

ATTENDANCE POLICY

'...like a tree firmly planted by streams of water which yields its fruit...'

Psalm 1v3



Bollinbrook CE Primary School Attendance Policy

Recommended by	Cheshire East Council
Approved by	Governing Board
Approval Date	September 2018
Version Number	2
Review Date	September 2026
Legal Status	Statutory

CHANGE RECORD FORM

Version	Date of change	Date of release	Changed by	Reason for change
2	August 2020	August 2020	L.Le Marinel	Annual review and Covid update
3	February 2021	February 2021	L.Le Marinel	Covid update
4	March 2022	March 2022	T Wallace	Covid information deleted. Attendance and Fixed Penalty Letters attached
5	September 2022	September 2022	L Le Marinel	Review
5	September 2023	September 2023	L Le Marinel	Review





Mission Statement

... 'a tree firmly planted by streams of water which yields its fruit...' Psalm 1v3

At Bollinbrook CE Primary the Christian value of 'Love' is at the heart of who we are as a community. We teach our children to be rooted in Jesus Christ so they develop a love of learning that supports their academic, emotional and spiritual growth. If rooted in Christ, children can grow into who they were created to be. Based on Psalm 1v3, 'like a tree firmly planted by streams of water which yields its fruit...' We are helping our children grow spiritually, emotionally and academically laying firm roots that will provide strong foundations and bear fruit that will help them on the next stage of their educational journey.

Pupil Attendance Policy

Purpose

We recognise the need to have a common, manageable policy on attendance procedures that all of the staff implement. **Regular school attendance is a pre-requisite to progression and continuity in learning.**

We remind parents frequently of the importance of attendance both from a statutory perspective and also of the effects of school absence on children's continuity of learning. We publish this information in newsletters, on the school website and where appropriate in individual communications with parents.

Principles

The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 it is the duty of the parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age to ensure that they attend school regularly.

Why is attendance at school and punctuality important?

'Because Every Second Counts:

5 minutes late each day means three whole days lost each year

17 days missed from school each year equates to a whole GCSE grade

Attendance affects learning, future earning, wellbeing and a sense of belonging



The way that schools function today means that even if a child misses one or two days s/he may miss out on key learning and find it difficult to 'pick up' from where the other children are due to missing the teaching input and the build up. Certainly if a child is absent for a week s/he will miss a unit of English and Maths and may miss a whole unit (topic) in other subjects such as history which s/he will not be taught again.'

Registers

The class register will be taken at the beginning of each school session (morning and afternoon) using the following procedures:

Morning session

- Children arriving between 8.55am and 9.00am will be marked as present (/)
- From 9.00am to 9.30am children will be marked as 'late (before registers close)' (L)
- After 9.30am children will be marked as 'late (after registers close)' (U). This is classed as an unauthorised absence
- If notification and reasons for absence are not given to school, children will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence' (O).

Afternoon Session

- Registration no later than 1.20pm

In all cases staff to complete the absence with the correct coding (see appendix).

The school uses electronic registers on the Arbor system. If a member of staff is not able to access this system to complete the register they are to use the class list available from the school office to complete the register and inform the admin staff that the Arbor system was not accessible.

All staff are required to note the number of children present for each session on the laminated card as this is used in the event of an emergency such as a fire/fire practice.

If a parent requests permission for a child to leave or return to school during the day s/he must sign the child in or out on the I pad in the school foyer.

Fire or Fire Practice

In the event of Fire or Fire Practices the class teachers must take the emergency red bag with them to the fire assembly point. Out of school hours, the wrap around care must ensure they have an up to date register and take this to the fire assembly point.

The school office staff collect the class and staff lists and fire register from our 'SignIn' App

Illnesses/Medical appointments

We ask parents to inform us by telephone or letter if a child is absent from school due to illness. Parents should leave a voice mail on the pupil absence line on the first day of absence stating:

- The name and class of the child



- The name and contact details of the person leaving the message
- The reason for absence
- The anticipated length of absence

On receipt of a telephone call we make the appropriate entry into to the register on Arbor.

If no call has been received then a text message will be sent immediately when the register closes (9.30am). If no response is received (telephone or parental visit) by 10.00am this will be followed up by a telephone call to the contacts on file in priority order.

Children, whose attendance is deteriorating without due cause, may be requested, via parents, to produce medical evidence in order for the school to authorise further absences. This can be in the form of: -

- A GP appointment card
- A copy of a prescription
- A copy of a letter from a consultant
- Written permission from the parent for the school to contact the GP or appropriate medical professional

Term Time Holiday

Following a change to legislation, with effect from 1st September 2013, parents no longer have a right to expect schools to grant term time leave other than in the most exceptional circumstances and where leave is granted schools will be expected to 'justify' its granting to the Local Authority and OFSTED.

In effect the 'default position' now, for all requests for leave, is to decline. However, the Governing Body accepts that there may well be reasons why parents feel that they must take children out of school during term time. In order to clarify this situation the Governors have provided some guidance which has now been updated in the light of further information from the Education Welfare Service at Cheshire East:

Circumstance	School Response
Where your child is unwell and unfit for school	Absence will generally be authorised but in certain cases additional evidence may be required e.g. letter from doctor, copy of prescription form, etc.
Medical/Dental Appointments	We would encourage parents to attempt to arrange these outside of school hours wherever possible however we appreciate that this is not always possible and so again these will generally be authorised but please try to give school as much notice as possible.
Family occasions, e.g. graduations, weddings and funerals	These will generally be authorised if it is immediate family . However, this will typically be for one day up to a maximum of three days



	where significant travel is involved. Additional evidence maybe requested e.g. invitation
Religious and/or Cultural 'Festivals'	These will be treated on a case by case basis but some form of supporting evidence may be required such as a letter from a 'minister' or other 'community leader'
Term Time holidays where leave dates are 'fixed' by an employer. By this we mean where leave can only be granted on certain dates (e.g. a factory shutdown) or where due to the nature of work ALL leave is forbidden during certain periods such as the school holidays.	Supporting evidence in the form of a letter from an employer will be required in this case in order for such a request to be considered but in all cases no requests for more than 10 days will be considered and no requests within the two weeks prior to and including statutory assessments such as KS2 SATs, Y1 Phonics Screening Check, etc.
Other Exceptional Circumstances	Once again these will be considered on a case by case basis but again supporting evidence will be required.

The process for applying for leave in any of the above cases, with the exception of ill health, will be as follows:

- Parents make written request to the school, marked "Term Time Leave Request - For the attention of the Headteacher" **before** making any confirmed bookings for travel. Parents must not assume that the leave will be granted
- The Headteacher (or Deputy in her absence) will consider the request and make a decision in line with the general guidance above, usually within three (3) working days
- If parents wish to challenge the decision this can be done in writing to the Chair of Governors who will consider the matter and aim to respond within five (5) working days of receipt of the written challenge

Where leave is granted the absence will be noted using the appropriate registration code for an authorised absence. Should a request be declined and parents continue to take the leave then the child's absence will, in the first instance, be marked as a 'G' code on the school register [Unauthorised – Family Holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)].

Where this leave is in excess of 10 sessions (5 days) in any one academic year it will be necessary to discuss the matter with the Local Authority (Education Welfare Service) and to consider the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). The FPN is currently £60 per parent per child rising to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 28 days. The letter which will be sent to parents when the Fixed Penalty Notice is issued is attached to this policy as well as the Fixed Penalty Code issued by the Local Authority.

Punctuality

Punctuality is monitored on a weekly basis. Children are expected to arrive on time for both morning and afternoon registration. Parents of children who are late are required to use the 'sign-in app' kept in the main office/school reception area – **please note children are not allowed to complete this**. In persistent cases the Cheshire East Education Welfare Officer may be involved.



Monitoring

The Headteacher, in conjunction with the pastoral team and admin staff, is responsible for monitoring school attendance. The school administration staff monitor the registers on a weekly basis. The Headteacher checks all holiday forms explaining absences. We keep a file of all request forms for that academic year in the main office.

The administration staff and pastoral team are responsible for following up any unknown reasons for absence and reconciling the registers at least weekly.

Teachers should report to the Headteacher concerns on attendance issues:

- unexplained absences
- frequent absences
- persistent lateness

Initially the Headteacher via the Pastoral Team and admin staff will look at the evidence and then make contact with the parents/carers via a letter to address the problem. If the problem persists a second letter will be sent out inviting the parent/carer into school for a meeting.

If attendance does not improve this may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

The Headteacher monitors school attendance year on year and informs parents and governors of any significant changes.

Copies of all letters and the Cheshire East Code for Fixed Penalty Notices are attached to the bottom of the policy.

Review

This policy is based on the Cheshire East model policy and will be reviewed every two years (or sooner if LA guidance changes).





Appendix: Completion of Registers and Register Codes

All absences are to be recorded electronically using Arbor

Key to Codes	
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration (attending other estab.)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not med/dental appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late (before reg closed)
M	Medical / Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Abs (not covered by other code)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip



Key to Codes	
W	Work experience
#	School closed to pupils & staff
Y	Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

All authorised absences need either a letter from the parent or a telephone message notification. Please ensure that at the end of the week all unknown reasons for absence are ascertained so that the register is complete wherever possible





ATTENDANCE MONITORING LETTER 1

Pupil Name	
Class	
Year Group	
Current Attendance	%

Date

Dear Parents/Carers

Following our weekly attendance review meeting, in which all pupils with an attendance below 90% were discussed, your child attendance was identified as a cause for concern. For your information a registration certificate is enclosed with this letter which outlines your child's attendance for this academic year to date.

To support you to improve your child's attendance, we are setting a monitoring period of two weeks in which your child is required to attend school every day. If your child's attendance has not improved in these two weeks, I will be inviting you to come into school to discuss the reasons why.

Week 1	DATE	Week 2	DATE
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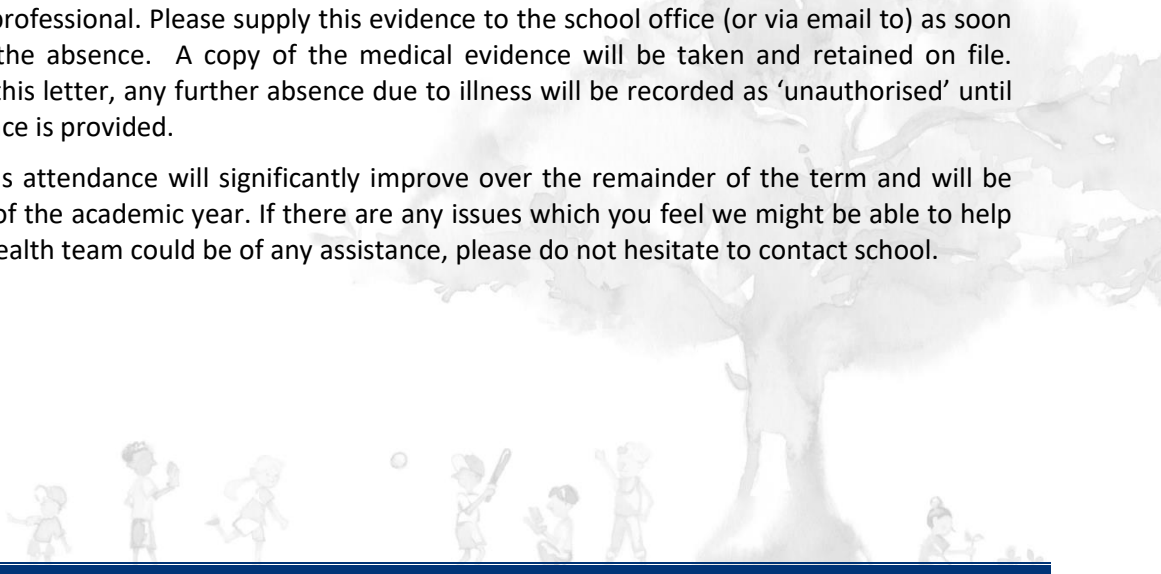
Any unauthorised absence during this monitoring period will be reviewed and may result in both parents being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning which is issued by the Local Authority due to irregular school attendance. Such action would normally be taken when unauthorised absences have reached ten sessions or more.

This now means that no further absence due to illness can be authorised unless medical evidence is provided. Medical evidence is accepted in the form of an appointment card, prescription, prescribed medication, or letter from a medical professional. Please supply this evidence to the school office (or via email to) as soon as possible following the absence. A copy of the medical evidence will be taken and retained on file. Following the date of this letter, any further absence due to illness will be recorded as 'unauthorised' until the appropriate evidence is provided.

I hope that your child's attendance will significantly improve over the remainder of the term and will be sustained for the rest of the academic year. If there are any issues which you feel we might be able to help with, or if the school health team could be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact school.

Yours sincerely

Miss Le Marinel
Headteacher





ATTENDANCE MONITORING LETTER 2

Pupil Name	
Class	
Year Group	
Current Attendance	%

Date

Dear Parent / Carer

Further to the attendance letter dated xxxx regarding your child's attendance I am still concerned that there have been further absences and that your child's attendance has not shown the improvement required.

Therefore, I request that you attend an attendance meeting in school to discuss this further. This meeting is to look at how we can address any barriers to your child's attendance and how we can work together to see an improvement.

As you know, it is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that children attend school on a regular basis and should your child's attendance not improve, the Local Authority may decide to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

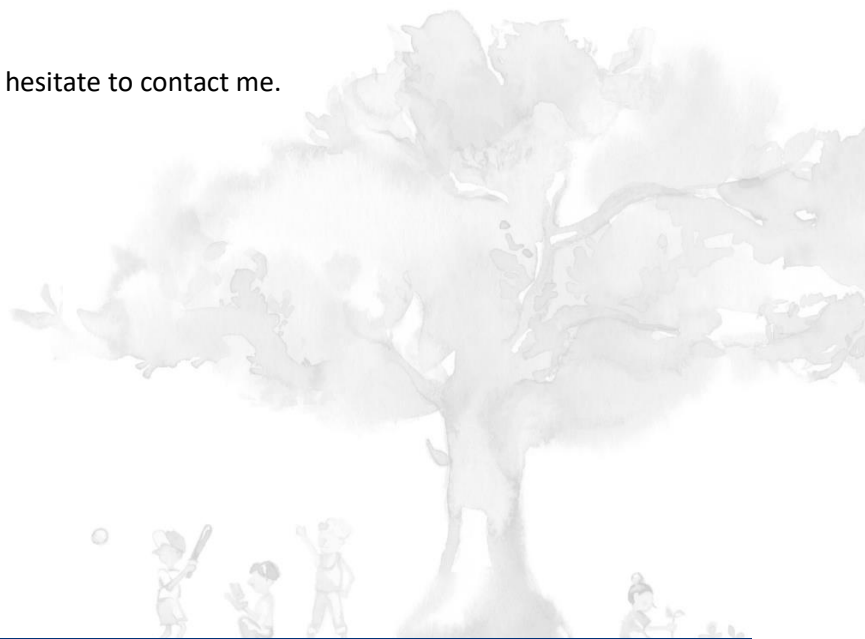
Please contact school to arrange a convenient date and time for the attendance meeting. A member of our pastoral team will attend.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Miss Le Marinel

Headteacher





PERSISTENT LATENESS LETTER

Pupil Name	
Class	
Year Group	
Number of Lates	

Date

Dear Parents/Carers

Following our weekly attendance review meeting, in which all pupils with persistent lateness were discussed, your child was identified as a cause for concern. For your information a registration certificate is enclosed with this letter which outlines your child's late marks for this academic year.

Children arriving late in school disrupt their class when they enter and some children may feel embarrassed walking into a class in the middle of a lesson.

To support you to improve your child's timekeeping, we are setting a monitoring period of two weeks in which your child is required to be in school on time every day. If your child's timekeeping has not improved in these two weeks, I will be inviting you to come into school for a meeting to discuss the reasons why and how school can assist to improve this.

Week 1	DATE	Week 2	DATE
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This follow up meeting is to look at how we can address any barriers to your child being in school on time and how we can work together to see an improvement.

As you know, it is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that children attend school on time on a regular basis and should your child's timekeeping not improve, the Local Authority may decide to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Please contact school to arrange a convenient date and time for these meetings. A member of our pastoral team will attend.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Miss Le Marinel

Headteacher





Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time

Following a change to legislation which came into effect on 1st September 2013, parents no longer have a right to expect schools to grant term time leave other than in the most exceptional circumstances and, where leave is granted, schools will be expected to justify its granting to the Local Authority and OFSTED. In effect the 'default position' now, for all requests for leave, is to decline.

If leave of absence is declined and children are absent we will follow the processes set out in our Absence Policy. **If children are absent for 10 sessions or more a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued from the Local Authority.**

Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence for more than ten days be granted in any academic school year.

I would like to take my child/ren out of school for the following dates:

Dates.....No of school days

Name of PupilClass

Name of PupilClass

*Reason why leave **must** be taken at this time.....*
.....

Signed Parent/ Guardian Date.....

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Stage of education	compulsory school age / non-compulsory school age
Level of attendance	(attach Registration Certificate from Arbor)
Proximity to Assessments	More than 16 wks / 8-6 wks / 2-8 wks / less than 2 wks / Test or SATS period
Leave of absence authorised this academic year	
Special mitigating circumstances / aspects classed as part of curriculum	
Decision	Authorised / unauthorised



CHESHIRE EAST CODE OF CONDUCT ON PENALTY NOTICES

1. Legal Framework

1.1 The law empowers designated Cheshire East Council officers, Headteachers, including their nominated deputies, and the police to issue Penalty Notices to the parents of children who have unauthorised absence from school.

1 Cheshire East has delegated this power to the Education Welfare Service and the Police.

2 The definition of parent means all natural parents, whether they are married or not; and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/or care for a child or young person.

1.2 The Local Authority, in its absolute discretion, may decide in any case that it is appropriate to issue proceedings under Section 444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act 1996 without first issuing a penalty notice where one child is failing to attend regularly at the school where he or she is a registered pupil.

1.3 The rules governing the implementation of these powers and the factors that should be taken into account when issuing a Penalty Notice are set out in:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education & Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- School attendance parental responsibility measures. Statutory guidance for LAs, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police. January 2015

1.4 In addition, the issuing of Penalty Notices must comply with other legislation, such as the Human Rights Act and all relevant Equal Opportunities legislation, in order to ensure that they are used in a fair and consistent manner.

1.5 To that end, Cheshire East Council is responsible for developing a protocol with which all the partners named in the legislation will work.

2. Rationale

2.1 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

“The parent^s of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable ... to his age, ability and aptitude, and ... to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

2.2 Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school or alternative provision is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

2.3 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child’s regular attendance at the school at which they are registered, where that absence is not authorised by the school. This could include: a number of unauthorised absences, perhaps within a rolling academic year; one off instances of irregular attendance such as holidays taken during term time without the school’s permission.

2.4 Penalty Notices are one of the sanctions available for this offence and offer a means of swift intervention, which can be used to combat non-attendance issues before they become entrenched.



2.5 Parents and children will be supported by their school/alternative provision, the Education Welfare Service and, as appropriate, other partner agencies, to overcome barriers to regular attendance, through a range of intervention strategies.

2.6 Irregular Attendance Penalty Notices and other sanctions will only be used where parental co-operation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem. They will be used as a means to support parents to meet their legal responsibilities and where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improved school attendance.

3. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued for Irregular Attendance

3.1 A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

3.2 Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to two notices per parent of a pupil per academic year.

3.3 In cases where there is more than one poorly-attending pupil in a family, notices may be issued for more than one child.

3.4 There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of a possible Penalty Notice.

3.5 Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

At least ten sessions (five school days) lost due to unauthorised absence (O code) in any two consecutive half terms

Persistent late arrival at school, for example after the register has closed, in any two consecutive half terms Persistent means at least 10 instances of late arrival

3.6 Penalty Notices will not be issued in respect of Children in our Care, for whom other interventions will be used.

4. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued for Leave of Absence.

4.1 A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

4.2 Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to two notices per parent of a pupil per academic year.

4.3 In cases where there is more than one poorly-attending pupil in a family, notices may be issued for more than one child.

4.4 Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate when there has been an unauthorised leave of absence (G code) of at least ten sessions (five school days) due to holidays in term time.

4.5 This paperwork should comprise:

A Penalty Notice Request Form

A declaration form signed by the head teacher

A copy of a communication, posted on website or a letter/newsletter, sent to all parents during the academic year, clearly explaining the procedure regarding requests for leave of absence which states that may receive a Penalty Notice and receive a summons if unpaid within the time frame

A copy/record of leave absence request from the parent, including a copy of the response informing the parent that the leave of absence has not been authorised. This should also inform the parent that they may receive a Penalty Notice and receive a summons if unpaid within the timeframe



A copy of the letter sent by the school to the parent advising that the absence has been unauthorised and that the school has referred the matter to the Local Authority and that a Penalty notice may be issued and receive a summons if unpaid within the timeframe

Relevant pupil attendance registration certificate

4.6 Penalty Notices will not be issued in respect of Children in our care, for whom other interventions will be used.

5. Procedure for Issuing Penalty Notices

5.1 Although the legislation permits head teachers and the police to issue penalty Notices the authorised officers within Cheshire East Council's Education Welfare Service will be the only individuals permitted to issue Penalty Notices in the Cheshire East area. This will ensure consistent and equitable delivery, to allow schools to maintain good relationships with parents and ensure that they reinforce other enforcement sanctions.

5.2 Penalty Notices will only be issued by post and never as an 'on the spot' action, for example during a Truancy Sweep. This will enable officers to ensure that all evidential requirements are in place and limit the health and safety risks associated with delivering such notices by hand.

5.3 Where schools, police or neighbouring local authorities ask Cheshire East Council to issue a Penalty Notice, in the case of an irregular attendance the request for the notice will be investigated and actioned by the Education Welfare Service provided that:

The circumstances of the case meet the criteria specified in this Code of Conduct

The pupil is registered at a Cheshire East school

All necessary evidence is provided to the Education Welfare Service to establish that an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 has been committed

Issuing a Penalty Notice would not conflict with another intervention strategy already in place or another enforcement sanction already being processed

There is a reasonable expectation that the use of a Penalty Notice would improve the child's school attendance or deter future unauthorised leave of absences.

5.4 In the case of **Irregular Attendance** the Education Welfare Service when satisfied that all of the relevant criteria are met will

Issue a formal written warning to the parent of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued

Set a period of fifteen school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence, and give the parent an opportunity to respond; this information can be included in the formal written warning letter, where one has been issued

After due consideration of the facts of the case, only issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the fifteen day period, if there has been no improvement in attendance or the improvement has not been sustained for a minimum of three weeks

5.5 Where the Penalty Notice is requested from a school in response to an **unauthorised leave of absence**, the **Education Welfare Service will not carry out an investigation** and the formal warning letter and fifteen day improvement period will not apply.



6. Excluded Pupils

6.1 The parent of the excluded pupil must ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours on a day that he/she is excluded.

6.2 If the excluded pupil is present in a public place at any time during school hours on a school day specified above the parent commits an offence under section 103 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 and is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

7. Procedure for the Withdrawal of Penalty Notices

7.1 Once issued, a Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn if the Education Welfare Service is satisfied that:

- the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person
- the use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to this Code of Conduct
- the Penalty Notice was delivered to the wrong address
- the evidence demonstrates that the Penalty Notice should not have been issued, for example medical evidence
- The circumstances of the case warrant its withdrawal

8. Payment of Penalty Notices

8.1 Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

8.2 Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

8.3 In accordance with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. If the Penalty Notice is paid:

- within 21 days the penalty payable is £60 or
- within 28 days the penalty payable is £120.

8.4 Payments will not be accepted from parents after the 28 days.

8.5 Penalty Notices cannot be paid either in part or by instalments. Late payments will not be accepted.

8.6 Cheshire East Council will retain any revenue from the Penalty Notices, hold it separately and use it to cover enforcement costs, for example costs associated with the issue, collection or prosecution, in the event of non-payment, of Penalty Notices and to improve outcomes for children

9. Non-Payment of Penalty Notices

9.1 Non-payment of a Penalty Notice may result in prosecution for the period covered by the Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

10. Policy and Publicity

10.1 The issuing of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Best Practice Guide available on the Cheshire East Council web site.

10.2 All school Attendance Policies will include information on the issuing of Penalty Notices and this will be brought to the attention of parents.



10.3 Cheshire East Council will include information about the use of Penalty Notices and other enforcement sanctions in promotional/public information material.

11. Reporting and Review

11.1 Cheshire East Council compile regular reports on the number of Penalty Notice issued.

11.2 The Education Welfare Service will review Penalty Notice use at least every other year and will amend its general enforcement strategy as appropriate. The next review date will be April 2016.

12. Right of appeal

There is no right of appeal, but where a parent contests the issuing of a Penalty Notice they can submit any complaints in writing to the Education Welfare Service and/or opt to face proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444, where all of the issues relating to their Penalty Notice can be fully argued.

13. The Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010

The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform with all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

One Minute Guide – 'Taking children on holiday during term time'

One Minute Guide – 'Taking action to improve attendance'

One Minute guide – 'Helping your child to attend school'

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ews

