

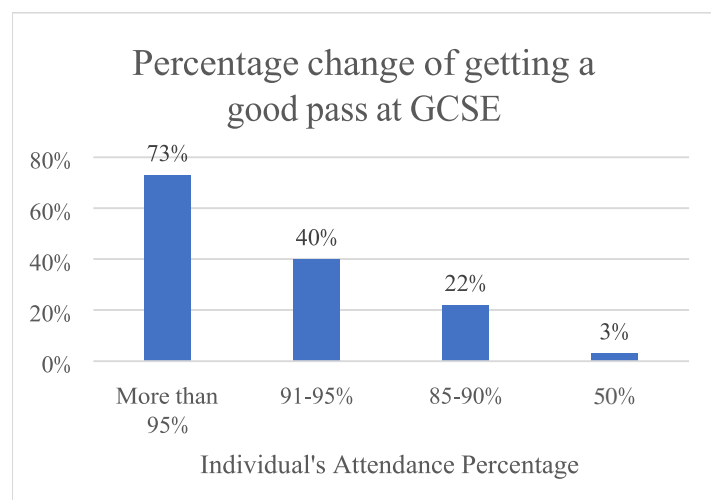
Aim

To ensure whole school attendance is at least 95% and Persistent Absenteeism (students with attendance below 90%) is less than 15% of the whole school population *with our school performance at, or better than the national average.*

Rationale

There is a clear link between attendance and achievement. Research has shown that 73 % of Students with attendance above 95% achieve 5 good GCSE passes. Attainments levels are shown to drop significantly at lower attendance levels; for example, only 40% of Students with attendances between 91-95% achieve 5 good passes at GCSE. This drops to 22% between 85-90% and only 3% with attendances of 50%. In addition, in 2015 research by the Department for Education highlighted that even short breaks during term-time can reduce a Students chances of succeeding at school by as much as a quarter.

Figure 1: Attendance = Success



Absence means lost learning time

Attendance %	No. of lost days	No. of lost hours
100%	0	0
95%	9	45
90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	38	190
75%	45	225

Overall attendance at Fitzharrys has improved over recent years with headline figures above the last known national average. Similarly, improvements have been made with the headline figure for students classed as being persistently absent although as a school we recognise that raising the attendance of some of our SEN students and Fitzharrys Scholars (Pupil Premium Students) remains a continued priority.

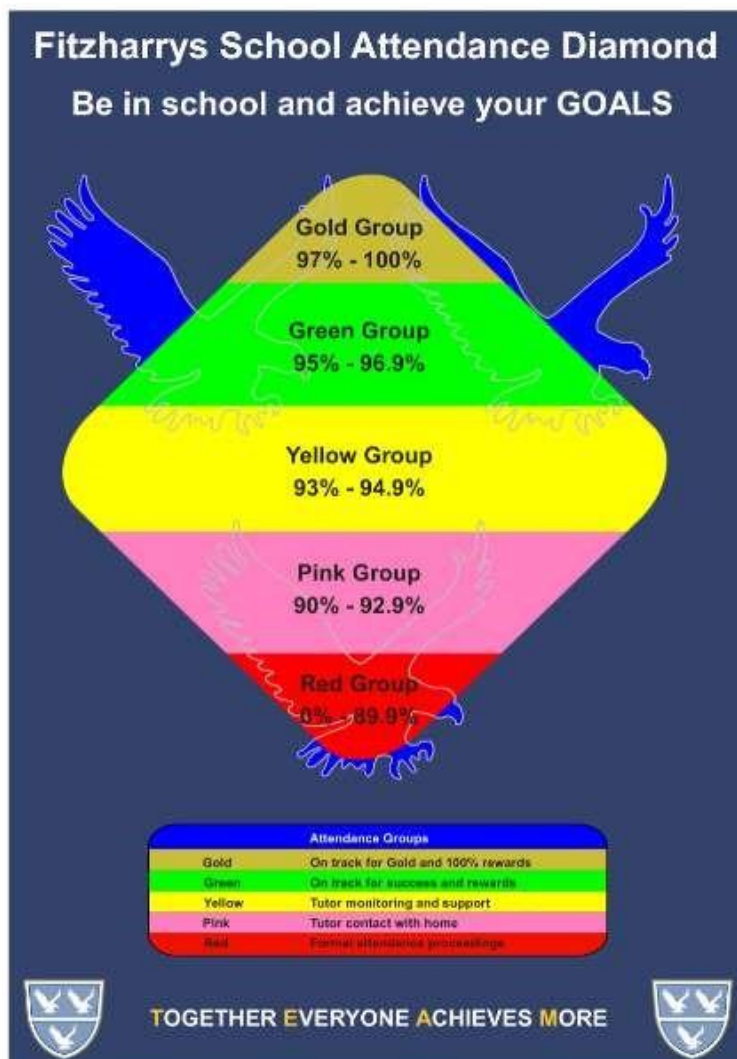
It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children attend the school where they are on roll. Some Students and their parents/carers may need to be supported at times in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities. A number of staff and outside agencies have responsibility for ensuring this happens. These are outlined below along with the timeframe for action for students who are regularly absent.

Implementation

Attendance targets and interventions:-

Every student will have a minimum attendance target of at least 95.5% with aspirations set at 97% to match the 'gold' group on the school attendance diamond (see figure 2). The school will promote the importance of this figure to students, parents and staff and reinforce the message throughout the year.

Students will be able to track and monitor their headline attendance figure via their student planner and personal tracker. Our current reward system, ePraise also enables students and their parents to access this key information easily. Figure 2: Attendance Diamond



We will do the following in order to promote and maintain good attendance:-

- 1) Ask Students to take responsibility for their own attendance by tracking it in their school planner on a fortnightly basis.
- 2) Contact parents/carers in writing if attendance drops below 95% (end of term 2 at the earliest).
- 3) Make a phone call to parents/carers to discuss any issues if attendance falls below 92%.
- 4) Call a meeting with parents/carers to carry out a 'Home/School Attendance Action Plan' if attendance falls below 90% by the end of the term 2. (This may be earlier if attendance was poor in the previous year). This meeting may take place within school, as part of a wider meeting or during a home visit to students who have failed to turn up to school. After the plan has been completed, attendance must improve over the subsequent monitoring period of 20 sessions (4 weeks).
- 5) After the 4 week monitoring period, if attendance is still poor, the school may take one of two courses of action. (see Annex 3: County Attendance Team Interventions).

- i. A Penalty Notice Warning may be issued which will lead to a referral to Oxfordshire County Council's County Attendance Team (CAT) to issue a fine if attendance does not improve.
 - ii. An Inter-Agency Meeting* will be held and a full referral will be made to the CAT if attendance does not improve. This may lead to prosecution by CAT.
- 6) Good attendance will be recognised, promoted and rewarded at inter year house assemblies and end of term award assemblies.

*Representatives from the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) and the County Attendance Team will be invited to attend.

Attendance Monitoring by school staff

A number of school staff will be involved in the monitoring of school attendance; please see Annex 4: Individual's Responsibilities).

School Registration Procedures Overview

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. If there is no known reason for absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded as unauthorised & unexplained in the first instance. Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence (see Annex 2 for information on authorised and unauthorised absence).

Lateness

Students must arrive at the gate between 8:30 and 8:37 am and be sitting in their form rooms for Fitzfocus, starting at 8:40am. Morning registers will open at 8.40am and remain open for 30 minutes. Any student arriving after the registers have closed will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is a suitable explanation i.e school transport was delayed.

Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the AM registration period will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present but will be coded as late (L). See Annex 1 for full description of the 'lates' procedure.

Daily Absence Procedure

Parents/Carers should inform the school if their child is going to be absent, or late, to school by calling the absence line on 01235 538243 before 10am on the day of absence. They should provide a reason for the absence and if absence continues beyond two days, call the absence line again to inform us of this.

If a student is absent from morning registration for no known reason, their parent/carer will be contacted automatically by Parent Call text (unless they have opted out of the system). In some cases a member of student services may make a physical phone call. Absences that remain unexplained will be followed up by letter 1-2 weeks later.

Combating Absenteeism in our School

This letter has been sent to parents and appears in the Parent Handbook issued at the start of each academic year:

Our school has installed an automatic communication system that will contact you directly if your child is marked late or absent at registration. This will ensure that the reason for the absence is known to us as soon as possible and to alert you if your child is not in school when they should be. Post-registration absences can also be detected and reported to you.

You will have already supplied contact telephone numbers when your child started at the school but please update these and where applicable include mobile and work numbers. If your home, mobile or work telephone number has changed recently please provide your new numbers including the area code. You may also supply an e-mail address for us to use to contact you. Please note, these numbers should be the contact numbers for parents, step-parents, or foster parents only.

Your child will be automatically included on the system. However, should you prefer not to be notified that your child is absent from school, please call me on the above number to discuss this further. To allow you to familiarize yourself with this system, we have set up a special local rate telephone number 0845 225 0201 which you may wish to call.

By introducing this service, our school is able to reassure you that we are meeting Government recommendations in contacting you on the first day of your child's absence. It will also provide an early warning system should your child go missing from school. As always your child's safety is our main concern.

Action the school will aim to take if a student's attendance drops below 90% without good reason:

Parents will be contacted with regards to concerns. If no improvement is seen over the next term parents will be invited in and an Attendance Action Plan will be completed. The plan can be drawn up in the absence of the parent/s should they refuse to attend. A target will be set. If there is still no improvement over the next 20 days then the school will call a multiagency planning meeting involving the Hub and the County Attendance Officer (CAO). If a student has had previous poor attendance, parents may be invited in as soon as attendance falls below 90%.

The school has informed parents about its decision to work with the County Attendance Team (CAT) in tackling truancy and that they may deliver penalty notices, or pursue the prosecution of parents, whose children continue to miss school after all other interventions have failed. These will be issued for three reasons:

- Persistent truancy
- Persistent lateness
- Unauthorised holidays taken during term

The following notice has been placed in the parent handbook, and in the school newsletter, to inform parents/carers of our work with the CAT, and of the potential consequences of nonattendance of their children at school.

Raising School Attendance

Schools in partnership with the Local Education Authority are imposing penalty notices for parents/carers of children who truant, take unauthorised holidays or are persistently late.

Different parts of the county are reporting dramatic improvements in attendance as a result of these measures and so along with other local schools, Fitzharrys School uses these approaches. If you would like further information; leaflets are available on request from the County Attendance Team (Email: attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk). Our attendance policy includes these measures and copies of this are also available on request.

If your child is absent you must inform school of the reason for this on the dedicated Absence Line (01235 538243) on the first day of absence before 10am, and either speak to Student Services or leave an answer phone message.

Working together we can secure high levels of attendance that will give every student the opportunity to be successful.

Monitoring and evaluation

The impact of this policy will be monitored at the fortnightly meetings between the Attendance Coordinator and the Assistant Head. The Assistant Head will work with the pastoral team and tutors to support the implementation of the supporting follow up actions. Regular updates will be shared with staff and governors across the academic year by the Assistant Head.

Reviewed and approved by Chair of Fitzharrys School's Local Academy Board 12th April 2023

Signed: S Gosling

Annex 1: Late arrival of students, signing in and late detentions

Students should arrive at school no later than 8.37am and be sat in their form rooms for Fitz Focus starting at 8.40am. Fitz Focus is a timetabled lesson which must be attended.

Punctuality is an important life skill!

1. If students arrive at the gate between 8.37am and 8.50am, a senior member of teaching staff will give out a red slip explaining that they have a detention during at break-time for being late. They MAY be excused if they have a note and a suitable reason for their lateness.
2. If students arrive after 8.50am, they must sign in at Student Services. A slip will be issued that must be shown to their teacher explaining that they have either signed in with a legitimate reason (yellow) or are late for no good reason (red) and have a detention.
3. If students arrive at a lesson without a late slip, the teacher will send the student back to get one, or inform Student Services of the late arrival so that a detention can be issued.
4. Students late because of an appointment, must bring a note from home or a message must have been sent to school informing us of the appointment. A detention will be issued otherwise.
5. Excuses such as having to go the shop will not be accepted. Students must be here on time and be organised accordingly.
6. If students were ill in the morning and come in late, they must either have a note from a parent or their parents/carer must have called the absence line in the morning informing us of the illness prior to arrival.
7. Lateness beyond a Students control, such as the bus arriving late or a car breaking down, will be excused the late detention. This will not apply if a pupil misses the bus.
8. Students who arrive late after the register has closed with no note/valid reason for lateness will be given a same day after-school detention of 45mins.
9. Failure to attend this ASDT will result in an extended senior after school detention.
10. If the senior detention isn't attended then the student will be placed into internal suspension

Annex 2: Types of Absence

Illness:-

The only reason that a student should be off school is because they are really very unwell and are not able to get through the day. We would encourage parents to send their child to school, even if they are feeling a little bit unwell; eg with a sore throat, cough or headache, because of the obvious educational benefits. The exceptions to this are if you have been advised by a doctor to keep your child off school or if they are infectious.

We will send a student home who say they feel unwell if we are concerned for their wellbeing. However, under no circumstances should a child phone home during the school day to ask a parent to collect them because they feel unwell. Any contact between student and parent during the school day must go through the school's main switchboard or Student Services. Absence may not be authorised in cases where students have arranged for themselves to be collected.

It is at the discretion of the school to decide whether or not to authorise absence due to illness. Of course, we will take into account any underlying medical conditions but if absence due to illness lasts longer than 10 days, or occurs regularly, and we have no firm medical evidence to justify the absence from school, we may no longer be able to authorise the absence. A letter will be sent home informing Parents/Carers of this. Alternatively, we may seek written permission from Parents/Carers for us to contact their GP directly. This should give us confirmation that the pupil is too unwell to attend and will help us decide upon the help that the school can offer. A letter from a consultant may also allow us to access support for Students via the hospital school, if appropriate.

Medical/Dental Appointments:-

Where possible, parents should try and arrange these for out of school hours. If this is not possible, then they should try to arrange them for first thing in the morning, or after 2.15pm. Students who arrive in the morning before the registers close at 9.10am will still get their morning mark. Evidence of the appointment must be shown when the student signs in or out. We will only ever authorise a half day of absence for medical or dental appointments unless a valid reason is given for it to last the whole school day; eg:-in the case of some hospital appointments.

Holidays during term time:-

As of September 2013, the Department for Education has changed the regulations about term time holidays. Parents can no longer request up to two weeks holiday during term time and they will no longer be authorised. In line with Oxfordshire County Council's advice and it's Statutory Code of Practice (Jan 2019) we will now issue a letter to all parents at the beginning of term warning them that should an unauthorised holiday be taken in the following calendar year we may ask the County Attendance Team to issue a penalty notice. Please see Annex 6 for further information.

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated

the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

The Headteacher can receive requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances for absences of one or two days. These will only be considered if the child's attendance is over 95%. Parents must complete an 'Exceptional leave of absence request' form, in advance, in order to apply to have this absence authorised. (see Annex 5: Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence)

Other UNAUTHORISED absence:-

The following are NOT acceptable reasons to be off school:

- Not sleeping well the night before
- The birthday of a child or a family member
- Being tired after travelling back from a weekend away
- Going to a concert or sporting event
- Moving house or having to look after pets
- Helping out at events or parties
- Christmas shopping

Other AUTHORISED absence:-

The only other, authorised, reasons for absence are approved sporting or educational activities such as trips, work experience and sporting events which are either run or approved by the school.

Annex 3: County Attendance Team interventions

Full referrals

In more complex cases, if Home/school action plans have failed to improve attendance, and Inter-agency meetings have been completed, we may refer to the County Attendance Team (CAT). CAT will accept referrals after 6 sessions (2 sessions per day) of unauthorised absence in no more than a 6 week period. A prosecution may result.

Penalty notices

Penalty Notice warnings may also be issued by the school in the following circumstances; cases of unauthorised absence of 6 sessions in a 6 week period, persistent lateness to school i.e 6 sessions of lateness (after the registers have closed at 9.10am) in a 6 week period OR 6 sessions of unauthorised holiday in a 6 week period.

There must be sustained and significant improvement in attendance after the warning has been issued for the penalty notice (£60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days, and possible prosecution if unpaid) not to be issued. In addition, following a Penalty Notice Warning, if attendance drops again during the term/year we may have to follow up with a full referral to the County Attendance Team.

Annex 4: Individual's responsibilities

Overview:

We will use a range of strategies with students in school to promote the importance of attendance, the link with achievement, and the 95% target for all. There will be a fortnightly focus in Fitz Focus showing tutor group attendance with those above or below 95%. Students will plot their own attendance over the year and keep a record in their planner. Assemblies will also promote attendance regularly. There will be inter form competitions with house points and prizes for forms. There will be a prize draw for good attendance every term and only students with attendance at 95% or above will be eligible to win.

Student responsibilities:

- To arrive between 8.30 and 8.37am, appropriately prepared for the day and go straight to their form room for the start of Fitz Focus at 8.40am.
- In the afternoons, go straight to pm Fitz Focus or assembly at 2pm (to period 5 on Wed).
- Attend school regularly and for the whole school day until 3.15pm (3pm on Wed).
- Inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that affects their attendance at school.

Parent/Carers responsibilities:

- Ensure their children attend school every day unless they are too ill to attend or there is an acceptable reason for absence.
- Ensure their children arrive on time, prepared and equipped for the day.
- Inform the school's Absence line 01235 538243 by 10am on the day of absence. Communicate with school about their children's progress and attend meetings such as Parents' Evenings.

General School responsibilities:

- Provide Students with appropriate education.
- Provide parents with an 'Attendance and achievement policy: information for parents leaflet' each year.
- Respond to concerns raised by both Students and parents/carers in a prompt, fair and proper manner.
- Work with other professionals as appropriate to support students who are supported by LCSS/Social Care.
- Share expectations over attendance with parents and students.
- Use parent call to contact the parent if no reason is given for absence during the morning.

Assistant Head responsibilities:

- Overall responsibility for policy.

- Production of information regarding the attendance policy for parents.
- Informing parents and staff of changes to attendance procedures.
- Reviewing attendance monitoring procedures with the Attendance Coordinator.
- Implementing plans for improved punctuality.

Heads of Year (HOY) and Student Well Being Manager (SWM) responsibilities:

- Monitoring patterns of absence and implementing the attendance policy sanctions.
- Calling Home/School Attendance Plan meetings and Inter-agency meetings.
- Initiating referrals to the County Attendance Team (CAT).
- Liaising with the school nurse when students have a large number of medical absences.
- Monitoring the number of times, a student is late.
- Supporting tutors in dealing with students who are persistently late.
- Termly meetings with the Attendance Coordinator and Pastoral Director.

Tutors responsibilities:

- Completing registers during afternoon Fitz Focus.
- Encouraging students to bring in notes before planned absences and after other absences.
- Passing absence notes to the Attendance Coordinator when they are handed in.
- Promote good attendance through inter-form competitions and fortnightly tracking planner activity.
- Informing HOY of concerns over attendance or lack of parental contact over absence.
- Completion of <92% tutor home school contact calls.
- Using sanctions to deal with students who are late for Fitz Focus.
- Informing HOYs of students who are persistently late for Fitz Focus.

The Attendance/Admissions Coordinator responsibilities:

- Checking the absence line.
- Managing Parent Call.
- Liaising with HOYs, SWMs and the Pastoral Director to analyse attendance figures.
- Produce fortnightly attendance e-mail for tutors and HOYs to be used in Fitz Focus.
- Liaising with HOYs over attendance issues as necessary.
- Meeting regularly with the Pastoral Director to monitor attendance trends and actions required.
- Sending out attendance warning letters when attendance drops below 95% and 90% in line with the Attendance and Achievement policy.
- Maintaining a list of students who arrive late on the spreadsheet in the S drive.
- Issuing late detentions for those that arrive after the register has closed.
- Signing students in and out during the school day.

Head of Department responsibilities:

- Ensuring that class teachers take a register at the start of every lesson.

Class Teacher responsibilities:

- Taking a register at the start of every lesson.
- Resolving truancy from single lessons.

Support students returning from absence/ missing work/ learning

Governor responsibilities:

- Monitoring attendance data.
- Assessing the impact of the attendance policy.

Annex 5: Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term-Time

Dear Parents and Carers

Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term-Time

There is now strong evidence that any term-time absence can be damaging to a student's education. In making a decision, the school must consider factors such as the reason for and the length of the proposed absence, its impact on the student's education, the student's overall attendance pattern, family circumstances and the rarity of the trip.

There is a clear link between good attendance at school and achievement in exams. Government figures from 2012 show that nationally 73% of students with attendance rates of over 95% achieved 5 A*-C, including English and Maths at GCSE. Of those children who had attendance of 91-95%, only 40% achieved the same results and this drops to 22% for those with attendance between 85-90%.

Please use the form on the reverse of this letter if you would like to apply for permission for exceptional leave of absence from School during term-time. There are some important considerations that you should think of before applying. Please read the following points carefully:

- As of September 2013, the Department for Education has changed the regulations about term time holidays. Parents no longer have the opportunity to request up to two weeks holiday during term time.
- Requests for holidays during term time will no longer be authorised. If a child is absent during term time for a holiday a penalty notice warning will be issued. If another is taken during the same year, a penalty notice will be issued by the Attendance and Engagement Officer.
- A Headteacher can receive requests for exceptional reasons for absence of one or two days, but these will only be authorised if the child's attendance is over 95%.
- Absence must be requested in advance. If it is not requested in advance, or taken despite refusal, it will count as unauthorised absence. Retrospective approval is not possible.
- All schools are obliged to report unauthorised absence to the Local Education Authority and the Department for Education and Skills.
- No absence will be authorised during practice or public examination periods.
- Any absences are always a matter of grave concern. Approval will not normally be given when the student's attendance is already below 95%. Please note that the School is obliged to report attendance below 85% to the Attendance and Engagement Service. Students with any unauthorised absence will not be considered until the unauthorised absence is resolved.

If, having read the above, you still wish to proceed, then complete the form on the reverse and return it to the Headteacher. Applications must include the student's name and tutor group, the dates of the absence, and a clear explanation of why you are unable to complete the activity in term-time. These new regulations will help to support students' success at Fitzharrys

Yours sincerely

Will Speke
Head of School

Attendance and Achievement Policy

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FITZHARRYS SCHOOL EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

To the Head of School:

I request exceptional leave of absence for my child to be taken in term-time.

Name of Student:	Tutor Group:
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Inclusive dates of the leave of absence, from	/	/	to	/	/
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Date of application:	/	/
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Reason why this absence cannot be taken outside term-time:
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Name of Parent:

Signature:

NB The Headteacher will consider this application and will reply quickly. Please do not book any arrangements until you know that the absence will be authorised.

For Office Use Only			
Attendance this year		sessions	
Authorised absence this year		sessions	
Unauthorised absence this year		sessions	

Exceptional leave of absence	GRANTED / DECLINED
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Annex 6: Penalty Notice for Term-Time Holidays

Re. PENALTY NOTICES FOR TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS

Fitzharrys school is committed to ensuring that your child receives the best possible education to best prepare them for the next stage of their life. Each school day is carefully planned, and each lesson informs a wider programme of learning. Therefore, every lesson really does count. Your child is a valued member of our school community and every day missed is a day lost without them.

It is the policy of this school not to authorise absence for holidays during term-time. While advance permission can be given in exceptional circumstances, this is rare and can only be granted by me in my capacity as Head Teacher. Any such request should be addressed to me in writing before the holiday is taken and you should not assume that permission will be granted.

If a term-time holiday is taken without permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a referral may be made to the County Attendance Team. This may result in the issue of an Education Penalty Notice under section 444A Education Act 1996 in respect of each absent child, to each parent/carer. The current penalty is £60 per parent per child, rising to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days.

Penalty notices are intended as an alternative to prosecution. If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days, the usual consequence is a Magistrates' Court prosecution for the underlying section 444(1) Education Act 1996 offence of failure to secure regular school attendance. If further instances of unauthorised absence occur despite a penalty notice having previously been issued, or if the child's attendance is a wider matter of concern, the local authority may consider prosecution in any event.