



Student Attendance Policy

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Members of staff updating the policy:

Helen Manyanya – Deputy Principal and

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Key Staff:

Chair of Trustees	Katie Parlett
Principal	Emma Sullivan
Deputy Principal	Helen Manyanya
Family Liaison Officer	Chelsey Schofield

Introduction and Statement of Intent

Under the 1999 Education Act, parents are responsible for ensuring that young people of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their children's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

The DFE advice on school attendance August 2020 and the Addendum September 2021 have been consulted before reviewing this policy.

The Family Liaison officer will regularly check the attendance of students and will follow up students' absence with their parents. We hope that parents will assist us in our work of raising attendance levels throughout the school by:

Ensuring the regular attendance of their young person

- Informing the school when their young person is absent from school
- Providing a reason for the absence
- Attending any meetings about their young person's attendance, where necessary

Lighthouse School believes that good attendance is vital for all students if they are to gain the most from education. The intent of this policy is to promote good attendance in school and to enable all students to make sustained progress towards their Educational Health Care Plan and academic targets. Lighthouse School sees good attendance as an essential life skill, preparing young people for the world of work, and understanding the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Lighthouse School encourages all students to have at least 90% attendance across the school year, and recognises that students with an Educational Health and Care Plan may face medical and mental health issues that make attendance at school more difficult. Lighthouse School is keen to work with parents to support their young person to enjoy their education.

Policy Summary

- It is parents' responsibility to ensure that their child attends school full time.
- Parents should not send their child to school if they have been diagnosed with, or are showing symptoms of a communicable / infectious disease and be advised to stay away from school until fully recovered or the minimum period required, e.g. 48 hours for sickness and / or diarrhoea bug.
- Parents should contact school as soon as possible (before 8am) if their child is going to be absent for the day.
- If a parent/carer insists on a student with symptoms attending school, where they have a confirmed or suspected case of an infectious illness, school has the right to refuse the student to protect other students and staff from possible infection.
- Lighthouse School will liaise with parents to maximise attendance at school, and may put in place an Action Plan or contact external agencies, as required, to support students.
- Authorisation for absence from school is at the discretion of the Principal.
- Term time absence is not routinely authorised; however, parents can request time out of school in exceptional circumstances.
- Communication between home and school is crucial in supporting students' educational outcomes

Absence Procedures

Illness

Parents/carers should use their best judgement when deciding if they are well enough to attend school.

- If your young person has had diarrhoea and vomiting, they should not attend school for 48 hours (2 full days) from the last episode
- If your young person has a contagious condition that could be passed on to other young people, please keep them at home (e.g. Covid-19, measles, chicken pox, impetigo, scabies)
- If your young person has moderate symptoms of a cold, and they are unable to manage these (e.g. excessive coughing, sneezing and unable to use tissues) or this is significantly impacting their concentration levels, then please ring school for advice on whether to bring them into school
- If a student attends school with symptoms of an infectious disease, the school may refuse entry to protect the school community.
- To support you in deciding if your young person is too ill to attend school, please access the NHS link: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Mental Health

If a student has poor mental health, and has not been diagnosed with an illness, they can continue to attend school.

Mental Health Illness

If parents/carers feel their young person is unable to attend school due to a mental health illness, please inform the school. Lighthouse School will work with the young person and their family to support their health needs. To enable us to offer full support the school will request evidence, to confirm the diagnosis and treatment, from a medical professional body such as a GP or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Students on Reintegration Timetables

Lighthouse school recognises that at certain stages in a child or young person's school life they may struggle to access their educational provision as a result of individual need. If it is deemed appropriate by school there may be times where a child or young person is placed onto a transitional / reintegration timetable. This may include time when:

- The child has significant medical needs
- At transition points (starting a new school or education provisions)
- When the child or young person has repeated or prolonged episodes of crisis when in the school
- When a risk assessment shows that their behaviour poses a significant health and safety risk to themselves, other students or staff which cannot be reasonably managed within the usual school day
- When their behaviour causes repeated and significant disruption to the education

other students.

If the school agree a reintegration timetable is appropriate, a clear plan for this will be completed in partnership with the child and parent or carer. The aim of a reintegration timetable will always be to support the young person so that they can return to full time education as soon as possible. The duration of a part time timetable should not exceed 6 weeks unless for exceptional circumstances.

When a student attends the school on a reintegration timetable, they shall be marked present only for the sessions that they attend – i.e. morning or afternoon. If they are not required to attend a session, and are not attending at an alternative provision, these sessions will be marked with the C code.

Other Reasons for Absence (not pre-planned)

Lighthouse School recognises that there are times when it is acceptable for students to be absent from school, other than for illness. When possible, these should be requested in advance using a request for absence in term time form (see section on Term Time Absence – on Page 9 and Appendix 2), however, if this is not possible, Lighthouse School will discuss whether the absence is authorised with the parent.

Lighthouse School will routinely authorise:

- bereavement
- family crisis

Lighthouse School will not routinely authorise:

- birthday or other celebrations
- attendance at local events (e.g. Great Yorkshire Show)
- not sleeping the night before
- holiday

Informing the School of Absence

Student absence should be reported to school via the main school telephone number (0113 457 0605) before 8.00am, giving the reason for absence. The school will record this information on the young person's record.

It is the parent/carers responsibility to inform transport of the absence.

This process must also be followed for each consecutive day of absence unless school is in receipt of a medical certificate

If a student has not arrived in school by 9:15 and no communication has been received, the school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contact numbers held on our school system and if appropriate contact the child's transport services. **It is important that parents/carers inform school if there are any changes in these details during the school year.**

Under the circumstance where there is no reply, if the safeguarding team feel it is necessary, a home visit may be made that day to ensure that both the young person and the parents/carers are safe and well.

If school are unable to make contact and have concerns for the safety / welfare of the young person or parent/carers, the safeguarding team may contact Leeds (or other relevant Local Authority) Safeguarding Team (Duty and Advice) for advice and may speak to the Duty Social Worker. Please refer to Appendix (1) – Attendance Flowchart of contact

Recording of Absence from School

All absence from school will initially be recorded as N (see Appendix 1), until a reason has been offered by parents and absence authorised by school.

If no reason is given by the end of the school day, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical evidence may be required for appointments made during the school day.

Authorised exceptional circumstances will be recorded as C.

Students Who Become Unwell at School

If a student is feeling unwell at school, and the symptoms are related to a communicable disease (such as chickenpox, measles, Covid-19 etc.) the teacher/lead will arrange for the student to be isolated whilst parents are contacted. The student will be monitored and supported at all times.

If a student is feeling unwell at school, and the symptoms are not related to a communicable disease, the student will be assessed by a first aider, and one of the following actions will be taken:

- if the student is well enough to remain in school they will be monitored by key staff and supported to return to lessons, parents will be informed as necessary
- if the student is not well enough to remain in school, ELT will arrange for parents to be contacted to collect as soon as possible
- if the student has medication relating to their illness in school this will be administered in line with school policy and parents will be notified

If appropriate, and as severity demands, the school will call 999 and take advice from health professionals. Parents will be contacted and, if required, the student will be accompanied to hospital.

Late arrival to school

Students who miss transport

It is parents' responsibility to ensure that students arrive at school. If a young person misses their transport, parents should make alternative arrangements to ensure they arrive at school.

Other reasons for late arrival

Parents should ring and inform school upon the event of late arrival to school as soon as possible.

Students will be marked as present if they arrive before 09.00.

Students will be marked as L if they arrive after 09.00am but before 09.15.

Students who arrive after 9.15 where parents have not contacted the school to advise of lateness, and school are not authorising the lateness will be marked as U

Late students should be brought to the main gate, in which a member of staff will meet them, record their attendance with reception and then ensure they are escorted to their lesson.

Managing Attendance Concerns

Internal Absence from lessons

The lead member of staff will take a register at the start of each lesson. If a student is absent from the lesson, but marked present in school, the Lead will alert the Wellbeing Team. The absence will be investigated to ensure that the student is safe and well. Internal absence is monitored and if absences develop a pattern or become persistent, this will be investigated, and interventions put in place to support the student to return to the classroom.

Persistent Absence from School

The Department for Education classifies any student with less than 90% as being a persistent absentee. All schools are required to report on the percentage of students who are persistently absent, and to track, monitor and support these students.

The Family Liaison Officer will contact parents if the student is identified as persistently absent, either with authorised or unauthorised absence. There will be a discussion about the next steps that could be put in place, which will include any relevant members of staff and parents. The student will be included in this, if possible.

An Action Plan will be put in place, which will include time limited targets, agreed between home and school, and, if relevant, linked to the student's EHCP. Lighthouse School may make referrals to external agencies in order to ensure there is adequate support for the student to engage in full time education.

If there is no improvement, or the Action Plan is not successful, Lighthouse School may call an emergency EHCP review, to discuss whether the school is able to meet the needs of the student.

Students Not Collected

Parents/carers should make the school office aware as soon as possible if there is an issue collecting their child at the end of the school day. The school will be able to make infrequent arrangements to support until parents/carers are able to collect.

If the student refuses to get on school transport, Lighthouse School will contact the parents/carers as soon as possible, using all available emergency contacts.

Lighthouse School may contact Leeds Safeguarding Duty and Advice Team if a student is not collected from school regularly, or if the school is unable to contact parents/carers to collect.

Children Missing Education

Lighthouse School will make all reasonable attempts to contact parents/carers of students who are not attending school, and are not being provided with suitable alternative educational provision. Lighthouse School will refer these students to the Local Authority as Children Missing Education. SENSAP will also be advised of the absence. This may lead to the removal of Lighthouse School as the named school on the students EHCP, and the student being taken off-roll.

Applications for Absence During School Time

In exceptional circumstances absence may be authorised during school time. It is the Principal's decision to authorise a request for term-time absence.

Parents/carers should make a formal request to the Principal stating the reason for the absence, the period of time the absence will cover and any mitigating circumstances. This request must be made in writing (see Appendix 3).

Lighthouse School will not routinely authorise:

- family holidays
- leisure activities

Lighthouse School may authorise:

- representative events (such as sport or music events)
- recognised religious observances
- attendance at major family events (such as weddings or funerals)
- attendance at interview for further education or work

Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss any upcoming requests in advance and before booking. Parents/carers can be fined for unauthorised absence of their children during term time.

Absence During a Major Epidemic

Lighthouse School will follow government guidance on dealing with absence in the event of a major epidemic or pandemic.

This will be communicated to parents and carers, and information will be placed on the school website.

Traveller Children

It is expected that Traveller children will attend school as regularly as possible. To protect traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

Lighthouse School will authorise a student's travelling patterns as long as:

- the family have informed Lighthouse School of their traveller status
- the family advise of the travelling patterns before they happen
- the student will be able to meet the minimum number of attendance (as above)

Other Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional Closure

In the event of a partial or whole school closure, for example due to dangerous weather conditions, students will be marked with #. This is excluded from the students' attendance records.

Not Required in School

Students will be marked with Z for those days that they have not attended if they begin part way through a school year.

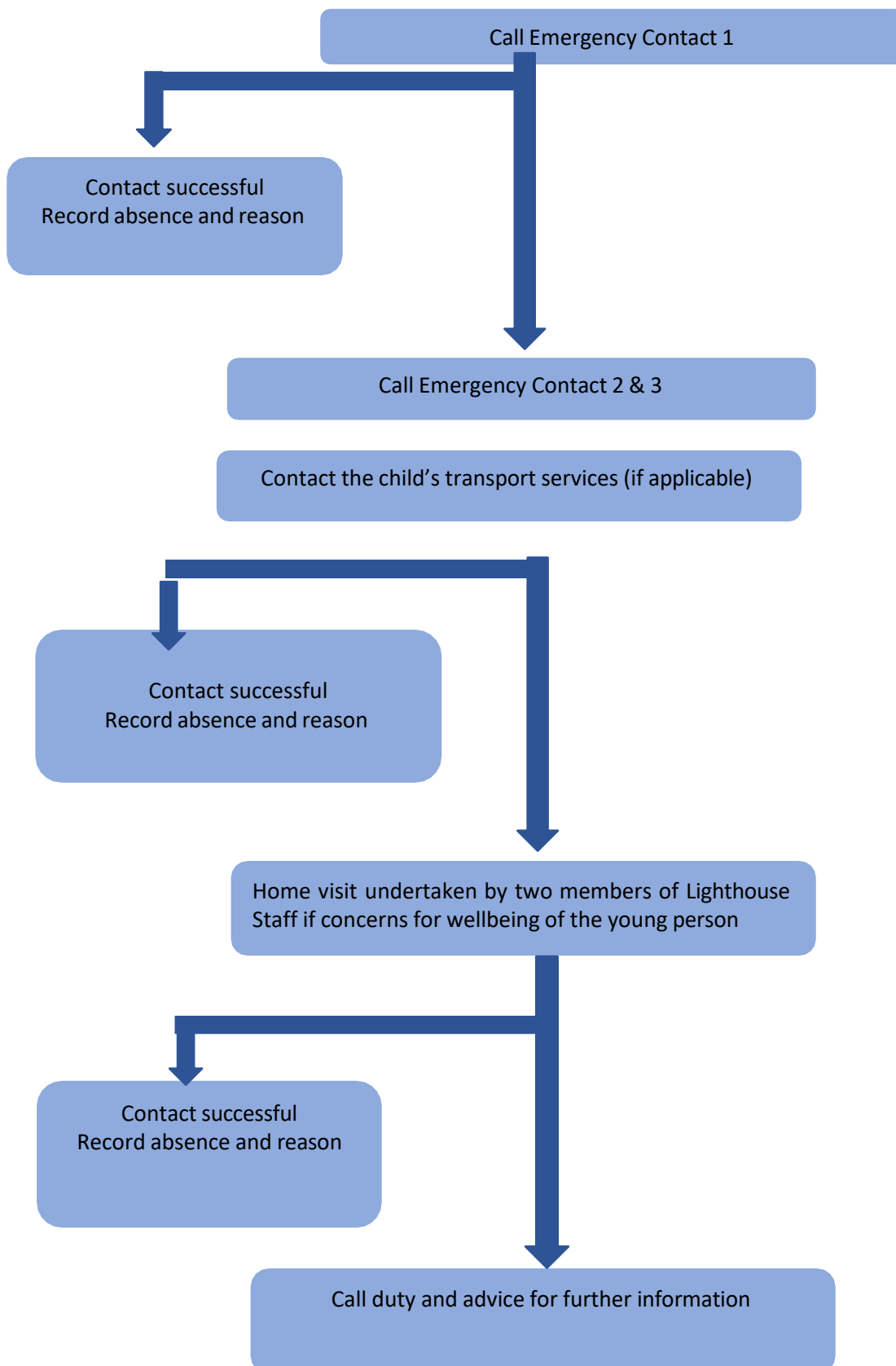
If the school has a 'staggered start', students will be marked as # on those days in which they are not required to be in school

These codes are not included in the students' attendance records.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Attendance Flow Chart of contact

Absence without communication from Parents/Carers



Appendix 2 – Attendance Codes

Reason	Code	Authorised/Attendance
Present at school	/(am) \ (pm)	Authorised attendance
Late before the register closes	L	Authorised attendance
Present at an off-site educational activity	B	Authorised attendance
Dual registered at another educational establishment	D	Authorised attendance
At an interview for education or employment	J	Authorised attendance
Participating in a supervised sporting event	P	Authorised attendance
Educational trip or visit	V	Authorised attendance
Work experience	W	Authorised attendance
Authorised leave of absence from school	C	Authorised absence
Excluded with no alternative provision	E	Authorised absence
Holiday authorised by the school	H	Authorised absence
Illness	I	Authorised absence
Medical or dental appointment	M	Authorised absence
Religious observance	R	Authorised absence
Study leave	S	Authorised absence
Gypsy, Romany and Traveller absence	T	Authorised absence
Holiday not authorised by the school	G	Unauthorised absence
No reason yet given for absence	N	Unauthorised absence
Absent without authorisation	O	Unauthorised absence
Late after the register closes	U	Unauthorised absence
Not required to be in school	X	Not included
Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Y	Not included
Student not on admission register	Z	Not included
Partial or whole school closure	#	Not included

Appendix 3 – Form for requesting term time absence

Absence request form

Absence request form			
Details of child / children at Lighthouse school:			
First Name:	Surname:	Year Group and class:	Address:
First day of absence:		Date due back in school:	
Length of absence applied for (number of school days only): _____			
Siblings in other schools: Please note this request information will be shared with the attendance lead in the school in which the sibling/s attend	First Name	Surname	School
Parent or Guardian contact details:	Name:	Telephone:	Email:

Reason for absence including full explanation (use a separate sheet of paper is necessary) Parents or guardians must seek approval to withdraw their child from school in term-time. Please state the exceptional circumstances that require you to apply to take your child out of school during term time instead of making arrangements for the proposed activity to take place during the school holidays.

Please complete if you are going on Holiday during term time.

Date and time of departure:	
Place of departure (e.g. address of airport, train station, coach):	
Transport details (e.g. flight number, name of airline or train company):	
Destination Address:	
Date of return home:	
Emergency contact details of someone who is staying in West Yorkshire (Please include, name, address, postcode and telephone number and relationship to child):	

Please provide as much information as possible and provide copies of travel plans to support your request

Statutory Declaration

Legal responsibility

All children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education, and under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, it is a parent / guardian's responsibility to ensure the regular school attendance of their children and that failure to do so could result in legal proceedings being taken by the Local Education Authority. I understand that requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances, and holidays are not considered exceptional. They must also be made to the school in advance, as the Department for Education has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

Lighthouse school policy

Parents do not have the right to remove their children from school in term-time. The Headteacher will decide whether or not an absence should be authorised. Headteachers will only authorise absence in term time when there are exceptional reasons for a child to miss school.

Absence in term-time will only be authorised if parents or carers make a request to the school in advance on the appropriate form and can show that there are exceptional reasons why the absence has to be in term-time. The cost, convenience or availability of a particular holiday will not be taken into consideration.

If an absence has not been authorised by the Headteacher and parents or carers remove their child from school, their child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the class register.

Absence for religious observance may be agreed by the Headteacher but will not exceed 2 days in any school year.

Fines

By law, you must ask permission for your child to miss school. If you don't, you risk a *£60 penalty notice per child. When a school doesn't give permission, absence is unauthorised and counted as truancy.

Parents/Guardian Full Name:

Parents/Guardian Full Name:

Signature:

Parents Signature:

Date:

Date:

To be completed by the school

Name		Class		Last Year Attendance	Current Attendance
				%	%
				%	%
				%	%
Previous term time request in the last 2 years		Y	N	Authorised	Y N
Reason for previous requested holiday:					
Authorised	Y	N	Number of school days authorised:	Reason for decision:	
Not authorised	Y	N	Number of school days not authorised:	Reason for decision:	

Appendix 4 – Absence request authorised letter

{Date}

Dear

Your request for absence in term time

I refer to your request to take [your child/children or name/s] out of school between [date] and [date].

Regulations in relation to term time holidays on 1st September 2013, make it clear that schools are no longer allowed to authorise holidays during term time. As a result, only exceptional circumstance leave can be authorised by the principal and must be applied for prior to the leave being taken.

We have considered your application and as such [(XXX)] days will be authorised as we deem these days to be exceptional circumstances. The remainder of this leave has **not** been agreed.

I have not made this decision lightly. Our school is dedicated to the education of all our students and believes regular attendance through the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

Each request for an absence in term time is considered on its merits at the time. Please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not mean I will agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any queries that you would like to discuss about this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Sullivan
Principal

Appendix 5 – Absence request denied letter

{Date}

Dear

Your request for absence in term time

I refer to your request to take [your child/children or name/s] out of school between [date] and [date].

In this case, I regret I cannot consent to your request. Regulations in relation to term time holidays on 1st September 2013, make it clear that schools are no longer allowed to authorise holidays during term time.

Our school, while acknowledging that each family's circumstances are different, is dedicated to the education of all our students and believes regular attendance through the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time and many variables are taken into consideration.

Because each request is unique, my decision in this instance cannot be directly compared with decisions made by the school in the past, and nor does it set a precedent. It does not mean I will not agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

I appreciate this is not the outcome you were looking for.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any queries that you would like to discuss about this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Sullivan
Principal

Appendix 6 – General messages about the importance of attendance

{Date}

Dear

School Attendance

At Lighthouse school we recognise that sometimes our students cannot come to school because they are unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance *Is my child too ill for school?* - NHS (www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that students fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Lighthouse school we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all our students in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

Lighthouse school would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that your child comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this – please call or come in and meet with our family liaison officers if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have concerns about your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Sullivan
Principal

Appendix 7 - Concern letter – below 95% - Unauthorised

{Date}

Dear

Absences from school

I am writing to inform you that [your child's or name's] **attendance for this academic year has fallen below 95%.**

The Department for Education states that good attendance is 95% or better.

Whilst we understand that the reasons, such as illness, may not be within anyone's control. We ask for your support to encourage [child's name's] attendance wherever possible.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. We are here to help if you'd like support in helping [child's name] attend school. Please contact us if you would like to discuss this further.

To ensure that any future absence is authorised, please provide medical evidence.

The welfare of our students is of paramount importance to us, and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Sullivan
Principal

Appendix 8 – Concern letter – below 90% - Authorised

{Date}

Dear

Absences from school

I am writing to inform you that [your child's or name's] **attendance for this academic year has fallen below 90%.**

The Department for Education states that good attendance is 95% or better.

Whilst we understand that the reasons, such as illness, may not be within anyone's control. We ask for your support to encourage [child's name's] attendance wherever possible.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. We are here to help if you'd like support in helping [child's name] attend school. Please contact us if you would like to discuss this further.

To ensure that any future absence is authorised, please provide medical evidence.

The welfare of our students is of paramount importance to us, and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

I therefore request that you contact the school's Family Liaison Officer to arrange a meeting to discuss this.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Sullivan
Principal

Appendix 9 – Concern letter – below 90% - Unauthorised

{Date}

Dear

Absences from school

I am writing to express my concern at **[your child's or name's]** recent high levels of unauthorised absence from school.

[your child's or name's] attendance for this academic year is [%]

The Department for Education states that good attendance is 95% or better. Your child's attendance for this academic year has fallen below 90%. The DFE classifies pupils who miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year) as persistent absentees.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child.

The welfare of our students is of paramount importance to us, and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

I therefore request that you contact the school's Family Liaison Officer as a matter of urgency to arrange a meeting with us to discuss this.

To ensure that any future absence is authorised, please provide medical evidence.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Sullivan
Principal