Stronger Together

BRADGATE
Education Partnership

# Eastfield Primary School

**POLICY:**

# Attendance

Approved: Board of Trustees
Approved Date: 23/09/2026
Review Date: September 2027
Author: John Pye
Responsible Officer: Deputy CEO

Ambitious
Collaborative
Ethical

# BRADGATE
Education Partnership



## MISSION:

**Through strong collaboration between our schools, Bradgate Education Partnership is committed to providing an ambitious and inclusive education for all.**

We want our children and young people to realise their full potential academically, socially and personally. We celebrate the distinctive ethos of each individual school. We ensure that all who are part of our Trust have a deep sense of belonging and a supportive opportunity to grow.

# Stronger Together

## VALUES:

### Ambitious
We aim high and are aspirational for all.

### Collaborative
We work closely together to encourage, support, challenge and share.

### Ethical
We treat everyone fairly, within a culture of kindness and respect.

## VISION:

### PUPILS
All our pupils are equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to thrive in life and make a positive difference.

### SCHOOLS
All our schools provide a safe and happy space where pupils study an ambitious curriculum which unlocks their personal potential so that they achieve exceptional outcomes.

### WORKFORCE
All staff have positive impact in their roles whilst feeling supported and valued both personally and professionally.

### COMMUNITY
All our schools embrace the local area they serve within a deeply embedded culture of community partnership.

### WIDER WORLD
All our pupils and staff understand, respect and embrace the diversity of the wider world in which they live.

### SUSTAINABILITY
Across our partnership, everything we do is aligned to meet the needs of the present without compromising a sustainable future.

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bepschools.org

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## 1. Introduction

Eastfield Primary School recognises that pupils will only benefit fully from their education if they attend school regularly and on time. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Attendance will be maximised through an effective partnership between pupils, their parents/carers, and the school.

Bradgate Education Partnership (BEP) and our school will ensure that all associated actions are undertaken rigorously and consistently. We will constantly monitor and evaluate action and impact through regular analysis of data and review of practice.

For schools who have pupils on roll who are below statutory school age, it is the view of BEP and our schools that these pupils fall under the ethos of this policy, as it is important to encourage excellent attendance at school from the earliest age.

## 2. Principles

To manage and improve attendance effectively we will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to, support and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Support pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

## 3. Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education.
- To promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- To acknowledge good attendance and punctuality.
- To monitoring the attendance of every pupil closely.
- To act early to address patterns of absence.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, staff and the Local Advisory Board (LAB).
- To maximise attendance across the school population and reduce persistent absenteeism (below 90%).
- To set targets for improvement to improve the attendance of the whole school.

## 4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) Working together to improve school attendance and Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance.

## 5. Eastfield Primary School Priorities

We strive for all pupils to achieve their full academic potential and aim for **100%** attendance. Through analysis of our attendance data Eastfield has determined that our attendance priorities this year are:

- To discourage term time holidays.
- To reduce Persistent Absence of those children who are recognised as SEND.
- To continue to communicate effectively the importance of attendance to pupils and families, and its link to academic achievement.
- To promote good attendance habits with all pupils.

## 6. Daily Routines

### 6.1 Daily Routines for Pupils

All pupils are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and to arrive on time.
- External school gates are opened at 8.35am daily. Morning registration will be taken in EYFS and Year 1 at 8.45am, Years 2 to 6 at 8.40am.
- and afternoon registration at 12.55pm for EYFS and Year 1 and Year 2 to 6 at 1.10. Pupils arriving during registration will receive a late mark. Arrival more than 30 minutes after registers close will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Come to school properly equipped and prepared to learn.
- Attend all lessons on time
- Not leave school site without permission from staff and signing out at reception.
- Talk to a member of staff if there is a problem causing them to miss school.

### 6.2 Daily Routines for Parents

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. They are expected to ensure that:

- Their child attends regularly and is punctual, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- They inform the school of the reason for any absence by 8.30am on each morning of absence. The school will then make the decision to either authorise or unauthorise the absence. If no reason is given the absence will be automatically unauthorised.
- They know that they will *not* have holidays authorised during term time.
- They make medical and dental appointments outside school time, wherever possible.

- They give the school up to date information regarding diagnosed medical conditions which may affect attendance.
- They provide the school with up-to-date contact details.

## 7. The Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### 7.1 Present at School

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken.

- Our pupils must arrive by 8.50am on each school day.
- Our morning register is taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.15am
- Our afternoon register is taken at 1.10pm

## 8. Punctuality

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens classroom disruption. Any pupil arriving after the gates have closed miss the vital settling in period at the beginning of the day.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L) – which counts as present.

Lateness after 9.15am be logged as an unauthorised absence and persistent lateness may result in a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team. Please note that if a parent/carer reports that there are extenuating circumstances that have prevented the pupil arriving on time, this will be taken into consideration.

- A member of staff will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late to school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.
- Pastoral Support Plans may be put into place to outline agreed targets, actions and sources of support.
- If a pupil is habitually arriving at school just before the 9.15am cut-off, the school has the right to amend the cut-off point for that pupil as a measure to help improve punctuality and attendance. Parents/carers will be notified of this.

## 9. Following up Absence

Where any child we are expecting at school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

**Where a Head Teacher has any concerns about a child's absence from school, they may authorise a home visit.**

## 10. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone, or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence.

When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence.

If we are unable to establish the reason for absence by the end of the first day of absence, we will mark the absence as unauthorised, using the O code.

If we are concerned about a pupil's absence or are unable to contact the parent/s, we will contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals, or contacts of the family, who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

If we are still unable to reach a family member, a home visit will be made by school staff, designated safeguarding leads and external agencies, as appropriate.

## 11. First Day of Absence Response

If the school has not been informed as to the reason for a pupil's absence, then they will contact the person allocated as priority 1 on the pupil's emergency details. The school will prioritise those pupils considered vulnerable e.g., Looked After Children; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; pupils with SEND, children who have previously been reported missing; primary aged pupils who make their own way to school.

Parents are expected to supply details of at least three people who can be contacted in an emergency. If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, or are concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may make a home visit or request a Welfare Check from the police.

## 12. Authorised Absence

**12.1** 'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away from the school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

*The School registers will be coded in accordance with the Department of Education mandatory codes*

### 12.2 Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. This concern might arise from repeated or unexplained periods of sporadic or sustained absence, where there are no known underlying medical conditions preventing pupils from attending school.

We recognise that some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support can be discussed and identified. This could include referrals to the school nursing service, local mental health services, and the local authority's special educational needs and disability team(s) to ensure joined up support for families facing health or disability related barriers to attendance.

If support has been offered and the school remains unsatisfied about the frequency, duration or authenticity of illnesses, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised to formalise support with other agencies.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence to authorise any future absences. If this is the case, a member of staff from the school will communicate this with the parent in advance and discuss forms of medical evidence that will be sufficient to authorise a further period of absence.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised retrospectively.

Parents should notify the school by 8.30am on the first day of absence. If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

### 12.3 Medical/Dental Appointments (M Code)

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary to attend the appointment. Only the session during which the appointment takes place will be authorised. In most cases, it would not be acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of school for an appointment. Where this is unavoidable, parents are expected to submit a clear, evidenced reason.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it is an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

### 12.4 Religious Observance (R Code)

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance & a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire SACRE and the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

### 12.5 Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller child of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place.

This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

## 13. Home Visits

Home visits are an important part of our school's approach to promoting and ensuring good attendance across all schools within the Trust. They are conducted as part of our safeguarding duties and to support families in overcoming any barriers to regular school attendance.

Home visits may be announced or unannounced, depending on the circumstances and rationale for the visit. Unannounced visits may be necessary when there are safeguarding concerns, a lack of engagement from the family, or where prior contact attempts have been unsuccessful. Announced visits are typically used when ongoing dialogue with parents/carers is in place and collaboration is needed to support improved attendance.

Visits are made for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Unexplained absence: where a pupil has been absent from school and no satisfactory reason or contact has been provided.
- Emerging patterns of absence: to explore concerns where attendance is becoming irregular or there are frequent short-term absences.
- Sustained absence across a week: particularly where a pupil has missed three or more consecutive days without medical evidence or clear justification.
- Absences close to a school holiday: to confirm that the child is at the address and has not travelled abroad.
- Welfare checks: when there are concerns for a child's safety or wellbeing in the context of non-attendance.
- To support reintegration following a prolonged period of absence or significant barriers to attendance.

Home visits provide an opportunity to engage with families in a supportive, non-judgemental way, enabling staff to assess the situation more fully and offer targeted interventions.

## 14. Roles and Responsibilities

Good attendance is the foundation for success, and we believe that supporting and promoting good attendance is a whole school responsibility.

School HT and attendance lead – Tim Gilbert
office@eastfield.bepschools.org

Person responsible for first contact and attendance champion – Gemma Newton-Pratt
Contact the school – office@eastfield.bepschools.org/ 01162694692
Trust Attendance & Welfare Officer 0116 4783426

### 14.1 Key Staff

All staff at Eastfield Primary School recognise the role they play in promoting good attendance:

- Class teachers, or those covering for class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily
- Office staff are the front line in highlighting the daily absence of identified vulnerable children to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) or Attendance Officer so that actions can be followed up in a timely manner.
- Head Teachers and DSLs ensure that the office staff are aware of vulnerable children to monitor their daily absence and punctuality. If there is no reason given, or there is reason to think that a child may be at risk, then a DSL will conduct a home visit, contact children's social care or request a Welfare Check by carried out by the police.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for:
- Implementation of this policy at the school;
- Ensuring the monitoring of school-level absence data
- Authorising the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure the Early Help process will be instigated for families with issues that impact on attendance and ensure support is put in place to improve attendance. This may be in conjunction with other professionals, such as the Trust Attendance & Welfare Officer
- The Senior Attendance Champion and Attendance team will carry out a number of roles, including:
- Monitoring attendance data at a school, cohort and individual pupil level.
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the DSL as appropriate.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Follow-up action-plans for pupils with low attendance.
- Timely liaison with home – this may be through letters, phone calls or emails.
- Referrals to outside agencies.
- Working with other agencies, including the Inclusion Service Attendance Team, to tackle persistent or severe absence.

## 15. Safeguarding and Attendance

At Eastfield, it is our legal responsibility to ensure that every child is safe and receives a suitable education. We will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding concerns to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and are concerned for the pupil's welfare.

If we have not received a reasonable explanation for a pupil's absence, have reasonable grounds to doubt an explanation received, or have been unable to contact a parent or carer to explain an absence, a 'safe and well' check will be carried out at the pupil's home address. This will be undertaken by a DSL, Trust Attendance & Welfare Officer accompanied by another member of staff.

For pupils with a social worker, we will inform the social worker if there are any unexplained absences and/or their name is to be deleted from the school register.

## 16. Children Absent from Education

No pupil should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance and Welfare Officer or Director of Education, and the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

Where a child is absent from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Pupil Missing Out on Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area, but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.
- A pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or 15 cumulative days

To assist with the transfer of pupils from one educational establishment to another, or to accommodate a parental request for home education, we ask that parents discuss matters with the Attendance Teams at the schools. To progress with these requests, there are a number of statutory forms/letters required to aid in the process.

## 17. Support for Pupils with Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided.

We are committed to supporting pupils and families of pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) to maximise their attendance. Pastoral support staff and the SEND team will work with families and pupils to identify and address any barriers to attendance. We will proactively and regularly monitor data for such groups, including at Trust levels to ensure attendance for these groups is maintained and maximised.

In a limited number of circumstances, it may be necessary to provide remote education for pupils who are unable to attend school. Remote education must only ever be viewed as a temporary, short-term arrangement. It does not reduce the need for the pupil to return to school as soon as possible. Remote education must not be offered in situations where it would adversely affect the pupil's ability to return to school. Examples of short-term situations where it would be appropriate to provide remote education include:

- Recovering from an infectious illness.

- Recovering from an operation or injury.
- Exceptional situations where a pupil's attendance is affected by their mental health or SEND, remote education may be offered on a short-term basis as part of a plan to reintegrate the pupil back into school.

## 18. Tracking and Monitoring Attendance

In order to support good attendance, we will monitor attendance on a regular basis through a range of measures.

Attendance data will be generated, analysed, and actioned in order to ensure that effective intervention strategies are implemented as a matter of routine. This data will be used to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify pupils who need support
- Monitor those pupils identified as being in need of intervention and support
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data sets
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Benchmark against local, regional and national levels
- Regular updates to monitor patterns of attendance will be shared with Class Teachers & Tutors
- Regular liaison occurs in school with key members of staff including senior leaders, heads of year, Designated Safeguarding Leads and other members of the pastoral team to discuss and implement strategies for dealing with poor attendance/punctuality attendance
- We will monitor pupil absence on a daily, weekly and termly basis.
- Where an unauthorised absence has been recorded school will liaise with parents to investigate the reason for absence, highlighting that further unauthorised absence could result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.
- In the case of a pattern of unauthorised absence developing, a face-to-face meeting will be offered to understand more about the situation. During this Attendance Meeting, school staff will look to identify barriers preventing regular attendance. If necessary, interventions will be identified and put into place over an identified period to further support improvements. Should attendance not improve in some cases this may result in a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team.

## 19. Elective Home Education (EHE)

Parents have a legal right to educate their child at home, rather than at school. This is known as Elective Home Education (EHE). If a parent/carer chooses to withdraw their child from the school roll for this purpose, the school has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed.

**19.1 Notification and Process**:

- Parents must provide written communication to the school stating their intention to home educate. The communication must be signed by the parent making the request (for emails, this must be a scanned signature).
- The written communication must include:
    - ✓ A clear statement of the decision to withdraw the child for the purpose of home education.
    - ✓ Confirmation that the parents understand their legal duty to ensure that the child receives a full-time, efficient education suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

On receipt of this written notice, the school will:

- Acknowledge the request via e-mail.
- Offer a meeting with the Head Teacher or Deputy Head to discuss the request and ensure that parents understand their responsibilities.
- Signpost parents to the Local Authority EHE guidance.
- Refer the case to the Local Authority's Elective Home Education Team.
- Remove from the school roll from the date of the parents' request.

## 20. Escalation of Procedures

We understand that some pupils may be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and carers to be open and honest about any issues affecting attendance so that we can provide the right support. Allowing a child to stay at home due to reluctance to attend can sometimes reinforce attendance difficulties and make them harder to overcome.

When attendance concerns arise, we will contact parents or carers as early as possible to discuss the situation, identify any barriers to attendance, and work together to find appropriate support. We believe that strong partnerships with families are key to improving attendance.

In the small number of cases where parents or carers do not engage with the school's efforts to address attendance concerns, records of meetings and missed appointments may be used as evidence of non-engagement. This will not prevent the school from referring the case to the Local Authority Attendance Team, which may lead to a penalty notice or prosecution.

## 21. Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice is intended as an early intervention and an alternative to prosecution when a parent fails to ensure their child regularly attends school. It may be issued when a pupil's absence is recorded as unauthorised and meets the legal threshold for action. A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent responsible for the child.

Penalty Notices are used where support to improve attendance has not been successful, has not been engaged with, or where support would not be appropriate, such as in cases of unauthorised term-time holidays.

The national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can include any combination of unauthorised absences, whether consecutive or spread across different weeks, terms, or school years.

The school will consider each case individually before deciding whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate.

Where a pupil is absent without the Headteacher's prior approval, the absence may result in further action being taken by the school. The fine for school absences as of the 19th August 2024 is **£80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days per parent per child.**

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of **£160**. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school, could incur a fine of up to £2,500.

If the school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal intervention to be considered, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal intervention.

## 22. Persistent Absence

A pupil is classed as a Persistent Absentee when their attendance falls below 90%. This is equivalent to missing around 19 school days per year, or approximately one day every two weeks. Persistent absence can have a significant impact on a child's academic progress, wellbeing, and social development.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child receives a full-time education suitable to their age, ability and needs.

Under the Education Act 1996:

- Section 444(1) states that where a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, a parent may be fined up to £1,000.
- Section 444(1A) applies where a parent knowingly fails to ensure regular school attendance without reasonable justification. This offence can result in a fine of up to £2,500, imprisonment for up to three months, or both.

## 23. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school does not give permission for the absence or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

## 24. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The legal reference states that schools should not authorise leave of absence unless both of the following apply:

1. The headteacher considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application **AND**
2. An application has been made in advance by the parent/carer.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Circumstances that may be considered exceptional are rare and could include events such as a significant family emergency or the funeral of a close family member. Planned medical treatments for parents or a lack of annual leave availability for parents do not meet the exceptional circumstances.

In addition, leave of absence for dates in the future, or where travel or accommodation arrangements have been made in advance, demonstrate that the leave would not meet the requirements of 'exceptional circumstances'. When determining whether leave can be granted, consideration will be given to the reasonability and length of leave being requested, alongside supporting documentation provided by parents. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times. Where these situations occur, a proportionate and minimal amount of time away from school is advised.

Parents must complete an Exceptional Leave request form click here and return the form to school before the leave is taken. The Leave of Absence request form must be completed and returned to school as soon as an absence is anticipated. and wherever possible, at least four weeks before the absence (not including school holidays). Parents may be required to provide the school with additional evidence to support their request. If the school has any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage, the necessary protocols will be followed.

*The school office will supply a paper copy of the Leave of Absence request form upon request.* If an unauthorised leave of absence (holiday) is taken in term time the absence will be referred to the Attendance Team at Leicestershire County Council, with a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued in accordance with their Policy.

The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance.

The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion. The Head Teacher may consult with the Executive Leadership Team at the Trust.

Exceptional leave will not be authorised during examination periods.

The decision of the Headteacher is final.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

## 25. Holiday Absence Policy

There is a well-established link between good attendance and educational progress. We are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their full potential, and time away from school can have a significant impact on academic achievement, wellbeing, social development, and continuity of learning.

The Department for Education is clear that family holidays, recreational trips, family work patterns, cheaper travel costs during term time, or a preference for travelling outside peak periods do not normally constitute exceptional circumstances. Consequently, requests for holidays or extended leave during term time are highly unlikely to be authorised.

The school is committed to supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and recognises that some families may face additional challenges when planning holidays and family activities. However, in line with statutory guidance, the school maintains the same high expectations for attendance for pupils with SEND as for all other pupils. A pupil's SEND, medical condition, anxiety relating to travel, preference for quieter holiday periods, or difficulties coping with busy environments will not, in themselves, be considered exceptional circumstances that justify a holiday during term time.

When considering any request for leave of absence, the school will carefully consider the individual circumstances of the pupil and the information provided by parents or carers. The school will also fulfil its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. However, attendance expectations and leave of absence procedures will be applied fairly and consistently to all pupils, and SEND status alone will not provide grounds for authorising a term-time holiday.

Parents wishing to request leave of absence must complete the Exceptional leave form, available from the school office, before making any travel arrangements.

Where a child is taken out of school without authorisation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. If the school believes a pupil has been taken on an unauthorised holiday without notification, safeguarding procedures will be followed to establish the child's whereabouts. This may include a home visit.

If parents are unable to provide sufficient evidence that a holiday was not taken, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice will be issued.

## 26. Holiday Request for Children of Service Personnel

The decision on whether to authorise term-time holidays for the children of service personnel sits solely with the headteacher of the school. To assist headteachers in making their decisions on applications for absence during term time, Unit Commanding Officers and their Welfare staff will be able to provide advice, verification and endorsement as required.

By law, headteachers are only able to grant requests for leave during term time in "exceptional" circumstances, examples include:

- Preparing for or returning from operational tours
- Shift pattern only allows leave to be taken during term-time
- Injury/bereavement

An exceptional leave request form needs to be submitted for any holiday request; the Unit Commanding Officer will then be contacted in order to verify the request. A maximum of 1 occasion and 7 days (14 sessions) may be authorised in any academic year; any additional days will be unauthorised.

**Appendix B School Specific arrangements**

**Appendix C Related Policies**

- DfE Statutory Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance July 2026
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Children with Health Needs
- Medication Policy
- Exclusions Policy