

# Attendance Policy

## Canon Sharples CE Primary School & Nursery



Created – June 2023

Reviewed – September 2024

## Vision and Ethos

Canon Sharples C of E Primary School and Nursery is a Voluntary Aided Church of England School.

Our school vision statement **Trust God, Love Always** and **Aim High** encapsulates our Christian distinctiveness and is underpinned by our 6 core Christian Values of **Fellowship, Friendship, Respect, Trust, Peace** and **Love**.

We ask all of our staff and pupils to embrace and uphold our school Christian values so that we can all flourish individually as well collectively as a school. Our ethos supports The Church of England's vision for Education with Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart.

### Rationale

Canon Sharples CE Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education Laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Local Authorities.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets. These will reflect both National and Wigan attendance figures.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

### Why is Attendance so Important?

We are committed to ensuring that children attend school as often as possible to ensure they maximise their opportunities to learn and progress. Table 1 & 2 show the impact that absence from school can have on a child's overall attendance figures and the learning time they lose as a result.

**Table 1: Attendance over one whole school year for each pupil**

Attendance	Missed Days
100%	0
98%	Less than 4 days / 8 sessions
97%	Less than 5 days / 10 sessions
95%	Less than 10 days / 20 sessions
90%	20 days / 40 sessions
85%	27 ½ days / 55 sessions
80%	37 ½ days / 75 sessions

**Table 2: Learning time lost over a year against overall attendance percentage figure**

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days Missed	Equivalent Sessions Missed	Equivalent Weeks missed	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 days	18 sessions	1.4 weeks	45 lessons
90%	19 days	38 sessions	3.4 weeks	95 lessons
85%	29 days	58 sessions	5.4 weeks	145 lessons
80%	36 days	72 sessions	7.1 weeks	180 lessons
75%	48 days	96 sessions	9.3 weeks	240 lessons

Therefore, it is vital that all parties work together to ensure your child attends school as often as possible.

## School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Head of School or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unexplained, if the absence is still unexplained after a 2-week period, this will be changed to unauthorised.

### Lateness

The classroom doors open at **8.45am** and the class teacher is responsible for manually documenting the morning registration, which closes at **9.00am**. This is completed using a computerised system (SIMS). If the usual class teacher is not present (i.e. there is a supply teacher) then a paper register can be requested from the school office who will then enter the attendance data in to the system.

If a child is absent, the class teacher will leave the register blank and the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered by the administration officer.

Pupils arriving after the close of registration **must** report to the school office. Pupils arriving before **9.30am** will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as Late (before registers close).

Pupils arriving late after **9.30am** will be marked as U (after registration closes), unauthorised absence.

Pupils arriving from a medical appointment will be given a 'medical mark'. A medical mark is an authorised absence but does affect the pupils' overall attendance percentage.

The afternoon registration will be at **1.00pm** and will close five minutes later, **1.05pm**. The class teacher is responsible for manually recording the correct mark.

Continuous lateness is monitored by the Head of School (or another nominated person) during each half term. A letter (Appendix 1a) will be sent to all parents and carers, whose child has a high number of late sessions (five or more), during a half term. If lateness improves, no further action will be taken. If the number of late sessions continues, and parents and carers have not been in contact with school, the Head of School (or another nominated person) will request a meeting with parents and carers to establish the reason for lateness, and to offer support.

### First Day Absence

Parents and carers should keep children at home if they are acutely unwell. Parents will be encouraged to send children in to school if there is a possibility of doing so. In this case, school will closely monitor the child and send home if necessary.

On the **first day** of absence, school should be notified by parents/carers, either in person, by telephone or by email, as soon as possible, giving reasons for why their child is unable to attend.

Thereafter, parents and carers should continue to notify school **every day** the child is absent either in person, by telephone or by email until their child returns to school.

It may be necessary for members of school staff to complete additional telephone calls and/or a home visit to offer further support.

### **Unexplained Absences/Unable to Contact Parents or Carers**

If the school has not been informed of a child's absence on the **first day** of absence, a telephone call to the child's parents/carers will be made by the administration officer before 10.30 am, to ensure they are absent with their permission, and to establish the reason for absence.

If there is no answer on either parent's contact numbers, a message will be left for them by the administration officer, stating why they are calling and asking them to contact the school as soon as possible.

If the child does not attend school for a **second day**, and parents/carers have not contacted school, the administration officer will contact **all** of the named contacts for the child and send an email requesting an urgent telephone conversation.

If the child does not attend school on the **third day** of the absence and parents/carers have not contacted school, a home visit will be arranged. If, after a home visit, no reason for the absence has been established, school may request a police welfare check. If a member of staff completes a home visit and there is no response, a note will be left informing parents/carers that school has tried to make contact. This will be repeated on the **fourth day** and **fifth day** if school have still not had communication from parents.

If, on the **sixth day** of absence, the child does not attend school and there has been no communication with parents/carers, school will complete and submit a 'Child Missing in Education' Form to the Local Authority.

If school has any safeguarding concerns or concerns for a child's welfare, they may choose to complete a home visit or request a police welfare check at any time.

### **Persistent Absence (defined in legislation as 10% or more absences; either authorised or unauthorised)**

A child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential within the school environment. Any pupil with attendance below 90% will be closely monitored and appropriate interventions will be implemented to raise attendance above the Persistent Absence threshold.

This initially will include parents/carers receiving a '**white letter**' (Appendix 1b), stating their child's attendance figure (below 90%) for up to that half term and an attendance certificate will be enclosed.

The attendance of children with attendance below 90% will be carefully monitored throughout the following half term.

If attendance improves and the cumulative attendance is above 90% at the end of the following term, parents/carers will receive a '**green letter**' (Appendix 1c).

The attendance of children with attendance below 90% will be carefully monitored throughout the following half term.

If attendance improves and the cumulative attendance is above 90% at the end of the following term, parents/carers will receive a **'green letter'** (Appendix 1c).

If attendance improves, but the cumulative attendance remains below 90% at the end of the following term, parents/carers will receive a **'yellow letter'** (Appendix 1d).

If attendance does not improve and remains below 90%, parents/carers will receive a **'red letter'** (Appendix 1e), and will be contacted by school to discuss how they can be supported to improve their child's attendance.

If a child's attendance falls between 90%-95% then parents/carers will receive a **'blue letter'** (Appendix 1f) which states that their child's is at risk of becoming persistently absent.

### **Routine Monitoring of Attendance**

The Assistant Headteacher, Pastoral Lead and Learning Together Trust Attendance Champion will meet regularly to undertake monitoring of whole school attendance and persistent absence.

This monitoring will include:

- Attendance code analysis
- Analysis of persistent absence
- Specific cohort and group monitoring – particularly for vulnerable groups i.e. children with a social worker, children with SEND

From this, identified pupils/families where attendance is a concern will be supported by the Pastoral Lead.

### **Frequent Absence/Attendance Support Meeting**

It is the responsibility of the relevant school attendance staff to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with parents and carers. In the first instance, where a child receives 2 consecutive red letters OR attendance remains a significant concern, parents will be invited to school to an 'Attendance Support Meeting' (see Appendix 2) with the Attendance Officer and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. During this meeting, all stakeholders will identify how attendance can be improved and agree the support required. This will be reviewed on a regular basis (suggested timescale will be 4 weeks in most cases). If this plan is unsuccessful, school may open an Early Help and/or contact Startwell, who may offer family support.

Where attendance and punctuality are a concern, absences will only be authorised with proof of any illness or appointments requiring time away from school.

If attendance does not improve and still remains a concern, school may contact the Local Authority who could start legal proceedings against parents or carers.

### **Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence, that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

### **Absence Notes/Emails**

Notes and emails received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year and recorded on Cpoms. If there are attendance concerns about a specific pupil, then the notes will need to be retained for a longer period in case they are required for further investigation.

### **Medical Appointments**

Parents/carers may request to take children out of school for medical appointments. Routine appointments such as GP, dentist and optician appointments should be made outside of school hours, where possible.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

Term time holidays and extended leave are not allowed and will not be authorised as stated in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

The school will only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances that are not related to holidays.

Parents/carers must complete a '**Leave of Absence in Term Time Request Form**' (Appendix 3), to the Head of School in good time (at least 6 weeks before a planned absence) to request permission to take their child out of school during term time. The 6-week time period is necessary in order for the school to give due consideration to the request.

If the request is denied, school will inform the parent/carer of the reason by letter (Appendix 4). If the parent/carer chooses to continue with the planned absence, it will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence** and could result in an Education Penalty Notice.

In the rare circumstances when the Head of School is satisfied that there are genuine reasons for an absence, they will determine the number of days a child can be away from school and the leave will be granted as **authorised** (Appendix 5).

## **Penalty Notices**

Wigan LA are informed of unauthorised absences by school and will take appropriate action, which may include issuing an Education Penalty Notice to parents/carers or court action. Parents/carers are informed of the criteria for Education Penalty Notices at the beginning of each school year (Appendix 6).

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came in to force on 27 February 2004) and were amended in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

A Penalty Notice may be issued if a child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12-week period:

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (including term-time holidays)
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

Further information about Attendance and Education Penalty Notices can be found at [School attendance \(wigan.gov.uk\)](http://wigan.gov.uk/school-attendance)

Parents are notified every term about Education Penalty Notices. (Appendix 6)

## **Categorisation of Absence**

**Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.**

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

### **1. Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. Unauthorised absences affect attendance figures.

### **2. Authorised absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. Authorised absences also affect attendance figures.



### 3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

This would include:

- Work experience placements;
- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

The school will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records and use the following codes to record attendance.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded/Suspended (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence

I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	Authorised absence
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	Authorised absence
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Authorised absence
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being closed unexpectedly	Authorised absence
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Authorised absence
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Authorised absence
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Authorised absence
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendances

## **Attendance Awards**

Individual attendance certificates and awards are given for 100% attendance each term.

Children will also receive a certificate and a reward for achieving 100% attendance during the full academic year.

Attendance is celebrated on a weekly basis and classes compete to earn points over each half term. The class with the most points at the end of each half term receive a reward.

The class that has the best attendance each week will also receive a reward (The reward can be decided by the class teacher and may include an extra playtime, 15 minutes of Golden Time etc)

In some circumstances, senior leaders/teachers/support staff may award an attendance certificate if a class has significantly improved their attendance.

Over a 1 month period, any child who has attendance of 96% or better will have their name entered in to a draw where, if drawn out, they will be offered a place on the 'Attendance Reward Trip'.

Attendance is a high priority around school and is celebrated on displays, newsletters and through social-media.

## The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 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 needs he/she may have.

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

## APPENDICIES

### Appendix 1a - Late Letter

Date

**Re: Attendance of (insert child's name)**

Dear Parents/Carers,

During the last half term, your child arrived at school after 9.00am and received a late mark on x **occasions.**

Your child's attendance and punctuality will be closely monitored during the next half term. I enclose a copy of the attendance certificate for your information.

When a child is late for school, they will miss valuable learning time, which could have a detrimental impact on your child's progress and attainment. They may also miss key information and messages from their class teacher. Arriving late for school can affect a child's routine and wellbeing.

If you would like to discuss any issues regarding this, please contact the school office to arrange a convenient appointment with your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr. M. Fletcher**

**Head of School**

**Appendix 1b - White Letter**

Date

**Re: Attendance of ... Class ...**

Dear Parents/Carers,

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. As a school we consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Systems are in place to carefully monitor attendance and we aim to communicate with parents when there are any concerns over attendance figures. The Local Authority consider any attendance below 90% as 'Persistent Absence'.

During the academic year so far, your child's attendance is %.

As this is below 90%, your child's attendance will be closely monitored during the next half term.

I enclose a copy of the attendance certificate for your information.

If you would like to discuss any issues regarding this, please contact the school office to arrange a convenient appointment with your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr. M. Fletcher**  
**Head of School**

**Appendix 1c - Green Letter**

Date

**Re: Attendance of ... Class ...**

Dear Parents/Carers,

During the academic year so far, your child's attendance is %.

I am pleased to inform you that there has been an improvement in your child's attendance.

Your child's attendance figure is now above 90%, which is the Local Authority Threshold for Persistent Absence. We hope that this remains above this threshold and your child's attendance continues to improve.

I enclose a copy of the attendance certificate for your information for your information.

Many thanks for your support.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr. M. Fletcher**  
**Head of School**

**Appendix 1d - Yellow Letter**

Date

**Re: Attendance of ... Class ...**

Dear Parents/Carers,

During the academic year so far, your child's attendance is %.

I am pleased to inform you that there has been an improvement in your child's attendance.

However, the attendance figure remains below 90%, which is the Local Authority Threshold for Persistent Absence. Therefore, we will continue to monitor your child's attendance during the next half term and I hope that it continues to improve.

I enclose a copy of the attendance certificate for your information for your information.

If you would like to discuss any issues regarding this, please contact the school office to arrange a convenient appointment with your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr. M. Fletcher**

**Head of School**



Date

**Re: Attendance of ... Class ...**

Dear Parents/Carers,

During the academic year so far, your child's attendance is %.

There has been no improvement in your child's attendance since the last half term and the attendance figure remains below 90%, which is the Local Authority Threshold for Persistent Absence. Therefore, we will continue to closely monitor your child's attendance during the next half. I enclose a copy of the attendance certificate for your information.

You will be contacted by school to discuss how we can support improving your child's attendance.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. As a school we consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Systems are in place to carefully monitor attendance and we aim to communicate with parents when there are any concerns over attendance figures.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr. M. Fletcher**

**Head of School**

Date

**Re: Attendance of ... Class ...**

Dear Parents/Carers,

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. As a school we consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Systems are in place to carefully monitor attendance and we aim to communicate with parents when there are any concerns over attendance figures. The Local Authority consider any attendance below 90% as 'Persistent Absence'.

During the academic year so far, your child's attendance is %.

As this falls between 91% and 95%, your child's attendance will be closely monitored during the next half term to ensure they do not become 'persistently absent' from school.

I enclose a copy of the attendance certificate for your information.

If you would like to discuss any issues regarding this, please contact the school office to arrange a convenient appointment with your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr. M. Fletcher**  
**Head of School**

## Appendix 2 – Attendance Support Meeting Pro-Forma

Name of Child

Class

### Persons Attending:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Meeting Outline

The focus of the meeting is to consider how we can improve the attendance of (name of child). We will consider what currently works well for (name of child) and what challenges are faced. This is an opportunity for everyone to share ideas about how the (name of child) and the family can be supported to improve attendance. At the end of the meeting, everyone will have a clear plan of the way forward with an agreed timescale and actions.

### Current Cumulative Attendance - %

Attendance Support Plan – Initial Meeting			
What is Currently Working Well?			
What are the Current Challenges?			
What actions are to be put in place to improve attendance?			
Cumulative Attendance Target for the next 4 weeks	%	<i>Review Date</i>	
Signed (School)		<i>Date</i>	
Signed (Parent)		<i>Date</i>	

**Review Meeting**

Date of Meeting –

<b>Attendance at previous Attendance Support Meeting</b>	<b>Target Set for Cumulative Attendance</b>	<b>Current Cumulative Attendance</b>
%	%	%

<b>Attendance Support Plan - Evaluation</b>			
<b>What has worked well?</b>			
<b>What challenges/barriers still exist?</b>			
<b>What further actions are needed?</b>			
<b>Parental Comments</b>			
<b>Cumulative Attendance Target for the next 4 weeks</b>	%	<b>Review Date</b>	
<b>Signed (School)</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signed (Parent)</b>		<b>Date</b>	

### **Appendix 3 - Leave of Absence in Term Time Request Form**

Date

Dear Parents/Carers,

#### **Re: Leave of Absence Requests**

As I am sure you appreciate, regular school attendance is essential if your child is to maximise their educational opportunities. Interruptions in school attendance not only disrupts your child's education, it makes it harder to catch up on work missed, and it can also affect their social life within school.

It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if your child attends regularly.

From September 2013 amendments to the 2006 School Attendance Regulations make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any requests for holidays in term time.

#### **Additionally**

- All requests for leave in term time must be in writing on the Leave of Absence Request Form (see reverse).
- Any granting of leave does not set a precedent for similar future requests and the frequency/duration of such leave periods will be considered as factors in any decisions.
- Requests will be considered by the Head of School.
- Any approved leave must be subject to a contract/agreement between parents and the school stating what leave has been granted and the pupil's date of return to school.
- School will not provide work for children for unauthorised absences.
- If a request for a Leave of Absence during term time is unauthorised, you may receive a fixed penalty notice.

Yours sincerely

**Mr. M. Fletcher**  
**Head of School**

**Term Time Holiday Request Form\***

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date requested: \_\_\_\_\_

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**NOTE**

**\*Please be advised that, by taking this term time holiday you may incur a fine from the local authority/attendance enforcement service (Educational Penalty Notice – EPN). For further details please refer to the school's Attendance Policy – available on request or via the school website, thank you.**

All term time holidays are all unauthorised therefore: Absence code = 

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. M. Fletcher (Head of School)

Date:

Filed:

\_\_\_\_\_

The Head of School will consider the following points before authorising leave:-

- The pupil's previous attendance history
  - The age of the pupil
  - the child's stage of education
  - time of the year (SATS/Exams)
- The nature/reasons for the absence

#### **Appendix 4 - Leave of Absence in Term Time Outcome Letter: Unauthorised**

Date

Dear (insert name of Parents/Carers),

From September 2013 amendments to the 2006 School Attendance Regulations make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any requests for holidays in term time.

Unfortunately, I am **unable** to grant your request for (insert child's name) to be absent from school during term-time on/from (insert dates requested) as it does not meet the agreed criteria.

I assure you that I have made this decision with the best interests of your child in mind and, I therefore, will not authorise this absence.

The importance of school attendance is such that leave of this kind will only be granted where the circumstances are exceptional. This is in line with Local Authority's Policy on absence during term-time.

Wigan LA are informed of unauthorised absences from school if your child falls into one or more of the following categories within a 10-week period:

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (including term-time holidays)
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

Wigan LA may take appropriate action, which could include issuing Fixed Penalty Notices or Court Action.

It is essential that your child attends school regularly to benefit fully from their education.

Yours sincerely

**Mr. M. Fletcher**  
**Head of School**



**Appendix 5 Leave of Absence in Term Time Outcome Letter: Authorised**

Date

Dear (insert name of Parents/Carers),

We have agreed that your child will be absent from school on (insert date) as per the Leave of Absence Request Form submitted recently.

The granting of this period of leave does not set any precedent for future applications.

It is also understood that if he/she does not return by the agreed date without suitable reason, any further absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr. M. Fletcher**  
**Head of School**

## **Appendix 6 - EPN Warning Letter to Parents**

Dear Parents/Carers

Attendance at school has been identified as a national priority by both the Department for Education (DFE) and OFSTED. Research in 2022 by the DFE found that pupils with higher attainment in end of Key Stage assessments had lower levels of absence than those with lower attainment.

At Canon Sharples we provide a wide range of support to ensure that children attend school as often as possible and work with families to help address difficulties and challenges they may face.

In some circumstances, Local Authorities may issue parent/s with an Education Penalty Notice (EPN) if a child's absence record does not improve. This year, there has been new guidance issued from Local Authorities which came in to effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024. The summary of the changes are included below:

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered. *(The new rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.)*
2. There will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.
3. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
4. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

On the reverse of this letter are some Frequently Asked Questions that you may have about EPN's. There is also information in our Attendance Policy which can be found on the website or requested from the school office.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Kind Regards

**Mr. M. Fletcher**

**Head of School**

## **Frequently Asked Questions – Education Penalty Notices**

**If I have already booked a holiday for next year, could I receive a penalty fine at the new higher rate?**

- Yes, if the absence has not been authorised by the Head Teacher of your child's school. Remember, only a Head Teacher can agree whether an absence can be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

**How do I request for my child to have leave granted during term time?**

- You must submit an Absence Request form at least 20 days before the proposed absence. It will be for your child's Head Teacher to decide as to whether there are exceptional circumstances that will allow them to grant the time off. Do not assume that the absence will be granted until you have received confirmation from the school.

**Do the 10 sessions of unauthorised absence have to be taken all at the same time before a penalty fine is issued to the parent/carer?**

- No, a penalty fine can be issued for any combination of absences over a 10-week rolling period. They can be consecutive or non-consecutive and can span over two terms.

**What happens if I am issued with a penalty fine and I don't pay it?**

- Unauthorised absence from school is an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996. A penalty fine is an opportunity for you to settle out of court. If you don't take this opportunity, you can be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance.

**What should I do if I am worried about my child's attendance?**

- In the first instance you should contact your child's school and ask for advice on how they can support you to improve the situation.