

## Attendance Policy

For National Guidance please see [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance)

### Rationale

For a child to achieve their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents, pupils and staff sign up to a Home School Agreement on entry.

Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. The target attendance for our school is 97%. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good school attendance.

### **What is good attendance?**

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between educational achievement and absence levels.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.

100%	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>95-100% represents between 0-10 days missed from school</b>
98-99%	<b>Excellent</b>	
97%	<b>Good</b>	
90 – 96%	<b>Improvement required</b>	<b>85-95% represents between 10-30 days missed from school</b>
85% - 90%	<b>Cause for concern</b>	
<b>Below 85%</b>	<b>Serious cause for concern</b>	<b>80-85% represents between 30-40 days missed from school</b>

During the Autumn Term when we start to monitor attendance, percentages may look low, even for children who have only had a small number of sessions off school. In the majority of cases we know that this would be for a genuine reason/illness which we would completely understand, however we would still notify parents so they are aware if they meet a trigger point. As the academic year moves into the Spring Term, with the children being at school longer, their attendance rate will increase with more days spent in school.

### Operating the Policy

#### **Promoting good attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parent/s and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child reaches their potential. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletter/website.
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates.
- Set attendance targets for the whole school and ensure that these are well publicised.
- Reporting low levels to the local authority.

### **Attendance and the Law:**

It is a legal obligation of all parents/carers to ensure their child attends school regularly; by law all children of compulsory school age must receive a proper full time education.

The 1996 Education Act states:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable

(a) To his/her age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) To any special educational needs s/he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

The legal framework for this policy is:

- Education Act 1996, section 444
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Access to Education for Children and Young People with Medical Needs

### **Role and responsibilities**

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the reasons for their child’s absence and will encourage them to keep these to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil’s home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Headteacher.

### **Responsibilities of classroom staff**

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the office staff on matters of absence and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child’s absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.
- Staff are aware of and know how to implement care, guidance and support policies, in order to recognise where there may be issues affecting pupil attendance and to be pro-active in dealing with issues in the appropriate way.

### **Responsibilities of parent/student**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an unavoidable reason for absence.
- Arrive at school on time and fully equipped for lessons.
- Get to registration on time.
- Parents to register child at the school office if they are late (*once the school gate is closed*) or are leaving the school site during school hours.

### **Responsibilities of parents/carers**

Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a parent/carer’s legal responsibility (Section 7 Education Act 1996) and

permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

A 'parent' is defined in Section 576 of the Education Act 1966 and is defined as follows:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of what their relationship is).

#### Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- To ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- To notify the school if their child cannot attend for any reason – this is for the child's safety as well as administrative reasons.
- Provide written confirmation of the reason for an absence on their child's return to school.
- To request authorisation for all 'leave of absence,' including holidays and appointments in school time.
- To work with the school and School Attendance Officer to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence.
- To attend meetings as required in relation to their child's attendance.

#### Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be taken twice daily. Once at the beginning of the school day (8.45am) and again in the afternoon (1pm - 1.15pm)

#### **Taking the register**

- Registers are treated as legal documents – indeed they may be used as evidence in court cases. For this reason they are retained for a minimum of three years.
- The Legal register is held on our MIS (Management Information System).
- For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent:
  - / - is entered to show the pupil is present in the morning session.
  - \ - is entered to show the pupil is present in the afternoon session.
  - N – is entered to show the pupil is absent until the reason is known (*a red circle is placed in the 'manual' register*);
- Once the school has been officially notified of the reason for the absence, the appropriate registration code will be inserted by the class teacher or the school office; (**Appendix 1**)
- The register must clearly differentiate between whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised by the school.
- It is the policy of the school that no absences are unaccounted for.

#### Understanding Types of Absence

##### **Authorised Absence**

- Authorised absence is absence with permission from the headteacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health.
- Even when pupils are engaged in an Approved Educational Activity off-site, they must not be marked as present, as good Health and Safety practice requires that the school needs to know who is on the premises in the case of a fire drill or real emergency.

- The school **may** authorise absence in the following exceptional circumstances:
  - i. Personal illness (excessive or extended absences **will require medical evidence**).
  - ii. Medical Appointment (copy of appointment to be seen and copied).
  - iii. Family bereavement.
  - iv. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to a child's health and safety.
  - v. Religious observance (limitations apply).
  - vi. A travelling child's absence (limitations apply).
  - vii. Involvement in a public performance.
  - viii. Approved sporting activity.
  - ix. Entrance exams.
- For periods of extended absence because of illness, the school will seek the advice of the school nurse and HPA (Health Protection Agency) and will only authorise the number of days that have been advised by the Health Authority for the illness.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the headteacher or authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

- The school is unlikely to authorise absence in the following circumstances, for example:
  - i. No explanation is offered by the parent/carer.
  - ii. The school views the explanation offered as unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, refusing to attend etc.)
  - iii. Written confirmation of the reason for the absence is not forthcoming.
  - iv. If a pupil's attendance percentage is below 97% and no medical evidence has been supplied.
  - v. Leave of absence which is taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or is in excess of the time agreed by the school.
  - vi. Special occasions such as birthdays.
  - vii. Minding siblings.
  - viii. Parent/carer or sibling illness.
  - ix. Treatment of head lice.
  - x. Family holidays in term time.
- Unauthorised absence from school is considered truancy. This can take the form of absence from school for complete days, lateness and absenteeism from individual lessons. Each of these is as serious as the other, but the strategies for effecting change may need to be different.
- When parents are unaware of such absences there may be a significant danger to the young person's safety, as it is likely that their whereabouts are unknown by a responsible adult.
- If a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absences during a 10 week period (equivalent to five days), the parents/carers can be issued with a Fixed Penalty notice by the Local Authority.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

- Persistent Absentees are pupils whose attendance falls below 90%.
- While discretion may be deployed (e.g. in cases of long term illness), Houghton Conquest Lower School will refer any individual child whose attendance is 90% or below to the School Attendance Improvement Officer. At this point, legal proceedings could follow.
- No absence below 90% will be authorised unless in extenuating circumstances such as long term illness; all PAs are tracked and reported to the Governing Body.

## Punctuality and Lateness

The school actively discourages late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs.

- A child will be registered as late in the morning if they arrive more than 10 minutes later than the scheduled start of the day. The 'Late' will be recorded on our electronic management system and on the register as 'L' for anyone arriving after 9am.
- Arrival 20 minutes after the register closes at 9:20am, unless for an authorised medical reason, is automatically coded as 'U'.
- Lateness can be an indication of more serious problems, as well as poor time management.
- Our level of contact will be increased if lateness continues, until after 10 lates when the School Attendance Officer may be informed.
- For full details see [Appendix 2](#) (Punctuality Protocol). Example letter see [Appendix 2\(i\)](#) and [2\(ii\)](#)

## Temporary School Closures

Where a school has to close due to severe weather conditions, problems with amenities such as water or heating, fire, structural damage or in-service training, no attendance registers are needed. This will be coded appropriately.

## Reporting Absence – First Day Response

- It is the policy of the school that no absence should be unaccounted for.
- For safeguarding purposes, on the first day of absence parents/carers are expected to contact the school, preferably by telephone before 9.30am.
- The parent/carer reporting the absence should give the reason for the absence and the expected date of return.
- If the date of the return is unknown, regular contact on a daily basis should be kept with the school.
- If the school receives no contact a member of the office team will:
  - i. Arrange to check if the child is in the lesson that they should be in. If he/she is present, the register will be marked accordingly. If he/she is absent, they will:
  - ii. Telephone the parent/carers working through the named emergency contacts provided.
  - iii. If contact cannot be made, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed. The school has a duty of care to ensure the child is safe and therefore we will consider alerting the police that the child is missing.
- **If no response is received the non-compliance with the school policy will be recorded as unauthorised on the register;**
- Reporting an absence, verbally or in writing, does not guarantee authorisation.

## Request for leave of absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. It is important to note that head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

The fundamental principles for defining **exceptional** are **rare, significant, or unavoidable**, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Circumstances where absences may be regarded as **exceptional** will vary from school to school and family to family.

There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the school office or website – [Appendix 3](#)) in advance and

before making any arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised.

### **Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness**

The following legal measures may be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school and are not attending regularly:

Penalty Notices: The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003  
Magistrates Court Action under Sec 444 (1) and (1a) of the Education Act 1996

#### **Penalty Notices**

Central Bedfordshire Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices states that where a child has had 10 unauthorised sessions of absence in a 10-school week period, the school may request a penalty notice be issued. The code of conduct is a statutory document that ensures that the powers for this legal sanction are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

Penalty Notices can be issued when

- a pupil has taken holiday during term-time and the absence has not been authorised by the school, providing the school has taken into account DfE guidance to inform its decision-making.
- where the school believes that the sanction will lead to an improvement in attendance, e.g. persistent late arrival at school; parent's failure to attend/co-operate at a parenting contract meeting.

Parents and carers will be alerted/warned about the possibility of a penalty notice being requested for unauthorised absence, via the leave of absence request form, through the school's attendance policy and website.

If more than one parent has parental responsibility, both parents will receive a Penalty Notice. In situations where there is more than one pupil in a family with irregular school attendance, multiple penalty notices can be issued to the same parents during the year. However, this action must be subject to careful consideration and co-ordination.

#### **Procedure in School**

On receipt of a written absence request, the following will occur:

- The request will be considered according to the criteria.
- If insufficient information is received, further details will be requested from the parent/carer.
- If appropriate, the parent/carer may be requested to attend a meeting to discuss the circumstances.
- If special exceptional circumstances are identified, authorisation of the term time absence may be granted by the school.
- Parents will be notified of the outcome in writing ([Appendix 3\(i\)](#)).

#### **Legal Action taken under Section 444 (1) and (1a) Education Act 1966**

Where the school has tried to address a pupil's unauthorised absences but the measures taken have been unsuccessful, it can then refer on to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer. If there is either no improvement in the attendance nor satisfactory evidence provided for the absences following their intervention, then it is likely legal action at Magistrates Court will be initiated.

#### **Sanctions available to the court are as follows:**

- A fine of up to £2,500.
- A conditional discharge – you will be given a set amount of time in which to improve your child's attendance. Should you fail the Council may bring a further prosecution against you and, if found guilty, you will be sentenced for both offences.
- An absolute discharge – the case is proved but you will not be subject to a penalty, although you will receive a conviction.

- A community order such as unpaid work, curfew or tagging.
- Imprisonment – for up to three months.

### **Education of Pupils with Medical Needs**

In response to the guidance - Access to Education for Children & Young People with Medical Needs, DfES 0732/2001 – Houghton Conquest Lower School recognises its responsibilities ‘for all pupils unable to attend school for medical reasons. Young persons should be able to access education without stigma or exclusion.’ The school’s aim is to ensure pupils have access to as much education as their medical condition allows.

- Pupils covered by this may:
  - i. Be recovering from an illness or injury, keeping the pupil away from school during recovery.
  - ii. Have a long term or recurring illness.
  - iii. Have an illness or clinically defined mental health disorder which causes them to be absent for a period in excess of 15 days, where medical opinion states they are still unable to access mainstream school.
- The headteacher, in partnership with the classteacher, will be responsible for:
  - Ensuring that Medical Needs have been thoroughly discussed eg with allocated nurse and the relevant external agencies have been involved.

### **Parents/Carers**

- Parents/carers are expected to be full collaborative partners in the process of ensuring all pupils maximise their attendance. Where difficulties arise, parents/carers must be able to access information, advice and support during a pupil’s illness. Opportunities to allow the pupil to be involved in decision making and choices will also be arranged.

### **Monitoring and Protocols for dealing with Absences**

- The office staff who have responsibilities for attendance will monitor absences via electronic registers at least once a month.
- If a child’s attendance falls below our school target of 97%, ‘Trigger Point 1’ will be activated as per our System Protocol (Appendix 4).
- If the attendance rate continues to deteriorate, the school will begin to follow the protocol for subsequent trigger points (Appendix 5, 6 and 7).
- All actions will be recorded electronically by the appropriate person, depending on the level of trigger point.
- At the start of the Academic Year, any pupil whose attendance was below 90% in the previous academic year, will be monitored carefully (communicated to parents in the July end of Year Report). If their attendance dips they will then be expected to attend an attendance meeting with the class teacher. An attendance contract will be completed. If attendance becomes an issue they will be fast tracked to Trigger Point 2 of the protocol.
- At the start of the academic year, any pupil who had been referred to the local authority School Attendance Officer (SAO) in the previous academic year, will be expected to attend an attendance meeting with their parents/ carers, classteacher and School Attendance Officer (CBC).
- If attendance subsequently becomes an issue they will be contacted further by the School Attendance Officer.

### **Non-Compulsory Age Attendance**

Pre-school attendance is a vital foundation for a child’s learning, but to get the most benefit a child must attend regularly and promptly. These also provide good habits for the future. Nevertheless, parents of non-compulsory school age (below the age of 5) children do not have a legal duty to ensure their children receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (this includes home education). However if a child is registered at a school, parents do have a responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

The school census now collects absence data in relation to pupils who are aged 4; hence the need to ensure good attendance

habits with non-compulsory aged pupils is now heightened for all schools.

**All non-compulsory age (pre-school and foundation stage pupils under 5) pupils will be treated exactly the same as compulsory age pupils regarding attendance.**

### **My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend then it is better not to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may also make things worse. Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries.

Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you, but consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

### **Rewards System**

- Rewards for good attendance are given to individuals. For full information see [Appendix 8](#).

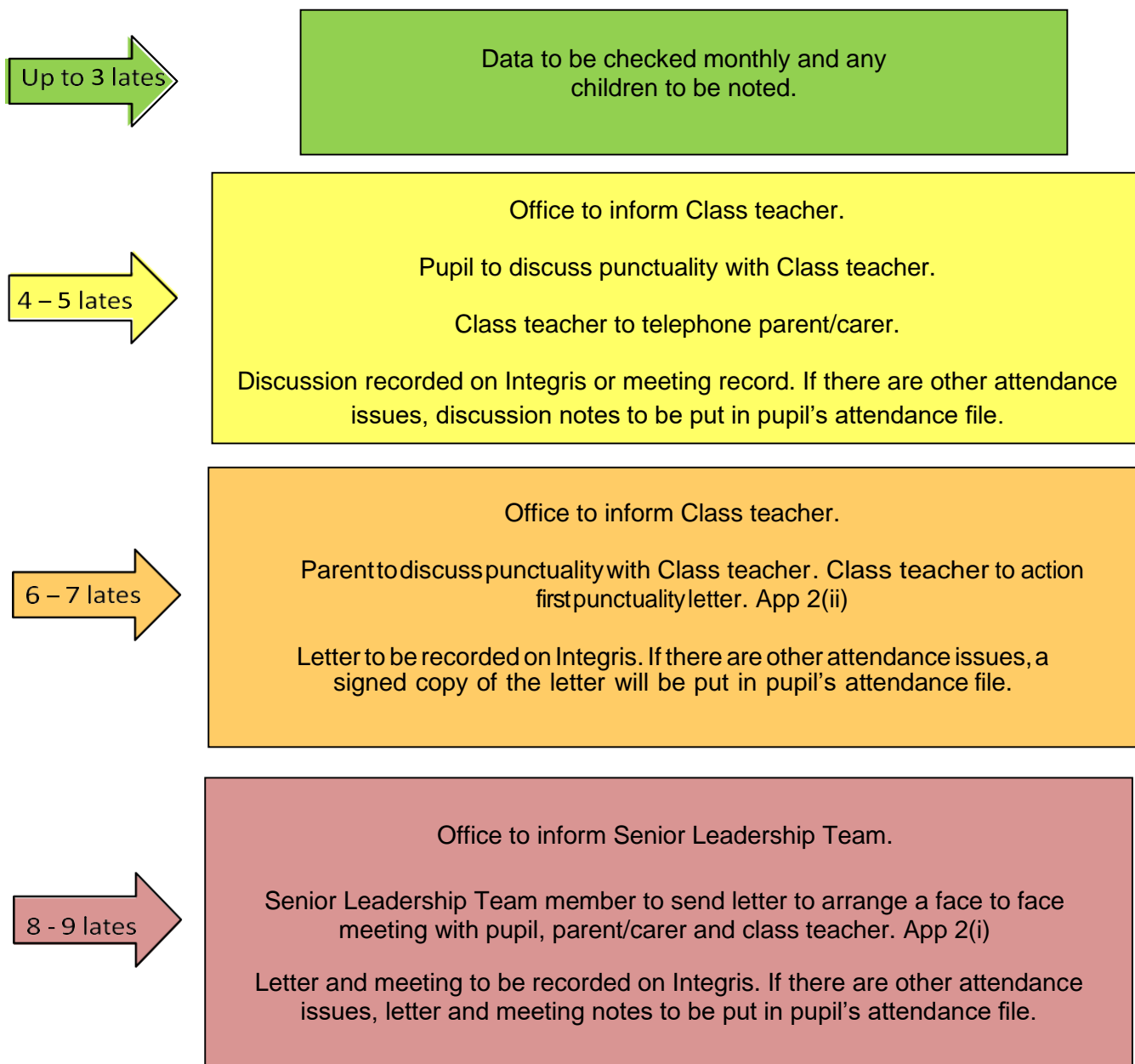


**Key to Attendance/Registration Codes**

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual Registration
E	Excluded
G	Holiday not agreed
H	Annual family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (Not Medical/Dental)
J	Interview
L	Late (before reg closed)
M	Medical / Dental
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised circumstances
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

**Punctuality (Lateness) Protocol**

Students to be recorded as 'L' if they arrive more than 10 minutes after the scheduled start of the day. Arrival after 20 minutes, unless for an authorised medical appointment, is automatically coded as 'U'. Registers are checked **daily** and recorded appropriately.



Dear

Re: Lateness

As you may be aware, our school is working very hard to improve both attendance and punctuality. I am writing to inform you that your child has been late on X occasions since xxxxx (date).

It is understandable that any child can be late on an odd occasion for any number of reasons, all of which should be verified by the parent/carer.

Lateness in school causes immense disruption and inconvenience, plus actively disadvantages the progress of pupils whose lessons are constantly interrupted by the arrival of latecomers. When a pupil arrives late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability.

Please make every effort to improve this situation. We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and hope to see an improvement in the coming weeks. If we can support you in any way to do this, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Dear

Re: Persistent Lateness

I am writing to inform you that your child \_\_\_\_\_ is persistently late for school. Between date and date he/she was late on \_\_\_\_ occasions and missed \_\_\_\_ hours of education.

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone’s education is compromised.

5 minutes late every day = <i>approximately</i> <b>3 DAYS</b> OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
10 minutes late every day = <i>approximately</i> <b>6.5 DAYS</b> OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
15 minutes late every day = <i>approximately</i> <b>10 DAYS</b> OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
20 minutes late every day = <i>approximately</i> <b>13 DAYS</b> OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
30 minutes late every day = <i>approximately</i> <b>19 DAYS</b> OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR

Further lateness may result in you being served with a Penalty Notice. Parents have a duty to ensure their child’s regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

I would like, therefore, to invite you to a meeting to find ways of improving your child’s attendance and to avoid the need for further action. This meeting has been arranged for XX. If this date or time is inconvenient, please contact me at your earliest convenience so that a suitable time can be arranged.

Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours sincerely



### Application for leave of absence for your child during term-time

Please ensure you read our Attendance Policy before completing this form  
[www.hcschool.org.uk](http://www.hcschool.org.uk)

As a Parent/Carer, you should complete this form and return it to your child's school AT LEAST SIX (6) WEEKS before the date when you want the period of absence to start. (A separate application must be completed for each child)

Child's Full Name: .....

Date of Birth.....Year Group.....Class.....

Address.....

Period of Absence: From..... To..... (inclusive)

Number of school days absent: .....

Please list below any siblings that do not attend Houghton Conquest Lower School

Name:	School:
Name:	School:

Please now complete the **Reason Requesting Absence** section overleaf

<b>SECTIONS BELOW TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL STAFF ONLY</b>	
<b>SCHOOL ACTION</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Previous holidays checked: ____% Attendance <input type="checkbox"/> Class teacher informed/consulted <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting evidence required
<b>DECISION</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Authorised Absence <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised Absence Comments/Reason (if applicable): ..... ..... ..... Signed: ..... Date: ..... <i style="display: block; margin-left: 100px;">Headteacher</i>

**Reason Requesting Absence** (leave of absence will only be granted in line with the DfE Guidelines for exceptional circumstances – [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance)).

*Please use the space below to give details of why you are requesting leave of absence for your child.*

Name (please print) ..... Relationship to child: .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Please use additional sheet, if required, and attach evidence.

Application for leave of absence

Dear

Thank you for your completed ***Application for Leave of Absence for Your Child during Term-Time*** form.

Following recent guidance, headteachers, are able to authorise leave during term-time in 'exceptional circumstances'. Examples of exceptional leave would be something that is rare, significant, unavoidable and/or short. I have reviewed your application and confirm that on this occasion the absence will be recorded as an authorised/ unauthorised absence.

However, please read the following extract of information for Parents / Carers (revised February 2014) regarding Non-school Attendance Penalty Notices from the Local Authority (Central Bedfordshire Council).

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their children regularly attend the school at which they are registered. Parents can help to ensure regular attendance by:

- encouraging their children to attend school regularly and on time;
- taking an interest in their children's education and life at school;
- communicating with their children's school in order to discuss any emerging issues or problems;
- notifying their children's school on the first day of any absence;
- not arranging any family holidays during term time.

#### **When a Penalty Notice may be issued**

In Central Bedfordshire School Attendance Officers are responsible for deciding when a Penalty Notice shall be issued. They will make this decision in consultation with schools and, when appropriate, other agencies, such as the police.

A Penalty Notice may be issued when:

- a pupil is taken out of school during term time for a holiday which has not been authorised by the school;
- a truancy patrol carried out by a School Attendance Officer has found a pupil absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school;
- a child's school attendance has been poor and his / her school believe that the issuing of a Penalty Notice may lead to an improvement in the child's attendance (for example, when a child is persistently late for school and his / her parents fail to address the situation).

Yours sincerely

**TRIGGER POINT 1 – 97% and below**

Class teacher to be informed of the pupil's attendance rate by the member of office staff for the monitoring of attendance.

Letter sent to parent to inform them.

Attendance to be monitored carefully.

**TRIGGER POINT 2 - Second Point of Contact (see Appendix 5 & 6)**

Class teacher to be informed of the pupil's attendance by the member of office staff responsible for the monitoring of attendance.

After all absences below 90%, evidence needs to be provided on the return to school and/or have a discussion with class teacher.

All information/evidence will be kept in the pupil's attendance file.

Second letter issued.

**If the attendance rate fails to improve or continues to fall, move to:**

**TRIGGER POINT 3 - Third Point of Contact (see Appendix 7)**

Class teacher and Headteacher to be informed of the pupil's attendance by the member of office staff responsible for the monitoring of attendance.

Formal letter to be sent by the Headteacher. Face to Face meeting to be held.

School Attendance Improvement Officer to be contacted and/or attend meeting.



Attendance 90 – 97%

Dear

### **School Attendance – Trigger Point 1**

I am writing to you with reference to the attendance of your son/daughter. At Houghton Conquest Lower School, we promote and encourage good attendance as it is a major contributor to good attainment. Children who attend regularly generally achieve better outcomes at school and consequently in their future.

The attendance register (copy enclosed) shows that his/her attendance currently stands at XX% (equal to X days missed).

Of course it would be preferable for children to have 100% attendance. We do appreciate and realise this may not be possible for all children, but would appreciate your continued support in ensuring that your child's attendance improves to at least our minimum school target of 97%. We will be monitoring their attendance in the meantime, and are happy to support in any way.

**During the Autumn Term when we start to monitor attendance, this letter may be issued to children who have only had a small number of sessions off school and in the majority of cases we know this is for a genuine reason/illness, which we completely understand, however still would like you to be notified of their attendance so you are informed.**

**As we move into the Spring Term, with the children being at school longer (assuming your child has had no further absences) then their attendance rate will improve. Updated information will be available during our February parent consultations.**

If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child's attendance, or if we can support you in any way to help improve (child's name) attendance rate please do not hesitate to contact myself.

Yours sincerely

*\* Paragraph in bold to be included in letters sent out in the Autumn Term*

Below 90%

Dear

### **School Attendance - Trigger Point 2**

I am writing to you with reference to the attendance of your son/daughter. At Houghton Conquest Lower School, we promote and encourage good attendance as it is a major contributor to good attainment. Children who attend regularly generally achieve better outcomes at school and consequently in their futures.

The attendance register (copy enclosed) shows that his/her attendance currently stands at XX% (equal to X days missed) with XX number of unauthorised absences. I am concerned that this attendance level may seriously impact upon his/her ability to fully access the curriculum.

Unfortunately we will be unable to authorise any further absences as illness from the date of this letter onwards unless satisfactory medical evidence is provided to support these absences. Medical evidence can take the form of copies of prescriptions, appointment cards or sight of medication. In certain cases a letter from a GP or Consultant would be required so that extra support to help a child access their education because of a medical need can be arranged.  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachmentatachment\\_data/attachment\\_data/file/131234/school\\_attendance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachmentatachment_data/attachment_data/file/131234/school_attendance.pdf)

Should XXXXX level of attendance fail to improve or the school doesn't receive satisfactory evidence to support the absences, the school may need to consider requesting that you attend a joint meeting with the Headteacher and the Local Authority School Attendance Officer or may request that a Penalty Notice is issued in line with Central Bedfordshire Council's Code of Conduct  
<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal/administration/inclusion/referrals.aspx>

If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child's attendance, or if we can support you in any way to help improve XXX's attendance rate please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Dear

**School Attendance – Trigger Point 3**

I am writing to you concerning the continuing problem of your child's irregular attendance at school. XX's current attendance is only XX%.

We have endeavoured to seek your support with this matter, but unfortunately your child's irregular attendance has now reached a stage where the School or Local Authority may consider taking legal action against you for failing to carry out your statutory responsibility of ensuring that your child receives an efficient full-time education at school. The action may include prosecuting you in a Magistrates court.

To avoid this possibility, I would therefore like to invite you to a meeting with myself and the Local Authority School Attendance Officer to find ways of improving your child's attendance and so avoid the need for further action. This meeting has been arranged for XX.

If this date or time is inconvenient, please contact me at your earliest convenience so that a suitable time can be arranged.

Yours sincerely

**Attendance Rewards**

***Half Termly***

- The class in the school that achieves the highest attendance gets 15 minutes added to their golden time on the last Friday before the half term.
- 97% or above attendance certificates awarded in the celebration assembly.

***Termly***

- \* 5 team points for those achieving the school attendance target or more.
- \* 10 team points for those achieving 100% attendance for the whole term.

## Legislation

### Section 175 of the Education Act 2002

*Places a duty on governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.*

*It is not statutory for schools to have an attendance policy.*

*It is statutory to have a home school agreement as set down in Section 110 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.*

### Section 7 of The Education Act 1996

Requires parents to secure the education of their children of compulsory school age.

*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable -*

*(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he may have,*

*either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/7>

### Section 576 Education Act 1996

Meaning of “parent”.

*(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—*

*(a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or*

*(b) who has care of him,*

*(3) In subsection (1) “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989.*

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/576>

### Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

*Penalty notices for parents in cases of truancy*

*(1) After section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (c. 56) (failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil) insert—“444A Penalty notice in respect of failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil*

*(1) Where an authorised officer has reason to believe:-*

*(a) that a person has committed an offence under section 444(1), and*

*(b) that the school to which the offence relates is a relevant school in England, he may give the person a penalty notice in respect of the offence.*

*(2) A penalty notice is a notice offering a person the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the offence under section 444(1) to which the notice relates by payment of a penalty in accordance with the notice.*

*(3) Where a person is given a penalty notice, proceedings for the offence to which the notice relates (or an offence under section 444(1A) arising out of the same circumstances) may not be instituted before the end of such period as may be prescribed.*

*(4) Where a person is given a penalty notice, he cannot be convicted of the offence to which the notice relates (or an offence under section 444(1A) arising out of the same circumstances) if he pays a penalty in accordance with the notice.*

*(5) Penalties under this section shall be payable to local education authorities in England.*

*(6) Sums received by a local education authority under this section may be used by the authority for the purposes of any of its functions which may be specified in regulations.*

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/38/contents>

*(5) Penalties under this section shall be payable to local education authorities in England.*

*(6) Sums received by a local education authority under this section may be used by the authority for the purposes of any of its functions which may be specified in regulations.*

#### Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996

*Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil.*

*(1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.*

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444>

*(1A) If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence.*

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444>