



Attendance Policy Pennington C of E Primary School (November 2025)

At Pennington C of E Primary School, we believe that all pupils benefit from the education we provide and therefore, from regular school attendance. In order to achieve this, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may impede full attendance are acted on as quickly as possible.

Aims

School aims to ensure that all pupils have an equal right and access to an education in accordance with the National Curriculum. We recognise that the majority of pupils want to attend school to learn; to socialise and interact with their peers; and to prepare themselves fully for their future. We have high expectations of attendance in school and share these expectations regularly with parents and pupils. The school's target for attendance is 98%. This target is regularly reviewed by governors with regard to context of our school and cohorts; and in relation to national statistics.

Expectations

School expects that all our pupils will:

- Attend school regularly;
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day

School expects that parents will:

- Endeavour to keep health appointments out of school hours when possible;
- To take all family holidays and trips out of term time;

- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school;
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child/children attend school regularly;
 - Contact school, as soon as is practical and before 8.35am, whenever their child is unable to attend school.

Parents and children can expect the following from the school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;
- Early contact when a pupil is absent without explanation;
- Action on any attendance problem notified to the school;
- Referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate.

We encourage attendance by:

- Consistent, clear, communication with parents and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt, attendance;
- Formal and informal reporting to parents on individual attendance at various points through the year;
- Setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with governors, parents and pupils;
- Accurate completion of registers at the start of each session;
- Attendance certificates at the end of each term for 100% and also good (98%+) attendance.

The school responds to non-attendance by:

- Contacting parents on the first day of an absence by 9.30am, by telephone, if no reason has been received;
- If there is no response, the school will continue to telephone parents throughout the day. School will also contact other emergency contacts for the pupil on the first day of absence. School holds at least two emergency contacts for every pupil in school;

- If there is cause for concern e.g the child is on a Child Protection Plan the HT and another member of staff will make a home visit to check that everything is ok and that the child is well.
- For the majority of children, if no contact has been made by day two of the absence, the HT, accompanied by another member of staff will attempt a home visit. In the event of no contact being made within 48 hours, the HT will then contact the police;
- Where a pattern of non-attendance or persistent lateness is emerging, the parent/carer will be contacted by school and the issues causing non-attendance or lateness will be discussed at an attendance panel meeting with the headteacher. Any action plan generated at the attendance panel meeting that fails to improve the child's attendance, will result in a full assessment of the children's needs and family circumstances. The headteacher will then contact the Local Authority Inclusion Officer explaining the actions and support provided so far and will discuss the possibility of an Attendance Review Conference. At this stage, it may be agreed that an Early Help Assessment may be the most appropriate intervention to support the family and improve attendance. School will inform the Local Authority Access and Inclusion officer of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's authorisation. All Staff are aware of children missing from education procedures in accordance with our safeguarding practices in school. In accordance with our Supervision of Pupils Procedure, the expectation is that children should arrive on site in the morning no earlier than 8.35am (the bell rings at 8.35 and the gates are opened) and be in classrooms at 8.45 Children should be in classrooms ready for registration at 8.45 am. Children arriving after 8.45 am will be recorded as 'late'. The punctuality of all pupils is regularly monitored. Cases of persistent absence will be reported to the Local Authority Access and Inclusion Officer and school will undertake steps to work with and support families to ensure punctuality improves. Reception class have an arrival window between 8.35 and 8.50 am to allow for a staggered start and personal greeting/informal discussion between parents and staff.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the term 'Traveller'. This includes Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen and Circus People. Absence can be authorised for families identified within this group when travelling for occupational purposes and when this has been agreed with school. However, they are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school. There is also an expectation that pupils can be registered with more than one

school so that absence can be significantly reduced for those undertaking extensive travelling in any academic year.

Leave of Absence in Term Time, including Holidays

The headteacher is not permitted to grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made at least seven days prior to the proposed absence and must be requested in writing using the 'Parent Request for Absence' form available from the school office and published on our school website. The headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave.

The DFE identifies exceptional circumstances as follows:

- Family needs arising from service in the armed forces or from a parent working abroad;
- Family bereavements;
- Exceptional family ceremonies;
- A holiday necessitated due to disability or illness in the family.

If the request is for a family holiday not considered to be identified as exceptional circumstances, and you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this will be recorded as unauthorised leave. All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the headteacher, are accumulated and parents who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The amount of £80 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days and £160 (per parent per child) if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.

In considering the decision whether to authorise, the following will be taken into account:

- Reasons given for the holiday;
- Any holiday leave taken in previous academic years (authorised or unauthorised);
- Your child's previous attendance record; this includes attendance in the current academic year - which should be over 95% - as well as attendance in previous academic years;

- Whether your child will miss any tests/examinations (or important preparation for their tests);
- Whether your child is making good progress; is on track to achieve age related expectations; and how the absence might impact attainment and progress.

All leave of absence requests must be completed on the official form. Letters and emails will not be accepted. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken as leave cannot be authorised retrospectively. The impact of poor attendance has been extensively researched in the UK. Pupil absence figures and both GCSE and primary school test results highlight the importance of clamping down on pupil absence to ensure more pupils regularly attend school, and ultimately leave with the qualifications needed to succeed in modern Britain. A Department of Education report published in 2015 clearly outlined the impact of low attendance: 'Primary pupils with no absence are around 1.5 times more likely to achieve the expected level of attainment and 4.5 times more likely to achieve above the expected level than pupils that missed 15-20% of key stage 2. Parents will be informed in writing of decisions about whether planned absences are to be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Schools are advised that the cost of holidays, work rotas of parents and working in tourism or farming can no longer be considered to be exceptional reasons. We do have concerns, as do other Headteachers, that families may feel they cannot share with schools that they plan to take time off during term time. This could mean that children will not be able to share any experiences they may have had and it could even encourage them to lie about their absence. This is not a situation we would want any of our families or children to be in. Not sharing planned absence from school could also lead to safeguarding issues. If families have not informed school and school cannot contact them for an explanation of absence; school may need to take all necessary steps to ensure the children and family are safe and well.

Policy Review

This policy was agreed by the Governing Body in November 2025
It will be reviewed in November 2026

HS November 2025

Example letters and attendance planning templates are below:

PENNINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL
PENNINGTON
Nr. ULVERSTON
CUMBRIA LA12 ORR.

TEL: 01229 587253
FAX: 01229 588346
Email: admin@penn.cumbria.sch.uk
Web: www.penn.cumbria.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs Helen Storey

Parents address



Date Month Year

Pupils name and date of birth

Re application for leave of absence due to a term time holiday

XXXXX's current school attendance is XXX

Thank you for your request for XXXX to take time off school during term time.

Your application for absence has been unauthorised on this occasion as the reason provided does not meet with the current expectations.

At Pennington C of E Primary School, we follow the government guidelines for school attendance and are guided by the local authority policy.

If your child's absence meets the national threshold, we are required to refer this to the school inclusion officer. The national threshold has been met when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks[1], with one of, or a combination of the following codes:

- a) code G (the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday)
- b) code N (the circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established)
- c) code O (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies) and
- d) code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies).

1. In situations where repeated unauthorised leaves of absence are being taken during the course of year which fall outside the threshold of 10 sessions in 10 school weeks but the total number of sessions missed would be more than 10, The School Inclusion Officer will decide whether issuing a fixed penalty notice is appropriate

[1] A school week means any week (Monday to Sunday) in which there is at least one school session. The 10 school-week period when the national threshold applies may span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

The Head Teacher is not authorised to sanction absences for holidays. Parents who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The amount is £80 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days and £160 (per parent per child) if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.

As a school we expect parents who take children on holiday during term time to ensure that work that is missed will be collected from school and completed, this by no way replaces the teaching your child will have missed but will go some way to ensure a smooth transition back into class.

Yours Sincerely

Helen Storey
Head Teacher

PENNINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL
PENNINGTON
Nr. ULVERSTON
CUMBRIA LA12 ORR.

TEL: 01229 587253
FAX: 01229 588346
Email: admin@penn.cumbria.sch.uk
Web: www.penn.cumbria.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs Helen Storey



2025

Dear Parent/Guardian of,

As you are aware, the government expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance. In previous years we have been able to authorise occasional, one-off term time absences but there has been a change in the government's position on such absences and rules have tightened. Head teachers can only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances and holidays will not be considered.

At Pennington, we follow the county policy and guidelines for managing school absence therefore we cannot authorise any holidays in term time. As your holiday/leave of absence exceeds 5 days, I am required to inform the school inclusion officer who is likely to issue a fine under section 444 of the education act 1996.

The amount of the penalty notice is £160 (per parent, per child). There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay a penalty notice will result in prosecution, except in exceptional circumstances.

I am happy to discuss this with you but you must be aware that guidelines make it clear that holidays should not be taken in term time. The decision to fine will be made by the school inclusion officer.

Yours sincerely

Helen Storey

Head Teacher

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Head Teacher: Mrs Helen Storey



CONFIDENTIAL:

Re: School absences

18th December 2025

Dear Mr and Mrs XXXX

I am writing to inform you that your child's school attendance is at a level that is a cause for concern. XXXX attendance at school from the beginning of the school year in September 2025 to December 2025 was 87.8%.

As a school, we are responsible for recording our pupils' school attendance data in our registers. The school registers are legal documents and its data is forwarded regularly to the department for education and the local authority.

As a result of XXXXs attendance being below 90% we must inform you and hope that we can work together to achieve a higher attendance percentage in the Spring term.

We understand that your child has been absent for a number of reasons and often absence is unavoidable. We have consulted with The School Inclusion Officer from the School Inclusion Team who has advised us on our attendance policy. Where holidays are concerned we are required to refer to the local authority.

Yours Sincerely

Helen Storey
Head Teacher

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holiday in Term Time

Penalty Notices will not be used as an **automatic** sanction against parents who take unauthorised holidays in term time, but may be issued in certain circumstances. Each situation should be considered individually.

Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised on behalf of the proprietor of the school. As from 1st September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Schools must ensure that all literature provided to parents, such as Prospectus, Attendance and Behaviour Policies, Home School Agreements, Newsletters and website information include the warning that parents may be issued with a penalty notice if a leave of absence is taken without permission.

A letter to the parent confirming that a leave of absence has not been authorised must be sent by the **Head teacher** and include a **warning that a penalty notice may be issued**.

If the leave is taken the head teacher may issue a fixed penalty notice for unauthorised leave of absence providing the following criteria apply:

- There have been 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taking during an academic year.

and

- Attendance is below 95% during the preceding 12 weeks before the leave was taken and the absence is unauthorised;

If the head teacher issues a FPN they should send a copy of the notice and the following documentation to the Inclusion Officer for their school:

1. A completed and signed witness statement
2. A signed head teacher's certificate for the period of absence in question
3. A copy of the leave request and the reply
4. A copy of the advisory letter sent to the parent

In the Barrow and South lakes area the schools have given a preference for the Area Inclusion Officer for attendance to issue the FPN.

No more than two penalty notices should be issued to a parent in a twelve month Period for unauthorised leave in term time. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance legal intervention process will be used.

If the fixed penalty notice remains unpaid any decision to prosecute rests with the local authority and tests of sufficiency evidence and public interest will be applied to each case individually. If the local authority is of the view that prosecution is not appropriate then the local authority is required by law to withdraw the Penalty Notice and inform the parents concerned.



Pennington C of E Primary School Bob Smith Attendance Action Plan		DATE OF ACTION PLAN: 26 th September 2016 To run for 6 weeks from 26 th September 2016 to 14 th November 2016	
STUDENT: Bob D.O.B: Year Group:		AIM: To increase attendance	
% ATTENDANCE: % Last 6 weeks		TIMESCALE	DESIRED OUTCOME
AGREEMENT	ACTION	Immediately Immediately Immediately	Bob will be attending school thus increasing attendance to be able to achieve targets set.
PUPIL Luke	Bob needs to attend school every day on time. Bob needs to stay in school for the whole school day. Bob needs to tell the teachers if he is feeling unwell.	Immediately Immediately As and when Immediately	School and parent will share all information relating to Lukes medical needs.
PARENT/CARER	To encourage and ensure Bob attends school every day. To contact school on 1 st day of every absence before 10am. To provide doctors notes for illness. To attend all meetings and respond to calls and texts.	Immediately As and when Immediately	For to attend school every day and on time agreed timetable.
SCHOOL	If is absent and no contact from mum by 10am school to ring to ascertain reason. School to home visit if attendance doesn't increase as and when necessary. Bob to have a visual attendance sticker chart? School to keep accurate attendance data.	Immediately As and when Immediately Immediately	
Local Authority Inclusion Officer	To follow Local Authority process on ensuring school attendance To attend review meeting in school on the 17/4/15	Immediately	



Pennington C of E Primary School

PENALTY NOTICE ACTION PLAN/PARENTING CONTRACT Attendance

STUDENT: D.O.B:

Form Year Group:

% ATTENDANCE: % for year xxx Last 6 weeks xxx

DATE OF ACTION PLAN: To run for 4 weeks from Wednesday xxx to xxx	
AIM: To increase attendance	
AGREEMENT	ACTION
PUPIL	To attend school every day following. xxx to go to bed at xxx
PARENT/CARER	To encourage and ensure xxx attends school every day. To contact school on 1 st day of every absence before 10am. To provide doctors notes for illness. To attend all meetings and respond to calls and texts.
SCHOOL	If is absent and no contact from mum by 10am school to ring to ascertain reason. School to home visit if attendance doesn't increase as and when necessary. xxx to have a visual attendance sticker chart? School to keep accurate attendance data.
Local Authority Inclusion Officer	To follow Local Authority process on ensuring school attendance To attend review meeting in school on the xxx
TIMESCALE	DESIRED OUTCOME
Immediately Immediately	xxx will be attending school thus increasing attendance to be able to achieve targets set.
Immediately Immediately As and when Immediately	School and parent will share all information relating to xxx needs.
Immediately As and when Immediately Immediately	For to attend school every day and on time
Immediately	