



Ratification:	December 2018
Review:	December 2019
Review Committee:	P&P
Leader:	Heidi Hollis
Link Governor:	Maria Artingstoll

Introduction

Regular school attendance is fundamental to pupil achievement. We work in partnership with parents to ensure regular attendance and take seriously any problems which may lead to non-attendance. We monitor all attendance, including the Foundation class and have the following procedures in place for investigating concerns.

Foundation Stage (3 and 4 year olds)

Regular attendance is encouraged from the outset and although attendance is not statutory, the school will contact the family by the use of the 'School Comms' system. In most cases, any difficulty can be discussed and resolved. In severe cases, the child will be removed from the Foundation roll, following a period of identification and support. At all times, the importance of Foundation Stage education and regular attendance is stressed, particularly for four year olds, in preparation for school.

Foundation Stage (5 year olds)

Attendance becomes statutory at the beginning of the term following a child's 5th birthday. These Reception year children will continue to be taught in the Foundation Class but their attendance will be subject to the procedures and monitoring outlined below.

Pupils of Statutory School Age

Principles

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring the child is brought to school punctually each day;



Attendance Policy

- Keeping the school informed each day of absence;
- Adhering to the attendance policy;

Teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring the electronic attendance register is completed accurately at the correct time;
- Reporting any attendance or lateness to the school attendance officer;
- Discussing concerns with parents/carers when they arise or at consultation meetings;
- Following all procedures for attendance and registration;
- Providing a welcoming, secure and inclusive atmosphere.

Children are responsible for:

- Taking an increasing role in responsibility for their own attendance;
- Taking an increasing role in their responsibility to get to school on time;

Identification and Intervention

Early identification and intervention are at the heart of the school's strategies for dealing with attendance and punctuality issues. Initial identification of children whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern will normally be made by the class teacher, Family mentor /Attendance Officer who all monitor children's attendance regularly. Attendance concerns include patterns of irregular attendance (regular one day absences); long periods of absence; concerns about reasons given, especially if a recurring illness; or where overall attendance falls below 90%.

Where there are siblings in school and one of the children is absent, the other sibling(s) should still attend school.

Any child with 90% attendance or below is identified by the Department of Education as being persistently absent from school whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.



Monitoring Attendance

The attendance officer and Head Teacher monitor all school attendance on a daily basis and will contact parents if the school have not been informed of the reason for the absence.

If parents/carers do not reply to school communications system, the attendance officer will follow this up with a phone call and may offer support if this is needed.

The school office makes a daily inspection of the registers to examine the level of absence, identifying children who may need referring. The Head Teacher and governors will receive termly reports from the attendance officer.

Half-termly review meetings are held between the attendance officer and the Head Teacher. The attendance of all children is reviewed and letters are issued regarding poor attendance/lateness or improving attendance.

If there is persistent non-cooperation by parents/carers or concerns about the reasons given, then this will be referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service when thresholds are met.

All attendance registers and information, as required by the Local Authority, is collected and stored electronically within the SIMS database. This information is sent directly to the Local Authority.

Frequent Illness / Common Ailments

The school will request that parents provide medical evidence to support any absences due to illness, for example a medical certificate, prescription or medical appointment card.

The school will record absences as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness or if not satisfied that absence from school was necessary.

Referral to the School Nurse may be made in cases of frequent pupil absence due to ill health/common ailments.

Reference will be made to current NHS guidelines for incubation/exclusion periods for common ailments.



Attendance Policy

Appointments

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, office staff should be informed in advance. A 'present' mark may still be awarded if a child attends for as much as the session as they can.

The people responsible for attendance matters in Dunkirk are Heidi Hollis Head Teacher and Mandy Bishton Attendance Officer.

Attendance Incentives

We operate an incentives scheme which rewards children with either:

- 100% attendance
- 95% attendance
- Improving attendance

Children receive rewards and prize in a special attendance assembly. Each term these attendance 'stars' receive a reward e.g.

- Autumn term –bookmark
- Spring term -extra playtime/gonk (googly eyes)
- Summer term-non-uniform day

All of the children who maintain 100% attendance during the academic year receive a 'goody bag' and are entered into a competition to win at attendance bike/scooter.

Class attendance is rewarded on a termly basis with a class sweet treat at each campus (the highest attendance).

Leave of absence

Dunkirk Primary School will not authorise absence from school for the purpose of taking a holiday or a visa renewal.

Time off school for leave or a family holiday is not a right.

We have the discretion to grant a pupil time off in term time but will only do so where there are exceptional circumstances and the child's attendance is above 95%. We will make reference to the Department for Education guidance and the National Association of Head Teachers' guidance (NAHT).



Attendance Policy

DfE guidance states that head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. It is not the right of parents to be granted leave for their child for a holiday.

Any leave in term time is at the sole discretion of the Head Teacher.

Parents should make any request for a leave of absence by completing a request form, available from school office. The application must be made 4 weeks **in advance** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Head Teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

Statutory regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval.

The Head Teacher is able to refuse the whole period requested by the pupil's parents, grant part of the period and refuse the remainder, or grant the whole period of the time requested.

Any travel is normally planned well in advance and are very rarely an occurrence that happens at short notice. Four weeks is a reasonable period of time for a request to be submitted and for the parent to be invited in to school to meet with the attendance officer if necessary.

Various factors will be taken into account when the Head Teacher is considering the decision. For example:

- if at the point of application, the pupil's attendance **level is at 95%** or above over the previous 12 months;
- any pending exams / tests
- the amount of time requested;
- the pupil's educational needs;
- the general welfare of the pupil;
- the purpose of the leave;
- when the request was made.

We will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing, giving the reasons for the decision. Letters approving a request will clearly state:



Attendance Policy

- the expected date of return;
- that the parents are expected to contact the school if anything delays the pupil returning to school when expected;
- what action will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected?

Similarly, a letter refusing a request will explain the reasons for the refusal and what action will be taken if the parents ignore the refusal and keep their child away. Any child who does not return by the agreed date of return will incur unauthorised absences until such time as they return. **This could result in a Penalty Notice being issued against the parent/carer(s).**

Pupils taken out of school for a holiday that has not been authorised by the Head Teacher will have the absence recorded as unauthorised absence. **This could result in a Penalty Notice being issued against the parent/carer(s).**

Where permission has been granted and a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date, enquiries being made by the school initially, then by the Local Authority as necessary. The school will therefore make every attempt to ascertain where the pupil will be during their absence by asking for the address and a contact phone number.

Parents can be given a penalty notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised holiday.

(Please see the 'Unauthorised Leave' Penalty Notice Flow Chart in Appendix 1)

Failure to return from a leave of absence

If a pupil fails to return to school on the expected return date, we will check that the pupil does not have a good reason for their absence, such as disrupted travel arrangements or illness. A referral will also be made to the Education Welfare Service for further enquiries to be made.

Failure to return on the date expected will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service and could potentially result in the **loss of the school place.**

The school and the Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to locate the pupil before any deletion from the school roll is made.

Religious Observance



Attendance Policy

Dunkirk Primary School is a vibrant and diverse school that promotes respect for the faiths and values of all its communities. There are many religions celebrated in our school and it is important that we recognise the diversity of the school population.

It is acknowledged that different schools have different arrangements according to the ages of the children, the type of school and the percentage of pupils from different religious backgrounds. This section promotes community cohesion by recognising the diverse needs of all sections of our school community.

One day for each religious festival (no more than three days in any one academic year) should be counted as authorised absence. The Pupil Regulations 2006 state that absence for religious observance should be treated as authorised (absence) **'on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs'**. Additional days off for travel, shopping or for extended celebrations should be treated as unauthorised absence.

In respect of pilgrimages, we request to see copies of visas. Dates of return should also be agreed prior to the period of leave. Parents should be advised about this policy and procedures regarding unavoidable delays in returning or taking extended leave that has not been authorised by the school.

Punctuality

Highfields Campus

The school doors are opened at 8.55 a.m. and closed at 9:00am. The backgate is also closed at 9.00am so any children after this time enter via the main gate on Marborough Street.

The registration period is from 9:00 am until 9:10 am when the registers will be closed. No child who arrives during this period should be marked late. Any child arriving after this time must enter through the school reception door where they will be marked as late, collect a green entry card and entered into the register by the office staff. It is very important that late children are **not allowed through cloakroom doors after 9:00 am** as this could result in a safety risk, as the child would not be registered.

Abbey Campus

The school doors are opened at 8.55 a.m. and closed at 9:00am.

The registration period is from 9:00 am until 9:10 am when the registers will be closed. No child who arrives during this period should be marked late, as they will have collected a green entry card from a teaching assistant on the playground. Any child arriving after 9:10am must collect a yellow entry card, where they will be marked as late and entered into the register by office staff. It is very important that late children are **escorted by a member**



Attendance Policy

of staff through cloakroom doors between 9:10am-9:30am as this could result in a safety risk, as the child would not be registered.

Any child arriving between 9:00-9:10am will be given a green card

Any child arriving after 9:10am will be given an amber card

Any child arriving after 9:30am will be given a red card

School session times are from 8.55am until 3.30pm KS1 and KS2 at the Highfields Campus, and from 8.55am until 3.15pm at the Abbey Campus.

Registration periods will last for ten minutes after which time the register will close. Any pupil arriving after 9:10am and before 9:30am will be recorded as an **L** which signifies a late attendance.

Issues relating to punctuality are addressed with the pupil/parents and carers by speaking with them directly; school communication system correspondence and through the use of punctuality letters (see late procedures document).

The office staff must ask parent/carers a reason for the lateness and parents must sign their children in using the 'Inventry' digital system.

The Local Authority will use the following as a trigger that allows us to request a Penalty Notice.

The Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice for any pupil registered late after the close of registers.

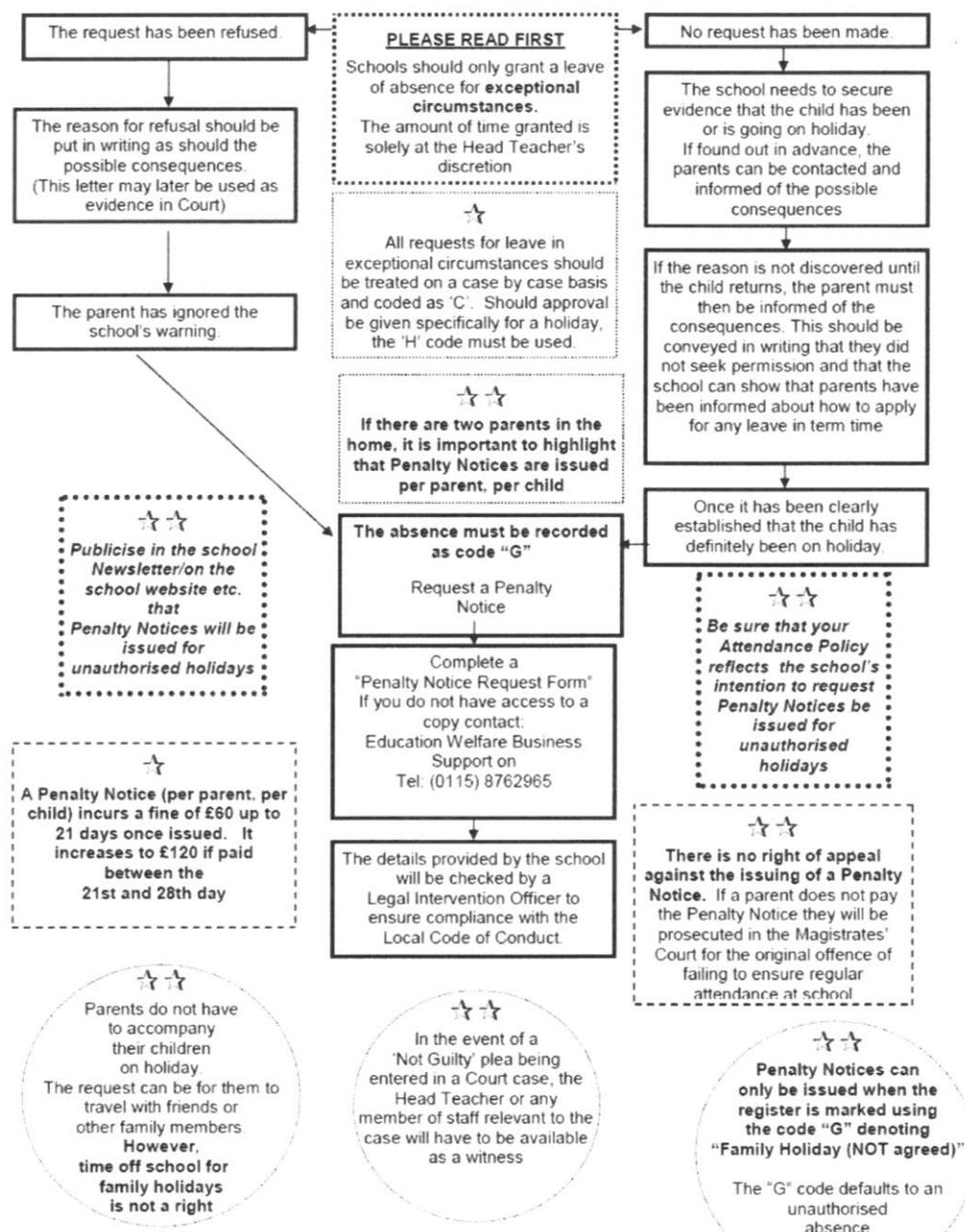
(Please see the 'Lates' Penalty Notice Flow Chart in Appendix 2)

Penalty Notices may be issued in respect of unauthorised absence/leave of absence per parent, per child, in line with the Local Code of Conduct. Penalty Notices are issued in the sum of £120 which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. Beyond the 21st day the full £120 becomes due. If no payment is made by day 28, the Local Authority may institute legal proceedings in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All of the above is reflected in the school prospectus, newsletters and on the school web site.

Appendix 1

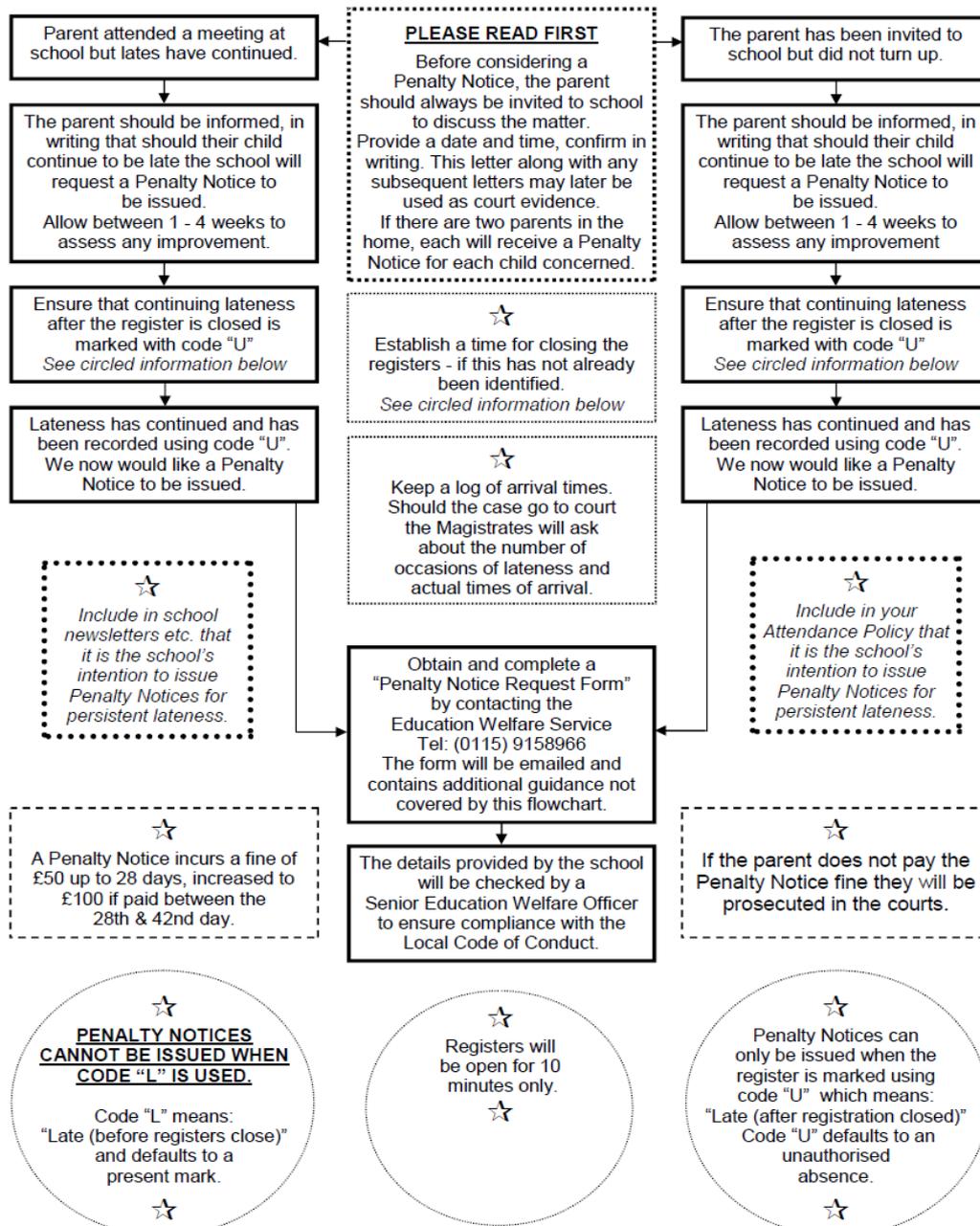
PENALTY NOTICES FOR UNAUTHORISED LEAVE IN TERM TIME SCHOOLS' FLOWCHART



Appendix 2

The Local Authority will use the following as a trigger that allows us to request a Penalty Notice.

PENALTY NOTICES FOR LATES - SCHOOLS' FLOWCHART



For any additional information contact your school's EWO or telephone (0115) 9158966 (EWS admin)
The above is taken from the DfE publications - "Keeping Pupil Registers", "Absence and Attendance Codes" and "Penalty notices (Education)".