

Attendance Policy

Approved by: Stoughton & Northmead LGB's

Date: December 2022

Last reviewed on: December 2022

Next review due by: December 2023



1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy



3.2 The Headteachers

The headteacher are responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 In Partnership with the Headteachers, the Home School Link Workers (HSLW) and the Administration Staff

Is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to the Headteacher and LGB and reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- Working with Surrey Inclusion Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Claire Marrow is the HSLW at Stoughton Infant School

Hayley Roberts is the Admissions and Attendance Officer at Stoughton Infant School

Wendy Cook is the HSLW and Attendance Officer at Northmead Junior School

3.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Attendance is recorded first thing in the morning and after lunch.

3.6 School Administration Staff

School administration staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system



- Monitor Studybugs for absence messages and ensure that this is transferred to SIMS.

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school or message via Studybugs to report their child's absence before 9am, preferably 8:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 2 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.



Pupils must arrive on time each school day:

	Register Opens	Register Closes
Nursery	8:50am	9:10am
Reception	8:30am	8:50am
Year 1	8:35am	8:55am
Year 2	8:40am	9:00am
Year 3	8.45am	9.15am
Year 4	8.45am	9.15am
Year 5	8.45am	9.15am
Year 6	8.45am	9.15am

The register for the first session will be taken at each year group's arrival time and will be kept open until for 20 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken at:

Nursery & Reception – 12:45pm

Year 1 & Year 2 – 1:00pm

Year 3 & Year 4 - 1:00pm

Year 5 & Year 6 - 1:15pm

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or earlier by calling the school absence line or messaging the school via Studybugs.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The school requires proof of the appointment such as a text message, appointment card or letter.



Parents/Carers can inform the school of appointments by telephoning the school office, emailing infants@stoughton.surrey.sch.uk/info@northmead.surrey.sch.uk or via Studybugs.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. If a parent/carer is applying for an leave of absence a request form must be completed in advance of the absence. Request for leave forms for those at Stoughton Infants School are stored in the 'my forms' section of Operoo. Paper copies of the form are available from both school offices. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school tracks lateness weekly. We will engage with families to see how we can support them in getting their child to school on time.

4.5 Following-up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call, SMS and Studybugs message the pupil's parent/carer on the morning (by 10am) of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will call the sibling's schools if applicable to see if they've had any communication from the family. If by 10:30am the school still haven't heard, we will make a risk assessment and decide whether we need to visit the child's home. If we visit the child's home and there is no answer we may call the police for assistance.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will report to parents/carers their child's annual attendance at the end of the school year. If a child's attendance is below 90% a parent will be informed prior to this as attendance is of concern.



5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-time Absence

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off, unavoidable events

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible for Stoughton Infant School via Operoo or paper copies via both school offices. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- To attend a wedding or funeral
- A housing crisis which prevents attendance

5.2 Legal Sanctions

There is no longer an entitlement for parents to take children out of school for a leave of absence.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Headteacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. To request leave, parents should fill in an Application for Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances form and return it to the Home School Link Worker. (Appendix 3)

In accordance with the above Regulations, requests for Leave of Absence are treated sympathetically, but only in exceptional circumstances can they be approved. The policy of Surrey County Council to which this school has agreed, states that where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and 'Leave of Absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.



The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks.

The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

If there is an unauthorised Leave of Absence for 5 or more school days, each parent/carer will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued per parent/carer per child and the amount payable is £60.00 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120.00 if paid after 21 days but before 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 38 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Making school an wonderful place to be so children enjoy coming and are therefore eager to attend.

Reporting half-termly attendance for each class in the newsletter.

Reminding parents/carers of the impact of taking their child out of school.

7. Attendance Monitoring

The school monitors attendance weekly, analysing reports received via Studbugs. These reports include: persistent absentees, attendance by group e.g. pupil premium and SEND, attendance by registration group and year group. The school looks to see if attendance is improving or declining and decides what action needs to be taken.

The school monitors attendance half termly with a Surrey Inclusion Officer.

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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

7.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:



- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and the HSLW to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school and Surrey considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Only authorise pupil absence if it is backed up by medical evidence

7.5 Changing Education Provision

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until they are on roll at their new school.

The school requires the following information:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next school
- The address of the new school
- The new home address (if appropriate and known).

If a family are moving to another country we will still require the information above. If the child is of statutory school age to the country they are moving to we will contact the new school to check they are on roll at attending.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Officer.

If a parent removes their child from the roll of the school to home educate, the school will notify the Inclusion Officer as soon as we have received written notification from the parent of their intention to home educate.

The Inclusion Officer will then visit the family to ensure parents are aware of their responsibilities and know where to access support.



8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 2 years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreements
- Parent Code of Conduct



Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances



I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school



#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
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Appendix 2 - Late Letter

Stoughton Infant School & Northmead Junior School

Dear XXXXX,

We have noticed that () has been late for school on () occasions in the last () weeks.

The morning register is taken at 8.XX am and it is absolutely essential for children to be in school at this time.

When your child arrives late to class the following could happen and cause them some unnecessary upset:

1. They miss out on the beginning of the lesson and do not know what is expected of them
2. They may disrupt the classroom routine
3. They may feel uncomfortable at not knowing what is going on
4. They may feel uncomfortable with their peers noticing their late arrival

Your child is marked late in the register if they arrive at school is after X:XXam. If they arrive after X:XXam, the register will be closed and their attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Over one academic year



If there are difficulties or areas where you may need some help in order to arrive at school on time, please either contact me or speak to the class teacher.

Yours sincerely

Home School Link Worker



Appendix 3 - Letter 1 - Attendance Below 90%

Stoughton Infant School & Northmead Junior School

Dear XXXX,

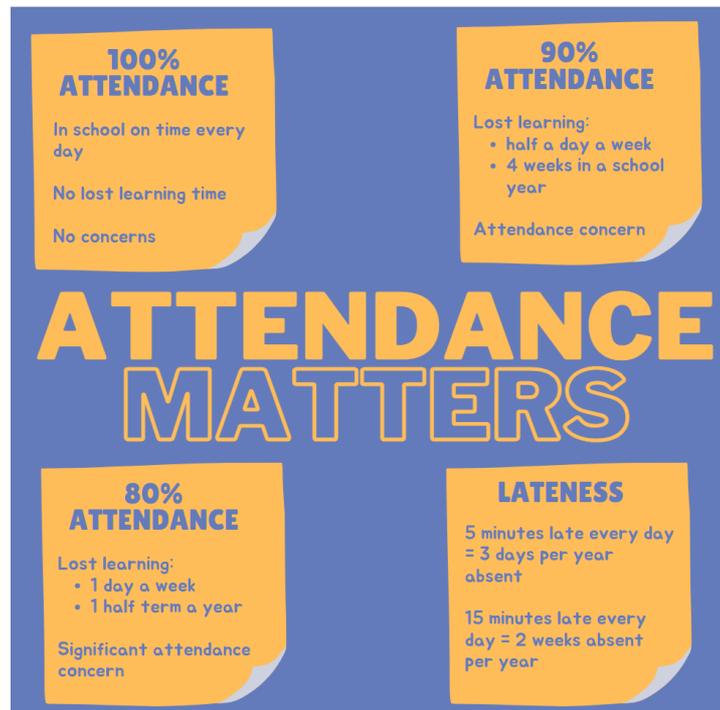
We regularly monitor every child's attendance and we wanted to inform you that your child's attendance has fallen below 90%. Any attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absence and is of concern to us as good attendance is essential for a successful education.

It is parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time for registration.

We understand that low attendance can be for a variety of reasons such as illness or bereavement and for this we understand and are compassionate. Equally, if you have taken unauthorised leave of absence, this will have affected your child's attendance.

We are drawing your attention to this so you can work with us to improve your child's overall attendance through the rest of the academic year, to give your child the best chance of success.

Please take a look at the image below for more information about how attendance matters.



We are here to help and we look forward to an improvement in your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,



Appendix 4 - Thank you - Attendance Improved but still below 90%

Dear XXXX,

We wanted to write to THANK YOU for all your efforts supporting your child with their education and attendance.

Since our last letter to you, your child's attendance has gone up and we are delighted to see this improvement.

To be clear, your child's attendance is still below 90% and therefore we will continue to monitor it.

Thank you for working with us.

Kind regards,



Appendix 5 - Thank you - Attendance Improved and above 90%

Dear XXXX,

We wanted to write to THANK YOU for all your efforts supporting your child with their education and attendance.

Since our last letter to you, your child's attendance has gone up and we are delighted to see this improvement.

Your child's attendance is now above 90% and no longer of a concern.

Thank you for working with us.

Kind regards,



Appendix 6 - Letter 2 - Attendance Meeting

Stoughton Infant School & Northmead Junior School

Dear XXXX,

Having carried out a review of your child's attendance for this year with the Inclusion Officer, there are concerns with their high level of absence from school as shown on the attached attendance grid.

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time and that days are only missed for exceptional reasons.

We would like to invite you to a meeting to be held at school to discuss how we can support you in improving your child's attendance. We will call you to arrange this at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely,

Home School Link Worker



Appendix 7 - Letter 3 - Medical Evidence Request

Stoughton Infant School & Northmead Junior School

Dear XXXX,

MEDICAL EVIDENCE REQUEST

I have this week had an Attendance Meeting with XXXXX XXXXX our linked Inclusion Officer, in which we discussed your child's attendance.

You have previously been made aware that we have had concerns regarding your child's attendance. Unfortunately, as your child's attendance hasn't improved we are no longer able to authorise absences without medical evidence of illness. This evidence must take the form of correspondence from your GP, a hospital appointment card/text or a letter from a Consultant outlining the current issues.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time and that days are only missed for exceptional reasons.

I am sure you are aware it is vitally important that we ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential, both socially and academically. Regular attendance at school is one of the ways we can achieve this.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything further we can assist you with.

Yours sincerely

Home School Link Worker



Appendix 8 - Penalty Notice

Stoughton Infant School & Northmead Junior School

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School

Following new Government legislation that came into effect on 1st September 2013 we have been required to change our policy regarding authorised absence from school. Full details of the updated attendance policy plus all the relevant documentation are available either from the school website or from the school office.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Head teacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances:-

1. Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. Leave of absence in term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more). In such cases the Head teacher/Governing Body will have to judge whether there are exceptional circumstances and may request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice when the absence is not authorised. Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.
3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions in the preceding 6 school weeks. The parent's failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a penalty notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance. If you have any questions or require further support to achieve an improvement, please contact the school or the education welfare officer.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.)



Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice

Notification has been received by means of a Statutory Instrument, -**The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**, that from 1st September 2013 the charge for Penalty Notices will be increased.

The standard charge will be £60 if the Penalty Notice is paid within 21 days, and £120 if the Penalty Notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court for the offence for which the Notice was originally issued.

Please be aware that each parent is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who incurs unauthorised absences, for example, if there are two parents and one child, each parent will receive one Penalty Notice.

If there are two parents, and two children incur unauthorised absences, each parent will receive two Penalty Notices.

Advice and support is available from an Inclusion Officer by contacting your local Education Office as follows:- South West - Tel: 01483 517179

Yours faithfully

Debbie Brown & Sarah Carrington
Headteachers
01483 529888 - Northmead
01483 504172 - Stoughton



Appendix 9 - Leave Not Approved

Stoughton Infant School & Northmead Junior School

Dear XXXXXX,

Re:

I am writing to inform you that your request for.....(pupil).....to be absent from school from.....(date).....until.....(date).....has not been approved as the reasons given for the absence are not considered to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you take your child out of school without the approval of the school, you will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice for failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance. **Each parent will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who is absent.**

The Penalty Notice is for £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid after 21 days, but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served with a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

I hope that you will reconsider your application.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Brown & Sarah Carrington
Headteachers
01483 529888 - Northmead
01483 504172 - Stoughton