religious observance, please contact the school office on [contact number] or email [school email].

Thank you for working with us to support [name]'s education and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Assistant Headteacher

Letter 13 – Rejecting a request for absence for religious observance

Dear [insert name of parent/carers],

Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request for [pupil name] to be absent from school on [date] for [religious occasion]. At [school name], we recognise and respect the diverse religious beliefs within our community, and we always aim to support families in practising their faith. Each request for absence is carefully considered in line with our school's attendance policy and government guidance.

On this occasion, I'm sorry to say that I am unable to authorise the absence requested. While we appreciate the importance of religious observance, the request does not meet the criteria for authorised absence for religious observance as set out in government statutory attendance guidance.

We are required to balance the needs of individual families with our responsibility to ensure all pupils receive the best possible education and maintain regular attendance.

Please note:

If [pupil name] does not attend school on the specified date(s), the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences can affect your child's attendance record and, where applicable, may result in further action in line with local authority guidelines.

If you feel there are additional circumstances you would like us to consider, please contact me directly so we can discuss your situation further.

We truly value your support and understanding as we work together to prioritise your child's education. If you have any questions or need further guidance, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher

Letter 14 – Congratulations for improving attendance

Dear [insert name of parent/carer],

Congratulations on improved attendance!

We are absolutely delighted to celebrate [name]’s fantastic achievement in improving their school attendance!

Since [date], [name]’s attendance rate has increased from [percentage]% to [percentage]% – this means [number] additional days of valuable learning and experiences at school. This is a significant accomplishment and a testament to [name]’s commitment and your ongoing support at home.

Why this matters:

Regular attendance makes a real difference to children’s progress, friendships and confidence. By being in school more often, [name] is giving themselves the best chance to succeed and enjoy everything our school has to offer.

A big thank you for encouraging and supporting [name] to attend regularly – your partnership is so important.

Celebrating success:

To recognise [name]’s hard work and improvement, [he/she/they] will be:

- [Include details of any reward scheme, e.g. receiving a certificate in assembly, being entered into a prize draw, or another recognition your school offers]

Next steps:

We encourage [name] to keep up this fantastic effort! If you need any further support or have questions about attendance, please don’t hesitate to contact us at [school office contact details].

Once again, congratulations to [name] and your family on this wonderful achievement.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Assistant Headteacher

