

Leigh Academy Wilmington

Attendance Policy

Last Review Date	Next Review Date
July 2025	September 2026

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Aim(s)

There is a strong relationship between positive attendance and achievement. We believe that every student will benefit from the education provided at Leigh Academy Wilmington and therefore regular attendance is crucial. The aim of this policy is to provide transparency, ensure consistency and facilitate regular attendance for every child, regardless of their age or background. The policy has also been created using the legal framework and recent DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

At Leigh Academy Wilmington we will ensure that:

- Every student has the right and access to a broad and balanced education
- No student is deprived of their education opportunities by either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students
- Rapid action is taken, where necessary to ensure an improvement in attendance or punctuality

At Leigh Academy Wilmington we recognise that:

- The vast majority of our students want to attend to learn, socialise with peers and fully prepare themselves fully to take their place in society
- Students and their families may require support at some stage in meeting attendance obligations and responsibilities
- Students who attend and are punctual, or make significant improvements need to be rewarded so this is recognised and encouraged
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers ensure their child's attendance at the academy as set out by law (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996)

At Leigh Academy Wilmington we will encourage 100% attendance by:

- Clear, consistent communication with parents/carers about importance of regular, prompt attendance
- Communicate with parents/carers to Set improvement targets, when necessary, and share these with students and parents/carers
- Accurate completion of registers within the first 15 minutes of each lesson
- Contact parents/carers, usually by text, if their child is absent and no reason has been received
- Utilise external agencies, where appropriate, to help support students/families when necessary

Legal framework

This policy has been created to include all requirements of the Department for Education's 'Working together to improve school attendance' (May 2022) and 'School Attendance' (May 2022). It also refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on 'School attendance parental responsibility measures' (Jan 2015). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties from all stakeholders: The Education Act 1996, The Education Act 2002, The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The Education (Pupil registration) Regulations 2006. This Policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient, full-time education suitable:

- a) to his age, ability and aptitude
- b) to any special educational needs, they may have
- c) Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Leigh Academy Wilmington and the Leigh Academies Trust are dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and have set out this Attendance Policy accordingly.

Links with other policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy and Marking & Feedback Policy
- Relationships, Health and Sex Education Policy
- LAT Policies: Attendance Policy, Uniform, Suspensions and Searching & Screening Policy

Roles & Responsibilities

1. Kent County Council

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, Kent County Council will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear to both parents/carers and students
- Annually review the Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, parents and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure that the Academy is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for the children who are educated off-site.
 - Have a School Liaison Officer (Inclusion & Attendance) to provide core functions:
 - Communicate and advice: regularly provide updates, share examples of good practice, provide training where necessary
 - Multi-disciplinary support for families: including access to Early Help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family

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support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and remove the barriers to attendance

- Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention where other support has not been successful or engaged with
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their virtual school.

2. Leigh Academies Trust (including the Trust Attendance Officer)

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, LAT Governance will:

- Review attendance regularly and scrutinise data, holding leaders to account
- Annually review the Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, parents and students to implement the policy effectively.
- TAO to support the academy with improving attendance (including weekly visits to discuss current attendance and carry out home visits where necessary)

3. Academy Leadership Team

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, the Academy Leadership Team will:

- Nominate a member of the Senior Leadership Team to oversee attendance throughout the Academy and an Attendance Lead to coordinate attendance across the academy.
- Be active in their approach to promoting excellent attendance to both students and parents/carers.
- Ensure that the Academy's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught about the importance and value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Review the Attendance policy annually and ensure it is updated with Government legislation, Local Authority guidance and that the Senior Leadership Team are aware of guidance/legislation
- Ensure staff are up to date with the Attendance policy, their roles in promoting and recording attendance as well as how to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Report regularly to both Leigh Academies Trust and Kent County Council the attendance data
- Ensure clear systems are in place to record and report attendance and that they work effectively

4. Attendance Lead

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, the Academy Attendance Lead will:

- Review attendance regularly
- Regularly review, alongside the attendance leads from each college and ensure letters are sent to parents/carers whose attendance has become a concern
- Coordinate daily texts to go out to parents/carers where their child is absent without notification
- Offer support via external agencies to encourage positive relationships to improve attendance.

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- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their virtual school
- Coordinate rewards and reporting of attendance across the academy

5. All staff

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, all staff will:

- Complete their registers within the first 20 minutes of every lesson
- Discuss attendance with their tutees and report any possible barriers to the relevant pastoral teams
- Promote positive attendance and take part in the whole school HERO strategy
- Actively engage in any CPD on or around attendance

6. Parents/Carers

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, all parents/carers will:

- Ensure the Academy have up to date contact details for their child (including contact numbers and addresses)
- Ensure their child attends the academy during academy hours and to avoid appointments during these times
- To make contact, preferably before 9am in the event their child is unable to attend
- To communicate with the relevant pastoral team in the event there are any barriers to their child attending

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an accurate attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will record whether every pupil is:

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

See Appendix 1 for Leigh Academy Wilmington's attendance code list, in line with the Department for Education's 'Working together to improve school attendance' (Page 55).

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school no later than **8.25am** on each school day for the first period at **8:30am**. The register for the first session will be taken by **8:40am** on each school day.

The register for the second session will be taken by **11:50am** on each school day.

Unplanned absence and illnesses

Parents/carers must notify the Academy on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am. This can be done by email to admin@wilmington.latrust.org.uk or by contacting your college admin via telephone on 01322272111 and then selecting the relevant College option to leave a message. Where a student exceeds more than 3 days absence within a year, medical evidence may be requested for any further future absences.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, students should attend the Academy for as much of that day as possible.

Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the Academy will authorise absence such as a family bereavement. All authorised absences other than medical appointments or illness require a leave of absence request to be email

Fixed term suspensions

In the event a student is issued with a fixed term suspension, this is treated as an authorised absence. These will be dealt with in line with the Academy's Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Family holidays and extended leave

We cannot permit leave of absence for holidays. The Principal has power to grant authorised absence for exceptional circumstances. In the event there is such a request this must be put in writing to the attention of the relevant Head of College and we ask for a minimum of two weeks notice.

Religious observance

The Academy recognises there may be times where students of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of the academy's holidays and weekends. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance, only one day will be authorised (R), any other absence relating to this will be recorded at the Principal's discretion. . These absences will be verified by our Trust Attendance officer in conjunction with KCC as they hold the official record for dates of religious observance. Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notice in advance.

Punctuality

Registration begins from 8.30am daily. Students who arrive after this time but before 8:45am must sign in with the Student Service Manager on the main entrance. Those who arrive after 8:45am must sign in at the main reception. Students who are recorded as late will be required to complete a detention at 3:15pm on the same day. Any unjustifiable reason for lateness will be recorded as unauthorised. It is imperative students sign in to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed.

There will also be sanctions implemented on those who are late/persistently late. This can be found set out in the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Attendance monitoring for students at risk/vulnerable

All students are monitored closely including any student who is recorded as vulnerable or at risk. All concerns are recorded, reported and acted upon immediately with appropriate staff and external agencies where necessary. Safeguarding procedures and agency referral procedures are followed when required, as set out in our safeguarding policy.

Persistence and severe absence

Students who have less than 90% attendance at any one time are recorded as persistent absentees. Those with less than 50% attendance at any one time are recorded as severe absentees.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

KCC procedures to safeguard missing children states that the Attendance Officer/Lead should be responsible for the check and referral of any student who has not attended, been seen or contact made from parents regarding their absence of more than 20 sessions (2 weeks). A home visit will be conducted before this referral is made.

Interventions & Penalty Notices

The Academy & KCC will make use of a full range of interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools/academies and Kent County Council to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Attendance Improvement Plans (AIP)
- Education supervision orders (issued by KCC)
- Attendance prosecution (AS1 referral completed by the Academy to KCC)
- Parenting Orders and Voluntary Orders (KCC)
- Fixed Penalty Notices (KCC)

KCC can fine any adult with the day-to-day care for the unauthorised absence of their child, from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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The penalty notice amount is increasing from August 2024 with a maximum of two penalty notices within a rolling three-year period:

- First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of school, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21 days).

If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.

A referral to Kent County Council will be made dependent on criteria being met. This may take into account:

- 10 sessions or 5 days unauthorised absence within 100 days (this can include being late after 9am)
- One-off instances such as unauthorised holiday (10 sessions or 5 days)
- Where a fixed term suspended pupil is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Regular communication with staff, students and parents/carers
- MCAS so parents can access their child's attendance
- Texts sent out for students who are absent without reason
- Letters in the event a student attendance falls below expectations
- HERO reward strategy
- Wilmington Wheels & home visits where necessary
- Utilise external agencies where necessary
- Digital displays for tutor group attendance
- Attendance Improvement Plans
- Certificates and rewards for students with positive attendance
- We have a limited number of uniform items which have been loaned as this is a barrier to attendance

Appendices

1. Attendance Codes List
2. Letter of Concern 1
3. Letter of Concern 2 - Meeting Required
4. Notice to Improve Letter
5. Holiday Letters

Appendix 1 - Attendance Codes

Code	Explanation
/	Present
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
C	Exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for a performance or employment abroad.
C2	Part-time Timetable.
D	Dual Registered
E	Suspended or permanently excluded.
G	Holiday not granted
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence for an interview, or admission to another institution.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late
M	Medical or dental appointment.
N	Reason for absence not yet established.
O	No reason for absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity
Q	Unable to attend because of unavoidable cause
R	Religious observance
S	Leave of absence for studying for a public exam
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes.
U	Late after the register has closed
V	Educational Visit or school trip
W	Work Experience
X	Non-compulsory school age not required to attend.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport not being available.
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel.
Y3	Part of school premises being closed.
Y4	The whole site unexpectedly closed.
Y5	Criminal Justice detention
Y6	Following public health guidance
Y7	Unable to attend due to unavoidable cause.
Z	Prospective pupil not on admissions register.

Appendix 2 - Letter of concern

LETTER OF CONCERN

xxxxDatexxx

xxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxx

Dear xxxxParent/CarerNamexxx

Re: xxxStudentNamexxx - xxxCollegeNamexxx

The aim at our Academy is that all students achieve % attendance and arrive at school on time. We are writing to you with regard to xxxStudentNamexxx attendance, currently xxx% (xx days absence of which xx are unauthorised) which is below our Academy and Government expectations.

xxxStudentNamexxx's attendance is now a cause for concern and needs to be addressed immediately. We are sure that you will appreciate that regular school attendance is crucial in order to make progress and achieve educational success.

We are bringing this to your attention as we are keen for us to work together to ensure that this attendance improves and that we are aware of any issues that may impact on attendance.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Appendix 3 - Letter of concern 2 - Meeting required

LETTER OF CONCERN NO: 2 - MEETING REQUIRED

XXXX
XXXXX
XXXX
XXXX

xxxDatexxx

Dear xxxxxxxx

Further to our letters dated _____ regarding our concerns for _____ low attendance, there has unfortunately been no significant improvement shown. Therefore we would like to arrange an attendance meeting to discuss our concerns.

Date: xxxxxxxxxxxx

Time: xxxxxxxxxxxx

If you are unable to attend on this date and would like to arrange an alternative, please contact us by xxxxdatexxxx. Failure to attend this meeting without notification or alternative arrangements may result in a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Services.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 4 - Notice to improve Letter

«Parental_addressee»
«HouseNumber» «HouseName» «Apartment» «Street»
«District»
«Town»
«County»
«Postcode»

date

Dear «Parental_Salutation»

NOTICE TO IMPROVE
FORMAL WARNING OF POSSIBLE ISSUING OF
PENALTY NOTICE FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Pupil Name:

DOB:

Address:

School:

School attendance is hugely important. For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, for their learning, wellbeing, and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, any person who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 may be guilty of an offence under S.444 Education Act 1996. The offences under the Education Act 1996 also include when a pupil is accessing alternative provision.

Penalty Notices can be issued where a pupil has lost at least 10 sessions (5 days) to unauthorised absence in any 10 school weeks. **Child Name** has recorded **0** unauthorised absences between **00/00/2024** and **00/00/2024**.

On reviewing our records, it is clear we have stated the benefits of regular attendance and parents duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. We have continued to raise our concerns with you regarding «Forename»'s attendance and punctuality, this has included:

(Please remove this bit: Outline actions interventions taken/offered to improve the pupil's attendance and/or where information was sought – this should reflect each set of circumstances – below are some examples. The ones in black are mandatory exhaustions of support to be added. The ones in red only add if also been offered and exhausted.)

- **Telephone Calls** – We have contacted you every day your child was absent to understand the reason for this and to offer support with any issues your child may be having.

- **Attendance Concern Letter** – We have written to you, letting you know of our concerns around your child's attendance at school and the impact of their continued absence, inviting you to contact us to discuss the situation further.

- **An Attendance Support Meeting Invite** – We have invited you to a meeting to discuss your child's attendance and absence. We notified you of the consequences should your child continue to have unauthorised absence and you did not effectively engage in the support offered.

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Remove if not applicable to case:

Other options of support you may have offered and need to be added:

Alternative provision, pastoral support, timetable amendments or reintegration to lessons.

Unfortunately, despite the actions taken to support an improvement to **Child Name's** attendance, it remains a cause of concern.

Before a decision is made whether to issue a Penalty Notice, you will be given an opportunity to improve **Child Name's** attendance for a period of 20 school days between **00/00/2024 and 00/00/2024**. During this time, you must ensure your child does not record any unauthorised absence from school. The School may request sight of medical evidence to authorise any absence reported as illness during the Notice to Improve Period. You may wish to consider addressing further support or access previously provided support that was not initially engaged with. Please contact the school office to discuss this further.

Should further unauthorised absence occur, a referral may be made to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) and/or Court action including the use of Education Supervision Orders (ESO).

It remains the Local Authority's decision on the type of intervention offered or used. If a FPN is considered, they are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be **£160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days**.

If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period, then the charge will be at a **flat rate of £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days**.

In both instances failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in **prosecution** by the Kent PRU and Attendance Service.

In the event of three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3 rolling year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. **A referral will be made to Kent PRU and Attendance Service Courts Team** who will consider the case for prosecution.

Please note that the payment should not be made to school, but directly to Kent County Council, if they contact you.

We will continue to work with you to help **«Forename»** to attend school regularly and punctually. If you wish to discuss this notice and what further support is available, please contact the school to make an appointment or arrange a phone call.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher, School Name

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Appendix 5 - Holiday Letters

Parent/Carer Name

Parent/Carer Address

Date:

Dear _____,

Declining leave of absence

Name:

DOB:

College/Tutor:

Thank you for your letter regarding absence from school from _____ to _____

I am sure you will agree that it is important that your child's education is consistent and uninterrupted. We will not authorise term time holidays during the 190 days each year designated for school. We expect parents/carers to use the thirteen weeks of school holidays available during the year.

The Department of Education (DfE) and Local Authority states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. Although we sympathise with your situation, unfortunately it is not exceptional. If your decision remains unchanged and you decide to take your child out of school, it will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to a Penalty notice.

In line with our school attendance policy, the Local Authority issues penalty notices on our behalf, after the holiday is taken to each parent/carers per child.

If you wish to appeal the decision and you feel that the reason for leave of absence fulfils the exceptional circumstances criteria, then you should write to me upon receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Principal

For your information:

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, any person who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 may be guilty of an offence under S.444 Education Act 1996. The offences under the Education Act 1996 also include when a pupil is accessing alternative provision.

If a Penalty Notice is considered, in the first instance, they are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be **£160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.**

If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period, then the charge will be at a **flat rate of £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days.**

In both instances failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in **prosecution** by the Local Authority..

In the event of three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3 rolling year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. **A referral will be made to the Local Authority** who will consider the case for prosecution.

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Letter 2

Parent/Carer Name

Parent/Carer Address

Date:

Dear _____,

Unauthorised absence

Name:

DOB:

Form/Class:

In response to the request submitted for your child's absence between _____ to _____ we informed you that it was not possible to authorise this absence.

Our records show that your child was absent between _____ and returned to school on _____. As a consequence, it is unfortunate that I have to inform you that this leave of absence has been formally recorded as unauthorised.

Previously we have written to you explaining that the Department of Education (DfE) states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. We informed you that although we sympathise with your situation, unfortunately it was not viewed as exceptional.

The decision you have taken may be subject to a penalty notice.

The Local Authority issues penalty notices on behalf of the school and they will be issued after the holiday is taken to each parent/carers per child, in line with our attendance policy.

Should you wish to discuss this, please make an appointment to meet with me.

Yours sincerely

Principal

For your information:

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, any person who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 may be guilty of an offence under S.444 Education Act 1996. The offences under the Education Act 1996 also include when a pupil is accessing alternative provision.

If a Penalty Notice is considered, in the first instance, they are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be **£160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.**

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In both instances failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in **prosecution** by the Local Authority..

In the event of three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3 rolling year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. **A referral will be made to the Local Authority** who will consider the case for prosecution.

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Letter 3

Parent/Carer Name

Parent/Carer Address

Date:

Dear _____,

Name:

DOB:

Form/Class:

You applied for leave of absence for your child between _____ to _____ which as we informed you (insert date of letter), was not authorised by the Headteacher.

Consequently, the leave of absence has now been taken, it has been recorded as unauthorised absence and your child/ren has returned to school, the details have been passed to _____ Council for the issue of a Penalty Notice/s.

Yours sincerely

Principal

For your information:

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, any person who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 may be guilty of an offence under S.444 Education Act 1996. The offences under the Education Act 1996 also include when a pupil is accessing alternative provision.

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In the event of three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3 rolling year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. **A referral will be made to the Local Authority** who will consider the case for prosecution.

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Suspect holiday letter

Parent/Carer Name

Parent/Carer Address

Date:

Dear

SCHOOL ABSENCE (INSERT DATES)

Name:

DOB:

Form/Class:

NAME OF PUPIL was absent from school during the above dates and the school has been made aware that the reason for **NAME's** absence was due to a family holiday. If you feel the school has been misinformed, please provide the necessary evidence now requested in order for the absence to be authorised.

Failure to produce the evidence by **DATE MONTH YEAR**, we will assume that an unauthorised holiday was taken. In line with the school's attendance policy, for holidays taken during term time, a referral will be made to the Local Authority

We look forward to hearing from you,

Yours Sincerely,

Principal

For your information:

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, any person who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 may be guilty of an offence under S.444 Education Act 1996. The offences under the Education Act 1996 also include when a pupil is accessing alternative provision.

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In the event of three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3 rolling year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. **A referral will be made to the Local Authority** who will consider the case for prosecution.