



# Lady Lumley's School

## Student Attendance Policy

Approver: Local Governing Committee

Review Cycle: 3 yearly

### Revision History

Date	Version	Short Description of Changes	Approved by:
26/11/2020	1.0		IEB
25/04/2023	1.1	Update following NYCC and DofE Guidance	LGC

## Student Attendance Policy

### RATIONALE

**All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) have a right to an education and are legally required to receive an education. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually. If a child does not, parents/carers may be breaking the law.**

Evidence shows that students who attend school regularly make better progress both academically and socially. Attendance is also a Safeguarding matter. Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly and schools have an important responsibility to make sure that their students are safe and well. If they are not present at school when they normally would be, efforts are made to establish their whereabouts and the reason for their absence.

Our aim is for every student to have the best possible record of attendance and punctuality in order that they remain safe and gain the maximum benefit from their learning opportunities, preparing them for the disciplines of adult working life. Every lesson counts and it is this commitment to learning that will have a positive effect on each student's examination results and their future life-chances.

**Lady Lumley's School strives for 100% attendance for all students and an attendance target of 95% is the minimum that we expect for all students.** The school will start to show concern for a student if their attendance dips below 95% in a 12-month period.

### **1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Parents and carers** are responsible for ensuring the children in their care receive an education.

**Lady Lumley's School** has a responsibility to monitor all students' attendance closely and to keep accurate records of attendance and punctuality. The school will follow up any unexplained absence by contacting parents/carers by telephone and/or by email/letter. Where a student's attendance record reaches a concerning level, we will contact parents to discuss ways in which the school can support parents in order to improve the attendance of the student.

**Teachers** are responsible for recording attendance at lessons within the first 10 minutes of each lesson and registration period and promoting good attendance through lessons and tutor groups.

**The Attendance Administrator** is responsible for ensuring all registers are complete and accurate and all absences are explained.

**The Attendance and Behaviour Officer** follows up individual students, liaising with parents, sending appropriate letters and liaising with the Local Authority Attendance and Enforcement Officer where necessary.

**Lady Lumley's School** will promote the importance of good attendance through assemblies, discussions with individuals and groups and celebrating good attendance through assemblies and other publicity.

**The Governing Body** will set attendance targets for the school after consultation with senior staff.

**Lady Lumley's** believes that its students are best able to achieve success when school and families work in partnership. We hope that parents will assist us in our work of raising attendance levels throughout the school. The Headteacher and Local Governing Committee of Lady Lumley's School are committed to:

- ensuring that the correct legal procedures are followed in school with regard to attendance;
- roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood by all parties;
- ensuring that every attempt is made to support students, parents and carers to attend a full time education package suitable to their needs.

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## **2. BROAD GUIDELINES**

Lady Lumley's School will enable students to attend regularly and on time by:

1. Helping them to understand what excellent attendance is and why it is important to them
2. Setting attendance targets which are tracked weekly and reviewed every half-term
3. Sharing attendance data with all students and Parents/Carers via ClassCharts
4. Encourage students to attend regularly and on time by giving regular praise and rewards for good attendance and progress with attendance and punctuality
5. Support students with any issues which may affect their ability to attend regularly and on time.
6. Liaise with outside agencies where extra support is needed
7. Provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where all students feel safe, valued, respected and nurtured to achieve their full potential.

Lady Lumley's School will follow and enforce the correct legal procedures for attendance. It will encourage all students to attend regularly offering support where appropriate. It will work in partnership with all parties to ensure that opportunities for all students are maximised. A whole school strategy involving key members of the school community will be applied consistently to ensure that attendance patterns are kept under review and that significant and sustained progress is made in improving attendance rates in line with targets.

## **3. ATTENDANCE TARGETS**

Our whole school attendance target for 2022/23 is 95%. The impact of COVID has meant that these targets are highly aspirational given the national picture relating to student attendance. The aim is to return attendance to pre-pandemic levels.

## **4. MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE POLICY**

Attendance statistics at school, year, selected cohort level are examined regularly at senior leadership team meetings.

The attendance of individuals is monitored weekly by Pastoral staff under the guidance of the Assistant headteacher with responsibility for student attendance.

Termly and annual attendance statistics are reported, by the headteacher, to each meeting of the Local Governor Committee.

Statistical trends are compared with local, national and previous year's figures at each of these meetings.

The impact of the policy is tested at each of these meetings. The policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly cycle.

## **5. RE-INTEGRATION FOLLOWING LONG-TERM ABSENCE**

Where a student has been absent for a prolonged period of time, perhaps due to illness, the school will:

- Welcome the student back to the school and value their return
- Provide support for the student in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the school.
- Ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- Work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome.
- Consider a personalised programme of return if appropriate, making use of Learning Support, the school's base for vulnerable students.
- Nominate a key member of staff to monitor and review the student's return.

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## LINKED DOCUMENTS

1. NYCC Executive Summary – Statutory Intervention by the Local Authority for School Attendance, October 2021
2. NYCC School Attendance - Advice and requirements of all schools for consideration of legal enforcement by the Local Authority, September 2021
3. NYCC Information for Parents/Carers - Rights and responsibilities relating to school attendance and behaviour, September 2021
4. DfE guidance - Working together to improve school attendance – May 2022
5. DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance – May 2022
6. DfE Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England, updated August 2017
7. NYCC FAQs – Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave of Absence (Holiday) in term time, September 2017
8. Lady Lumley’s School Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Understanding types of absence

Appendix 2 - Religious Observance

Appendix 3 - Parents’ guide to children’s absence - illness and medical appointments

Appendix 4 - Parents’ guide to children’s absence - holidays in term-time

Appendix 5 - Flow chart for leave of absence in term-time

Appendix 6 - Letter not authorising leave (more than 10 sessions and less than 10 sessions)

Appendix 7 - Letter authorising leave

Appendix 8 - Witness statement in the case of issuing a penalty notice

Appendix 9 - Penalty Notice: Certificate of Absence

Appendix 10 - Sample Letters re: attendance concerns

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## **Appendix 1 - Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Absence may be authorised for such reasons as:

- illness
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
- days of religious observance (see Appendix 2)
- study leave
- exclusion
- involvement in a public performance

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the North Yorkshire County Council using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips e.g. The Yorkshire Show
- looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
- family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will not normally be approved).
- special occasions, where the school does not agree that the absence should be granted.

Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, students should, where practically possible, come to school before the appointment, sign out and return to school after the appointment. Confirmation of all appointments by way of appointment card, letter or appointment slip must be provided for any absence to be authorised. The school requires sight of an appointment card or letter in order to authorise any absence from school. If medical appointments are attended at the start of the day, causing the student to arrive late, medical evidence (as above) must be provided or a late detention will be issued. Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a student's absence, the school will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly. Absence which hasn't been explained will remain as unauthorised.

Parents/carers should not take their children out of school for holidays, days out, to attend sporting events, etc.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

## **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

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A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA students and their parents can be subject to an Action Plan and intervention negotiated with the parents or carers, and external agencies if appropriate.

Intervention may be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve a family support plan and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant school staff and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the school, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the relevant Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

## **APPENDIX 2: Religious Observance**

Authorised absence may be granted for religious observance, for example, Eid. The Department for Education definition is as follows:

“Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.”

If the religious body has not set the day apart, there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant leave of absence.

Individual religions and their religious observance are too numerous to detail in this document. Parents should contact the school to request leave of absence for all religious observance.

## **APPENDIX 3 - Parents' guide to children's absence (illness or medical appointments)**

Parents/carers have a vital role in promoting good attitudes in attendance.

We ask for support from parents/carers to ensure that their children are present at every opportunity and arrive to school on time and ready to learn.

Parents should avoid allowing children to stay at home unnecessarily or taking them out of school without authorisation. **Only the school can authorise an absence.**

### **Reporting Absence:**

#### **What to do if your child is ill:**

If your child is too ill to attend the school, **parents/carers** should contact the school's attendance office between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m, inform school via ClassCharts. Or, you can call into school and report to reception and a member of staff will speak with you.

#### **Calling School**

- Telephone 01751 472846
- Explain the call is about a child's absence
- Please give your child's name, tutor group, the reason for the absence, and how long you expect the absence to last.

#### **We ask that you contact us each day that your child is absent.**

Absences of over three days should be supported by a doctor's note, appointment slip or a copy of medication prescribed

We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously and the attendance administrator will contact parents/carers if a student is absent from period 1 and school has received no reason for absence by 9 a.m.

The attendance administrator will call each day the child is ill unless contact has been made to the school by 9 a.m.

The attendance administrator will also contact the parents/ carers if the student rings to report his or her own absence or if we have reason to doubt the identity of the caller.

#### **What to do if your child has an appointment:**

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We ask that you make routine medical and other appointments out of school time. If this is not possible, we require notification in advance. Please telephone, e-mail or provide a note from home or appointment letter/card to confirm the appointment. Wherever possible, your child should attend school before the appointment and return afterwards. They should bring a note from home to the school reception desk when it is time for them to sign out. They should sign back in at the school reception desk on their return.



#### Appendix 4 - Parents' guide to children's absence (holidays in term time)

Due to recent changes in Government guidelines, **schools are not able to authorise holidays in term-time**. If a holiday is taken in term time, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and it may result in a Fixed Penalty Charge Notice, under section 44 of the Education Act 1996. This will result in a fine.

However, under exceptional circumstances you can apply directly to the Headteacher for "leave of absence" although the Government guidance states "Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional".

Parents or carers considering taking a student out of school during term-time need to follow the procedure below:

#### APPLICATION FOR STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING TERM TIME

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and preferably at least **6 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the school's permission **before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised**.

**No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.** The Education regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each application is considered individually by the school.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term-time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences.

Taking a student on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application form parent/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.

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**Appendix 4 continued**

**APPLICATION FOR STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Name of student(s):

School:

Class (es):

Address:

Telephone No:

Siblings (if at different school):

Schools attended:

I request permission for my child to be absent from school

From ..... To .....

Total school days .....

**Exceptional circumstances for request:**

*(this section must be answered in full and against stated criteria)*

Signature of parent/carer.....Date.....

**For school use only**

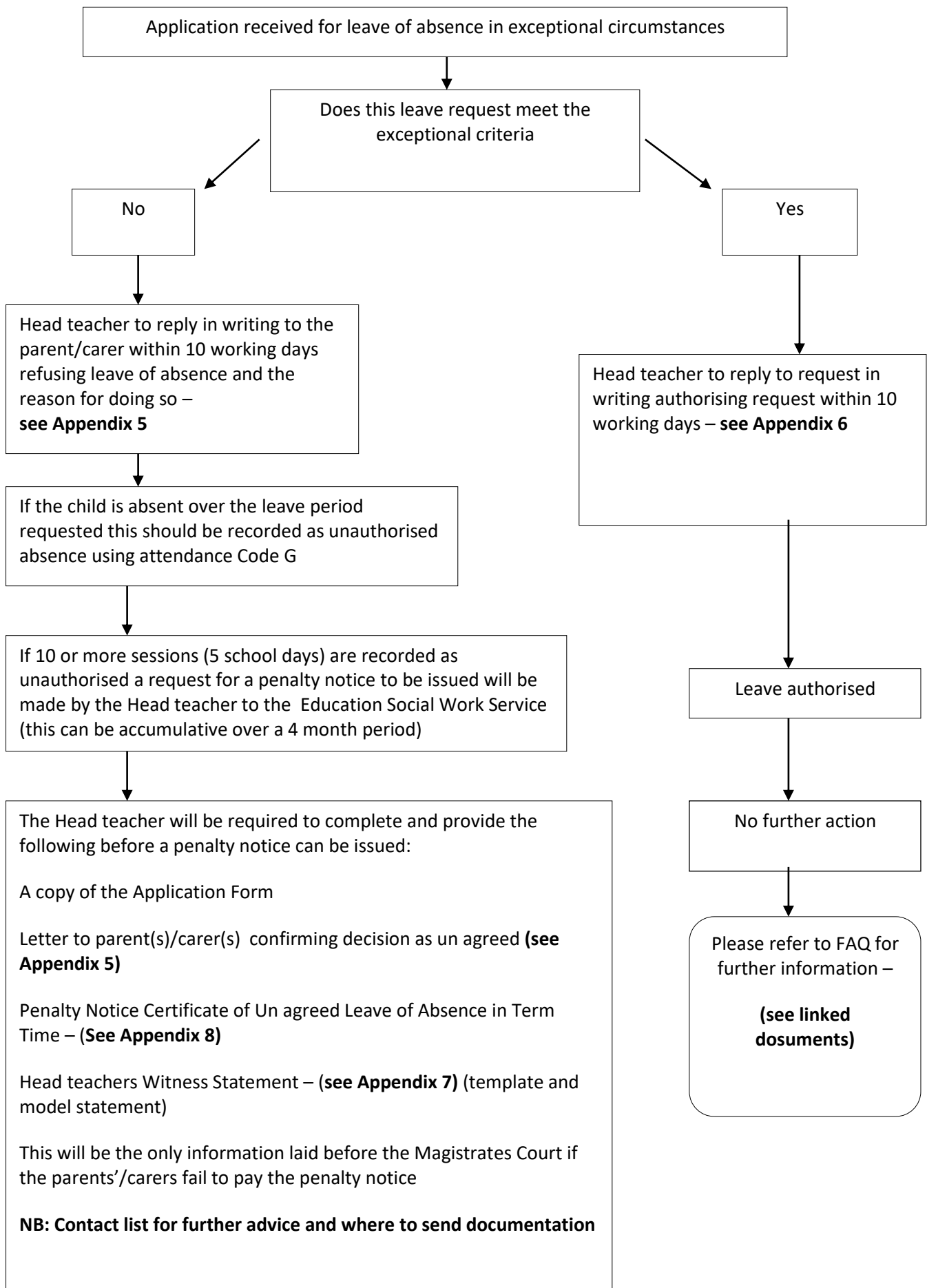
Seen by Head teacher (signature).....Date.....

Decision reached.....

Date reply returned to parent (s).....

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**Appendix 5 – Flow chart for leave of absence in term-time**



**Appendix 6 - Letter not authorising leave.**

Dear ( insert full name of parent/carer/s)

**Refusal for exceptional leave in term-time.**

**RE: Student name and Tutor Group**

Thank you for your recent request to take «chosen\_forename» on a family holiday.

I have carefully considered your request for leave in term-time and on this occasion I will not be able to authorise your child's absence. This is due to a new law which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, and which gives no entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time.

If your child does not attend school during the dates you requested, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a request to issue you with a penalty notice may be made to the Local Authority.

A penalty notice of £60 is payable within the first 21 days and rises to £120 thereafter. The Local Authority will consider taking legal action if the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £1000 and a criminal record for each parent/carer.

Should your child still miss school, the school will continue to help them to catch up with missed work on their return from holiday, but it is your responsibility to ensure that such work is completed in order to minimise the negative effects of absence. I trust that you will be able to help us with this. Completion of work is especially important in Years 10 and 11 where the work may be vital to coursework which is assessed for final examination.

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child's school file.

Yours sincerely  
Ms C Foden  
Headteacher

**OR**

Thank you for your recent request to take «chosen\_forename» on a family holiday.

I have carefully considered your request for leave in term-time and on this occasion I will not be able to authorise your child's absence. This is due to a new law which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, and which gives no entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time.

If your child does not attend school during the dates you requested, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. As the unauthorised leave does not amount to 10 sessions or more in a period of 4 months, a request to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice will not be made at this time.

However, please note that if further leave of absence is taken without the agreement of the school, and amounts to 10 sessions or more over a period of 4 months, inclusive of the current request, this can result in a penalty notice being requested.

A penalty notice of £60 is payable within the first 21 days and rises to £120 thereafter. The Local Authority will consider taking legal action if the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £1000 and a criminal record for each parent/carer.

Should your child still miss school, the school will continue to help them to catch up with missed work on their return from holiday, but it is your responsibility to ensure that such work is completed in order to minimise the negative effects of absence. I trust that you will be able to help us with this. Completion of work is especially important in Years 10 and 11 where the work may be vital to coursework which is assessed for final examination.

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child's school file.

Yours sincerely

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Ms C Foden  
Headteacher

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**Appendix 7 - Letter authorising leave**

Dear (insert full name of parent/carer)

**Request for exceptional leave in term-time.**

RE: Student name and Tutor Group

Thank you for your recent request to take «chosen\_forename» out of school during term time.

A new law came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 which gives no entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time.

However, I am happy to consider this as exceptional circumstances, and I am therefore able to authorise your child's absence on this occasion.

Please note, any further leave taken without permission beyond the requested dates will be recorded as unauthorised absence and could result in a penalty notice being requested from the Local Authority.

The school will continue to help your child to catch up with missed work on their return, but it is your responsibility to ensure that such work is completed in order to minimise the negative effects of absence. I trust that you will be able to help us with this. Completion of work is especially important in Years 10 and 11 where the work may be vital to coursework which is assessed for final examination.

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child's school file.

Yours sincerely  
Ms C Foden  
Headteacher

**Appendix 8 - Witness statement in the case of issuing a penalty notice**

(CJ Act 1967, s.9; MC Act 1980, ss.5A(3) (a) and 5B; Criminal Procedures Rules 2005 Rule 27.1)

<b>STATEMENT OF:</b>
<b>AGE OF WITNESS (IF OVER 21 ENTER "OVER 21"):</b>
<b>OCCUPATION OF WITNESS:</b>
<b>ADDRESS:</b>
<b>STATEMENT:</b>
<b>This statement (consisting of pages each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that if it is tendered in evidence I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.</b>
<b>Dated the day of</b>
<b>Signed</b>

**Appendix 9 - Penalty Notice: Certificate of Absence**

**PENALTY NOTICE  
CERTIFICATE OF ABSENCE (UNAGREED LEAVE)**

Section 444 Education Act 1996

This form is to be completed by the Headteacher. It will be used in legal action under the above Act relating to non-school attendance of a registered student at the school.

I certify that                      date of birth                      is a registered student of compulsory school age, on roll at School and that they had unauthorised absence from school on or between                      to                      for a reason that comes within North Yorkshire’s Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices for Un agreed Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances.

<b>Week beginning:</b>																<b>Totals</b>
<b>Possible number ½ days</b>																
<b>Actual attendance</b>																
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>																
<b>Authorised</b>																

To the best of my knowledge, the person(s) with parental responsibility for this student are:

1.        Surname                      First Name                      Address
2.        Surname                      First Name Address

**Declaration**

**I am the Headteacher of the school named. I hereby certify that the information given in this form is true to the best of my knowledge. The information has been extracted from the school’s register of attendance which can be made available to confirm it is an accurate record.**

Dated this.....day of..... 20...

Signature.....Name (printed).....



**Appendix 10 – Sample Letters/Forms: Attendance Concerns**

See NYCC School Attendance – Advice and Requirements of School January 2018 Pages 20-22 and pages 24-57.