

AYLSHAM LEARNING FEDERATION

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Reference:	SS/Attendance Policy	Review Frequency:	Annual
Issue Number:	02 (27.11.2018)	Next Review Date:	27.11.2019
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Ratified by the Governors' Curriculum, Assessment and Attainment Committee on: 27.11.2018

Signed: _____

Chair

Mission Statement

Aylsham Learning Federation (ALF) seeks to ensure that all our students/pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student/pupil to realise his/her true potential. Regular school attendance and punctuality are essential components if children are to achieve their full potential. Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades.

The Federation believes that regular school attendance enables children both to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become responsible, organised and motivated adults.

We value all students/pupils/children. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. All Federation staff will work with students/pupils/children and their families to ensure each student/pupil/child attends school regularly and punctually.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole Federation community. Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

The Federation will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the Federation's community feels wanted and secure.

ALF has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students/pupils/children to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students/pupils/children and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. This includes parents/carers who authorise absence during term time, including leave of absence.

To meet these objectives each school will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students/pupils/children, parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

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1. Introduction

We wish to:

- Develop habits of good time keeping
- Develop habits of regular attendance
- Ensure that every school day/lesson counts
- Be proactive in reducing the number of persistent absence students/pupils/children. (PA students/pupils/children)

1. To improve the overall percentage of students/pupils/children at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the Federation, including students/pupils/children, parents/carers, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students/pupils/children.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To develop a system of rewards and sanctions.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the local authority attendance team, AHS (Su Smith), BVS (Sally Fox), JOG (Caroline Lord) and with other appropriate services and agencies.
9. To recognise the needs of the individual student/pupil/child when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Aim 1 To improve the overall percentage attendance of students/pupils at school

1. Apply the Federation attendance policy consistently.
2. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
3. Relate attendance issues directly to the Federation's values, ethos and curriculum.
4. Monitor progress in attendance through measurable outcomes, e.g. weekly attendance figures, individual figures, termly figures and annual percentages.
5. Identify PA students/pupils/children (90% and below) and implement procedures to improve their attendance.

Aim 2 To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the Federation including students/pupils/children, parents/carers, teachers and governors

1. Use each schools' prospectus to promote DfE literature.
2. Using the traffic light system (red, amber, green) or BVS equivalent to produce attendance letters for parents/carers to promote excellent attendance
3. Provide SLT with attendance data to be shared with governors.
4. Hold induction evenings for parents/carers/students/pupils/children where attendance is highlighted.
5. Produce newsletters which reflect attendance issues.
6. Provide CPL training for appointed/promoted staff.
7. Display attendance figures at focal points, form/class rooms, noticeboards, etc.
8. Discuss attendance issues at SLT/pastoral meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings including subject meetings (AHS).

9. Develop reward systems, for example badges, trophies, certificates, half termly draw for 100% attendance, end of year prizes etc.
10. Use fast-track procedures for poor attendees, attendance panels, and pastoral support meetings and liaise with the local authority attendance team.
11. Parents/carers can be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice in relation to their child's unauthorised absences.
12. Adopt a whole Federation approach towards attendance.

Aim 3 To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks

1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
2. Make immediate phone/letter contact, with:
Aylsham High School, Attendance Officer (Su Smith)
Bure Valley School, School Office, or Pastoral Leader (Sally Fox)
John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School, (Caroline Lord)
on first day of absence, for example parent/carer requests, school concerns, etc. The Attendance Officer (AHS)/School Office (BVS and JOG) will administer Truancy Call/First Day Call.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
4. Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of students/pupils/children and parents/carers).
5. Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the Federation staffing structure (see procedures).
6. Timetable staff to meet with the attendance leads in schools.
7. Have clear procedures prior to referral to local authority attendance team.
8. Review attendance regularly.
9. Be familiar with the local authority attendance referrals for fast track and fixed penalty notices.

Aim 4 To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students/pupils

1. Highlight attendance in:
 - Curriculum areas
 - Assemblies
 - Staff available to talk to students/ meetings with parents/carers/students/pupils/children
 - Making use of available resources
 - Promote the use of SIMS Parent
 - Letters/newsletters to parents/carers
 - Through Parent Support Adviser (PSA) Carol Flatters
2. Offer support for families with serious issues.
3. Set aside time for parents/carers to speak to staff regarding attendance.
4. Seek improved communication with parents/carers, e.g. encouraging parents/carers to ring in - Truancy Call/First Day Call and further daily reporting of absence until student/pupil/child returns to school.
5. Provide accurate and up to date contact information for parents/carers.
6. Involve parents/carers from earliest stage.

Aim 5 To develop a systematic approach in gathering and analysing attendance related data

1. Computerised registration, using the SIMS management information system. Standardise recording of:
 - Authorised/unauthorised absence using DfE codes (see Appendix 2)
 - Educational Activity
 - Presence at school
2. Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.
3. Decide what information is provided for:
 - Governors – Standard item on agenda for meetings
 - Pastoral staff
 - Other school staff
 - Parents/carers
 - Students/pupils/children (individual or groups)
 - Local authority attendance team
4. Identify developing patterns or irregular attendance and lateness – focusing on tracking vulnerable groups e.g. FSM, CLA, SEND.

Aim 6 To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school

1. Initiate first day absence contact by using Truancy Call/First Day Call (see Point 2).
2. The Attendance Officer (AHS)/Pastoral Lead (BVS)/ School Office (JOG) to call families of PA students/pupils/children daily if they are absent without justifiable reason.
3. Make full use of standardised letters home.
4. Promote expectation of absence letters/telephone calls from parents/carers.
5. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parent/carer partnerships (see Aim 2).
6. Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English and non-written).
7. Encourage all parents/carers into school.
8. Use the PSA (Carol Flatters) to liaise with parents/carers as appropriate.

Aim 7 To implement a system of rewards and sanctions

Aylsham High School

1. Identify appropriate rewards for individuals and form/class groups.
2. Actively promote attendance and associated reward and effective sanctions, particularly through the House system and assemblies.
3. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
4. Involve students in system evaluation, particularly through student leadership team and school council.
5. Take action which accords with objectives agreed between school and others, e.g. local authority attendance team, parents/carers, Behaviour Support Service, etc.

Bure Valley School

1. Clear home school agreement promoting good attendance, punctuality and the need for school and parents/carers to work in partnership.
2. Identify pupils for attendance awards which are given out to pupils termly for pupils with 100%.
3. Actively promote attendance, associated awards and sanctions through school newsletter, house points system and whole school assemblies.
4. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
5. Involve school council and pupil leaders in evaluating, promoting and evaluating attendance initiatives.

John of Gaunt

1. Clear home school agreement promoting good attendance, punctuality and the need for school and parents/carers to work in partnership.
2. Identify children for attendance awards which are given out to children termly for children with 97% attendance – good or 98%, 99% and 100% attendance – excellent.
3. Actively promote attendance, associated awards and sanctions through school newsletter and whole school assemblies.
4. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.

Aim 8 To promote effective partnerships with the student/pupil/child attendance service and with other services and agencies

1. Designated key staff to liaise with the local authority attendance team and other agencies.
2. Attendance officer (AHS)/pastoral lead (BVS) and school office (JOG) to carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
3. Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of referral to the local authority attendance team.
4. Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.
5. Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community.
6. Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the schools.
7. Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.
8. Liaise and work in partnership with our Cluster partners re consistent approach to attendance and persistent absentee interventions.

Aim 9 To recognise the needs of the individual student/pupil/child when planning the reintegration following significant periods of absence

1. Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning students/pupils/children.
2. Involve/inform staff in/of reintegration process.
3. Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
4. Consider peer support and mentoring.
5. Involve parents/carers as far as possible.
6. Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
7. Include attendance lead, pastoral staff, parents/carers and students/pupils/children in the reintegration plan.

Summary

The Federation is committed to ensuring that **ALL** students/pupils/children receive a full time education in order to maximise potential. The policy will be reviewed by the governors annually.

The local authority attendance team for Aylsham High School, Bure Valley School and John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School can be contacted through the attendance duty line on 01603 223 681.

The governor responsible for attendance:
Aylsham High School, Judy Taylor
Bure Valley School, Di Scott
John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School, TBC

2. Legal Framework

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

2.2 Under the Education Act 1996, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

2.3 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the student/pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. Definitions

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, the Federation defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

Regular attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to students/pupils unless their absence has been authorised.

An “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause.

An “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

“Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

“Parent/Carer” as

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

4.1 The table below shows the national codes which enable all schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, and comply with the regulations.

Absence and Attendance Codes	
Present at School	
/\	Registration code /\ : present in school / = am \ =pm
L	Late arrival before the register has closed. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A student/pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.
Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity	
B	Off-site educational activity. This code should be used when students/pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students/pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard students/pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a student/pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual students/pupils. The school should record the student/pupil’s absence using the relevant absence code.

D	Dual Registered – at another educational establishment. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school Census. The law allows for dual registration of students/pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the student/pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are students/pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the student/pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the student/pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the student/pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment. This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity. This code should be used to record the sessions when a student/pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational visit or trip. This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.
W	Work experience. Work experience is for students/pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual students/pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.
Absence codes when pupils are not present in school	
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made. If no alternative provision is made for a student/pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded student/pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.
H	Holiday authorised by the school. Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the executive headteacher/head of school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the executive headteacher/head of school will determine the number of days a student/pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the executive headteacher's/head of school's discretion.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request

	parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
M	Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the student/pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
R	Religious observance. Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
S	Study leave. Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to year 11 students during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those students who want to continue to come into school to revise.
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence. A number of different groups are covered by the generic term traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. This code should be used when traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student/pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.
Unauthorised Absence from School	
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the executive headteacher/head of school. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided. Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a student/pupil's absence. When the reason for the student/pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a student/pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).
O	Absent from school without authorisation. If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes	
X	Not required to be in school. This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.
Y	<p>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This code can be used where a student/pupil is unable to attend because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or • The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the student/pupil's home is not within walking distance; or • A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the student/pupil from attending school. <p>This code can also be used where a student/pupil is unable to attend because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student/pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the student/pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity). <p>This code is collected in each school census for statistical purposes.</p>
Z	Student/pupil not on admission register. This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of students/pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put students/pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student/pupil will attend the school.
#	Planned whole or partial school closure. This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

4.2 Leave of Absence

- 4.2.1. Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance means that headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence for the sole purpose of a holiday (unless in exceptional circumstances). All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents/carers known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the local authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the local authority to consider prosecution.
- 4.2.2. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence for their child due to 'exceptional circumstance'. Within the Federation, leave of absence shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. This may only be granted at the discretion of the executive headteacher/head of school. The schools will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Exceptional circumstances may be:

- Armed forces personnel returning from a tour of duty.
- Police or other service personnel whose leave has been cancelled during school holidays.

- Consideration for a leave of absence will only be given where families have experienced particularly challenging times such as a recent bereavement or serious illness or where an employee has difficulties accessing a leave of absence during school holiday time. In this case, a letter from the employer is required to explain that this is the case.

4.2.3. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the executive headteacher/head of school at least 1 month before the planned leave. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the executive headteacher/head of school and it will be marked as unauthorised. Each school will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the local authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

4.2.4. A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the local authority should:-

- The parent/carer fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the executive headteacher/head of school but is still taken.
- A longer period of time is taken in excess of the agreed number of days.

4.2.5. When absence is granted by the executive headteacher/head of school, the parents/carer will need to agree a date of return. If a student/pupil/child fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents/carers, the school will seek advice from the local authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

4.3. Student/pupil/child absence for the purposes of religious observance

The Federation acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the schools will consider either authorising the student/pupil/child absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school.

4.4. Traveller Absence

4.4.1. The aim for the attendance of traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

4.4.2. To protect traveller parents/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, s. 86 of The Education Act 1944 states that a traveller parent shall be entitled to be acquitted if his or her child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) during the period of twelve months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted, if the family are of no fixed abode.

4.4.3. However, it should be noted that this provision applies 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. It does not mean that part-time education for traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it

relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

- 4.4.4. When trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.
- 4.4.5. Aylsham High School/Bure Valley School/John of Gaunt School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the student/pupil/child must have attended Aylsham High School/Bure Valley School/John of Gaunt School in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the student/pupil/child's school place at Aylsham High School/Bure Valley School/John of Gaunt School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.
- 4.4.6. Aylsham High School/Bure Valley School/John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with traveller families. This means that parents/carers must:
 - Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
 - Inform the school regarding proposed return dates
- 4.4.7. Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:
 - The child is on roll and attending another visited school
 - Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- 4.4.8. Where traveller children are registered students/pupils/children at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student/pupil/child.

4.5. Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents/carers have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the schools. That decision is at the discretion of the executive headteacher/head of school. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A student/pupil/child/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the student/pupil/child's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the student/pupil/child is actually considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school.

4.6. Persistent Absence

A student/pupil/child becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19

days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all students/pupils/children at each school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents/carers fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to the local authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or full prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

4.7. Late Arrival at School

Aylsham High School

All students are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year.

The school day begins at 8.50am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken between 8.50am and 9.10am. All students arriving after this time are required to report to the main reception with their parents/carers, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before 9.10am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9.10am. All students arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents/carers will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate sanctions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a student arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session. The PM registration periods closes at 1.45pm.

Bure Valley School

All pupils are expected to have arrived on site before the morning whistle is blown at 8.45am. The school day begins at 8.50am and any pupil arriving after 8.50am will be recorded as late.

Registration occurs at 8.50am and 1.10pm and remains open for 20 minutes. All pupils arriving after this time are expected to report to the school office, and their lateness will be recorded. If pupils arrive before 9.10am it will be recorded as late (L code) before the close of register.

Any pupil arriving after the register is closed will be marked as having unauthorised absence (U – after register closes) unless there is an acceptable explanation, i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery

All children are expected to have arrived on site before the teachers come on to the playground at 8.50am. The school day begins at 9.00am and any child arriving after 9.00am will be recorded as late.

Registration occurs at 9.00am and 1.00pm and remains open for 30 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon. All pupils arriving after this time are expected to report to the school office, and their lateness will be recorded. If pupils arrive before 9.30am it will be recorded as late (L code) before the close of register.

Any pupil arriving after the register is closed will be marked as having unauthorised absence (U – after register closes) unless there is an acceptable explanation, i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

4.8. School Refusal

Where we have concerns that a student/pupil/child is absent due to emotional difficulties, we will endeavour to:

- Involve the school support team
- Arrange a meeting with the family to look at any underlying issues and agree a plan of action
- Discuss at Support Team meetings.

Although in most cases the procedures outlined here will be followed, there may be times when agreed sanctions are not appropriate in helping to tackle school refusal. In these cases, alternative strategies can be used. Every attempt will be made to identify any underlying causes of school refusal and non-attendance.

4.9. Long Term Absence

When students/pupils/children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will send materials home in order that they can keep up with their school work if they are well enough. Where it is likely that the absence will continue for a protracted period of time or be repeated, support services may be contacted in order to arrange tuition outside school.

5. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Regulations, students/pupils/children will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

A	Where the student/pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
B	Change of school Except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the student/pupil/child should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a student/pupil at another school.

C	Where a student/pupil/child is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
D	Home education In a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the student/pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
E	Moved away Except in the case of a boarder that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.
F	In the case of a student/pupil/child granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (i) the student/pupil/child has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student/pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student/pupil/child is.
G	That he is certified by the school Medical Needs officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
H	That he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2); (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student/pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) The proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student/pupil is.
I	That he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student/pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.
J	That the student/pupil/child has died.
K	That the student/pupil/child will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and— (i) the relevant person has indicated that the student/pupil/child will cease to attend the school; or (ii) The student/pupil/child does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.
L	In the case of a student/pupil/child at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a student/pupil of the school.
M	Permanent exclusion. That he has been permanently excluded from the school.
N	Where the student/pupil/child has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, which he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.
O	Where— (i) the student/pupil/child is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the student/pupil; and

(iii) Those charges remain unpaid by the student/pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.

The Federation will follow Norfolk County Council's Children Missing Education procedures when a student/pupil/child's whereabouts is unknown and the schools will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Federation believes that improved school attendance is a responsibility shared by governors, school staff, parents/carers, students/pupils/children and the wider school community.

The governors of Aylsham Learning Federation will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students/pupils/children and their parents/carers.
- Annually review the Federation's attendance policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Identify a member of the governing board to lead on attendance matters.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the local authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the performance management of senior leadership within the Federation.
- Monitor each school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at governors' meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the local authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the schools have clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students/pupils/children, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The senior management team in the Aylsham Learning Federation will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students/pupils/children and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students/pupils/children and parents/carers.
- Ensure that there is a whole Federation approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students/pupils/children to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the attendance policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.

- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the local authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report each school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the governors and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students/pupils/children, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students/pupils/children and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support students/pupils/children with irregular attendance.

All staff in the Aylsham Learning Federation will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students/pupils/children and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students/pupils/children and parents/carers.
- Contribute to a whole Federation approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students/pupils/children to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students/pupils/children, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students/pupils/children and their families.

Students/pupils/children will:

- Be aware of the Federation's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents, and the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents/carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen.
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. This will help each school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

The attendance officer (AHS)/ pastoral lead (BVS)/ school office (John of Gaunt) will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The attendance officer (AHS)/ pastoral lead (BVS)/ school office (John of Gaunt) will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing student/pupil/child attendance data.
- Undertaking regular attendance meetings with the designated safeguarding lead and other relevant staff members.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual student/pupil/child casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for students/pupils/children causing concern through the school attendance panel.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to, if a child is absent from school without contact from parents/carers.
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as celebration assemblies and reward schemes.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

Aylsham Learning Federation requests that parents/carers will:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their school work or home and family life.
- Inform the schools of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the schools by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

7. Attendance Protocols

If a child is absent, the following will be initiated by each school:

Aylsham High School

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all students who are not in school after close of register at 9.10am and where no reason for absence is known using Truancy Call automated calling.

- If there is still no contact made from the student's parents/carers, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned.
- If school cannot make contact with a parent/carer and are concerned about a student, a home visit may be carried out (PSA).
- School will telephone home if a student leaves the school without permission.

Bure Valley School

If a pupil is absent, the following will be initiated by Bure Valley School:

- First Day calling procedures will be activated by school office staff for all pupils who are not in school after the close of morning registration, where there is no known reason for absence.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents/carers, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, all the child's named emergency contacts will be telephoned at least twice. Messages will be left if there is a voice mail or text option.
- If a pupil is absent on a third day, and we have received no contact from parents/carers, and have been unable to contact them by phone, a letter will be sent to the home address – by special delivery. Parents/carers will be asked to contact the school immediately on receipt of the letter.
- Continuing absence – the above procedure relating to letters will be repeated after 5 and 7 days.
- Any pupils absent for 10 days without an explanation will be notified to the LA, by submitting a referral to the Children's Service Attendance Staff for the local area. Within the referral we will include details of the action that has been taken to gain a reason for absence.
- Notes received from parents/carers explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes need to be retained for a longer period.
- If a pupil leaves the school premises without permission then the parent/carer and/or police will be called.

John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School

If a child is absent, the following will be initiated by John of Gaunt School:

- First Day calling procedures will be activated by school office staff for all children who are not in school after the close of morning registration, where there is no known reason for absence.
- If there is still no contact made from the child's parents/carers, a text will be sent.
- The next morning if there is still no contact from the child's parents/carers, a further telephone call is made.
- If a child is absent on a third day, and we have received no contact from parents/carers, and have been unable to contact them by phone, a letter will be sent to the home address – by special delivery. Parents/carers will be asked to contact the school immediately on receipt of the letter.
- Continuing absence – the above procedure relating to letters will be repeated after 5 and 7 days.
- Any pupils absent for 10 days without an explanation will be notified to the LA, by submitting a referral to the Children's Service Attendance Staff for the local area. Within the referral we will include details of the action that has been taken to gain a reason for absence.
- Notes received from parents/carers explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the child, that

may require further investigation, then the notes need to be retained for a longer period.

- If a child leaves the school premises without permission then the parent/carer and/or police will be called.

In certain circumstances the schools may also:

- Visit the home of the student/pupil/child or request a welfare check to be made by the police.
- Write to the parents/carers of a student/pupil/child to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Invite parents/carers to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Refer to an external agency/ support service to offer support, guidance and advice.
- Refer to the local authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures.
- Refer to the local authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or referring to Children Services, where there are safeguarding concerns.

7.1 Expected absence procedure for parents/carers

A parent/carer has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents/carers are expected to:

- Contact school by telephone call on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, identifying the specific reason for absence and the expected date of return.
- If no contact is received, the attendance protocols will be instigated and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

7.2 Support Systems

The Federation recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some students/pupils/children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance.

The Federation will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.

Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents/cares and students/pupils/children
- Parent Support advisor
- Child/Pupil voice activities
- Friendship groups
- 1 to 1 mentoring
- Reward systems

- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Engaging the support of other agencies

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and students/pupils/children. Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the executive headteacher/head of school will consider the use of legal sanctions following consultation with the local authority.

7.3 Encouraging Outstanding Attendance

It is important to remember that the vast majority of children arrive on time every day. An important part of our attendance policy is that this good practice is commended and applauded publicly. In order to do this we:

Aylsham High School

- Publicise class/tutor group attendance figures on a weekly basis in assembly and in each tutor group. There is a designated notice board for attendance for all students and staff to see.
- Present any student who achieves 100% attendance during an academic year at Aylsham High School with a certificate at celebration evenings.
- Have half termly draws during celebration assemblies for 100% attendance.
- Award credits to students half termly to reward regular attendance.
- Use the traffic light system 'red, amber, green' to promote excellent attendance.
- House points are awarded at the end of each academic year to the house with the highest attendance.

Bure Valley School

- Publicise the class with the highest attendance figure in the school newsletter.
- Present any pupil who achieves 100% attendance during an academic year at Bure Valley School with a certificate in celebration assemblies at the end of each term.
- Present any pupil with 100% school life attendance with a framed certificate in the Year 6 leavers assembly.

John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School

- Publicise the class with the highest attendance figure in the school newsletter.
- Present a weekly attendance bear to the class with the highest attendance.
- Award a prize to the class with the highest attendance bear awards at the end of the academic year.
- Present any child who achieves 100% attendance during an academic year at John of Gaunt School with a certificate in celebration assembly at the end of each year.

8. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our Federation and our intent to ensure that students/pupils/children at our schools attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Safeguarding policy
- Admissions policy
- Anti-Bullying policy (AHS, BVS and JOG)
- SEND and inclusion policy
- Teaching and Learning policy (BVS)
- Behaviour for Learning policy (AHS, BVS and JOG)
- Home school agreement (BVS and JOG)

9. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [School attendance](#), DfE (2016)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures: statutory guidance](#), DfE (revised March 2017)
- [Norfolk County Council Children Missing Education Practice & Procedures](#)
- ['Keeping Children Safe in Education'](#), DfE (2016)

10. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: Example warning letter FPN for schools

INSERT SCHOOL LOGO

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at school and legal intervention

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers that the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

1. 10 consecutive sessions¹ of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (for absences from 1 September 2017); or
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any pupil at [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] who meets either of the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

¹ Please note that the school day consists of 2 sessions.



Name of School:

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Please note: taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress

Full name of child(ren)

Address

Leave requested from _____ to _____

Total number of school days _____

Reason for application:

I/we have read the information on the reverse of this application and would like to formally request the leave of absence as shown.

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s) _____

Date: _____

The Headteacher will consider your request for leave of absence following government guidelines and the following points

1. The child's previous attendance history
2. The child's stage of education.
3. The time of year (SATS or exams).
4. Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave from their employer.

Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been agreed/not agreed.

Signature of Headteacher _____

Please note: Retain the original signed and completed forms in school records and ensure a copy is returned to the parent/carer of the student to confirm authorisation.

Leave of absence during Term Time

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is however, a discretionary power to allow leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term time. This is not an entitlement and purely at the discretion of the schools head teacher. Schools should not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a student's education or if the absences are during school exam periods and SAT's.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child's education. National statistics show 10 days absence in any academic year does have a negative effect on attainment. Schools are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence; however some schools may choose to do this.

The government advises that any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student's records. As you may be aware unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Discuss with the school any request for leave of absence prior to making a booking. Your child's school may have a designated person for this. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure you receive confirmation from the school before the leave is taken. Do not assume permission is granted if you have not received written confirmation.

Fixed Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence, which is acceptable to the school.

The school will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents/carers are failing in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

The penalty is in the form of a £60 fine per parent/carer per child payable within 21 days, this increases to £120 payable per parent/carer per child within 28 days. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

*(Academic year =school year from September to July)