

# Attendance Policy



Date of Policy: Nov 2023

Next review date: Nov 2025

## **Introduction**

The Government published new guidance on school attendance in May 2022 in their publication “Working together to Improve School Attendance” which states

*The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education*

*9. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.*

*10. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school*

At Oaklands School we recognise that regular and consistent pupil attendance at school is essential to our pupils making progress in their academic, physical and emotional development. Absence from education disadvantages children and fragments their learning. Pupils are also missing education if they arrive late or leave earlier than the planned school day.

At Oaklands we do recognise that our pupils’ additional medical needs do impact from time to time on their ability to attend school and that where this is the case some pupil’s attendance rates may be lower than pupils in other educational environments.

We also recognise that some of our pupils display challenging behaviour which makes it more difficult for parents to ensure their attendance. At Oaklands we always seek to support parents and to work with health and social care professionals to support parents. It remains however parental responsibility to ensure their children attends school regularly.

## **The effect of pupil absence on welfare and learning**

Any absence affects the pattern of a young person’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil’s absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a young person’s regular attendance at school is the parent’s legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law.

At Oaklands the beginning and end of a school day are particularly important parts of each pupil’s educational programmes as pupils need to be prepared for learning and learning

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needs to be reviewed with the pupil. The end of the school day is also when assembly takes place and are particularly important to enable each pupils to experience being part of the school community.

Where pupils do not attend school regularly enough and parents do not keep us fully informed of the reasons for pupil absence in line with their medical needs the school has a duty to consider this as a safeguarding issue and report it to the appropriate authorities.

If there is a legitimate temporary reason for which children need to arrive at school late parents will be informed of the times at which they may bring thir child to school in line with breaks between lessons so that late arrival does not disrupt teaching.

## **Reporting absence from school**

It is the parent's responsibility to report pupil absence and the reasons for that absence by telephoning the school on the day they are absent. Parents should then keep the school up to date with the details of any continued absence. If a parent does not report absence directly to the school then school will contact parents on the day of absence to ask for information. This call is made by the receptionists. Receptionists send a list of absent children to the relevant Head of School on a daily basis. If actions are required as a result of absence this is carried out by either the Head of School or the relevant Assistant Head.

## **Monitoring attendance**

When the registers have been taken in the morning, a receptionist will cross reference with telephone calls from families. A phone call will be made by the receptionist to families who have not reported a reason why their child is not in school. A written record is kept of all messages phoned into school .

Please note - If a child is absent from school for 2 days and there is no contact from the family and we are unable to contact the family the Head of School informs the relevant social worker or, if there is no social worker, a CFAN should be completed. A home visit will be carried out by one of the schools DSL.

Pupil attendance is discussed with parents formally at annual review meetings.

Regular late arrival of pupils is also considered as absence.

Pupil's attendance is recorded on SIMS s by the receptionist who makes or receives the call from the family. The attendance report is provided to our monthly pupil causing concern meeting.

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## **Attendance causing concern**

Attendance causing concern is reported and discussed at fortnightly PCC meetings. In usual circumstances this is where a pupil's attendance falls below 90% and there is no clearly identified medical reason for this.

Where pupils attendance is causing concern and is below the attendance expected for them parents will be sent an absence letter by the Head Teachers PA. In the primary school **sending letters may be delegated to the primary admin officer**. That pupil's attendance will be reviewed after 4 weeks.

The Head Teacher's PA will produce a summary of attendance actions taken for the pupils causing concern meeting.

The meeting will decide on an appropriate action for instance;

- 2<sup>nd</sup> letter will be sent including a 4 week attendance target with another review date
- An attendance meeting to be set up between the parents and the appropriate senior leader
- A referral to another agency e.g. EWO, social care,

The Heads of school participate in a termly monitoring meeting with Deena Gill, Educational Welfare Officer where students absence is discussed.

## **Absence from school for reasons other than their medical needs or illness**

Parents are informed of their duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly. They are asked not to book any other events during school term time that will result in them being absent from school, and in particular are asked not to book holidays during term time.

If there are unavoidable reasons for absence other than meeting a young person's medical needs then parents need to complete an 'exceptional leave request form' and submit this to the Head Teacher for consideration. The Head Teacher may decide whether there are exceptional reasons for which a pupil needs to be absent, however it is highly unlikely that any holiday would be considered to be an exceptional reason. The parents will receive a reply in writing either giving or not giving permission for the absence. *We reserve the right to ask parents to demonstrate to us why a term time absence is necessary such as medical certification, and/or proof of the planned return date including copies of booked flights.*

Where permission has not been given for absence the pupil's absence is 'unauthorised'

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If a pupil is absent from school for a reason other than illness where permission has not been given then the Local Authority will be informed by sending a copy of the parent's letter requesting permission and a copy of the reply letter sent to parents to the , Education Welfare Officer by the school administrator. The Local Authority will then issue a Fixed Penalty warning letter.

If there is a second incident of another period of absence then both the parent's request, and the copy of the reply and a printout of the register showing the absence is sent to the Deena Gill at the Local Authority and a fine will be levied.

## **Alterations to the timings of the school day**

From time to time some families request alterations to the school day owing to their need to take or collect other family members from educational placements. Such requests may be considered on a case by case basis.

Any request to alter the timing of the school day should be made in writing to the Head teacher. If an alternation to the length of the school day is agreed this will be on a temporary and fixed term basis to provide the family with adequate time to make arrangements so that their child can attend school full time. Agreement for late arrival or early collection will not be given on a permanent basis unless it is for medical reasons.

Where permission is given for late arrival or early collection this will only be at the beginning or end of a lesson on the timetable. Late arrival or early collection during lessons disrupts learning for other children by removing staff from the classroom, and distracting peers.

## **Late Arrival**

We understand that there may be occasions which mean students arrive at school late. If a child arrives after 9.40 when the registers are closed this will be marked as late, this does have an impact on the child's attendance. If a parent brings their child to school once a lesson has begun they may be asked to wait in reception with their child until a member of staff is available to collect them or until the lesson has ended. It is important for all children that their learning in the classroom is not disrupted by staff having to leave the room to collect children. If a parent informs us in advance that a child will be arriving late due to a pre arranged appointment arrangements can be made in these exceptional circumstances. Timings of lessons can be seen below.

## **School refusal**

Where a pupil's school refusal has been identified as a result of an anxiety disorder then the absence will be recorded as illness. All other absence as a result of school refusal is unauthorised. School will however work with parents to support them in bring pupils to

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school and will refer to and liaise with relevant agencies able to work with families towards school attendance.

## **Pupils who Leave Oaklands School**

Where a family informs us that their child is leaving school that child will remain on our register until we are informed of the new school. This absence is unauthorised initially. The welfare officer will send a Child Missing Education Form to the LA. Once the child starts another school they can be removed from our role from the last census date.

Template 1

School Letterhead

Date.....

Dear Parent/Carer,

Name of child.....

DOB .....

Attendance.....%

I am writing to you about your child's school attendance. As I am sure you are aware regular attendance is important so that pupils can maximise their educational opportunities. I note from the school register, your child's attendance is below 90%.

School will continue to monitor your child's attendance and if there is no significant improvement further correspondence will follow.

Please contact the school office if you have any queries regarding this letter.

Yours faithfully

HeadteacherTemplate 2

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School Letterhead

Date.....

Dear Parent/Carer,

Name of child.....

DOB.....

Attendance %.....

Further to my previous letter dated ....., I am writing to express my ongoing concerns regarding.....'s level of school attendance.

School are now setting ..... a % attendance target which we will review on .....

School can only authorise an absence when medical evidence is provided. We do not expect a medical certificate from your GP, however the legal burden lays with the parent to provide: a date stamped appointment card / appointment letter, a label from any prescribed medication for the absence to be authorised.

If your child's attendance does not improve and absences are not authorised you will be invited to a school meeting where a referral to Education Welfare *or, for pupils in the sixth form a referral to social care will be made.*

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher

Template 3

School Letterhead

Date.....

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Dear Parent/Carer,

Name of child.....

DOB.....

Attendance %.....

Further to my previous letters, I am writing to express my ongoing concerns regarding..... 's school attendance. I would therefore like to invite you to a meeting in school with Mr/Mrs.....on .....at.....

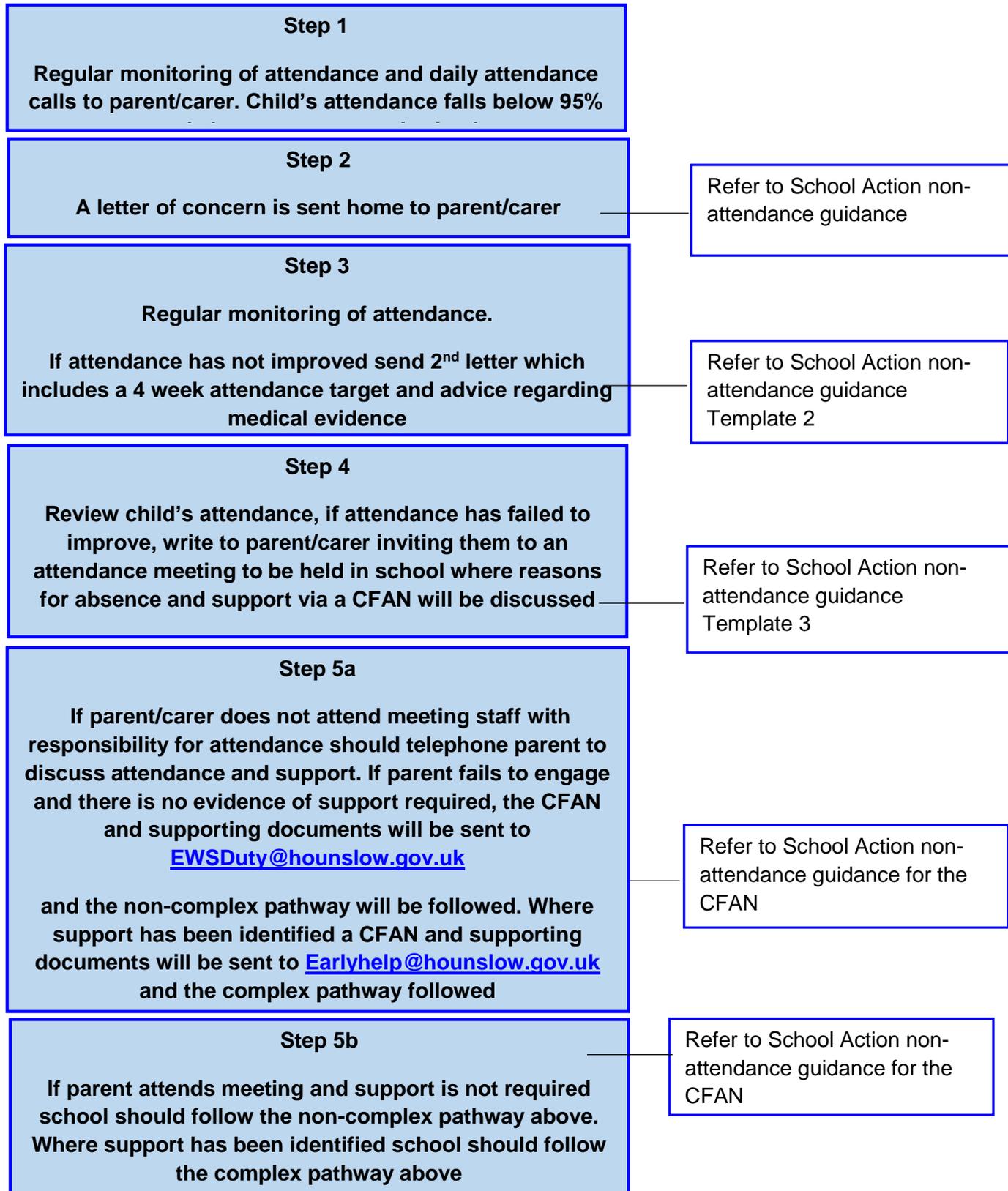
This meeting will give us an opportunity to discuss ways that we can support you in improving your child's attendance and a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

I would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance, however, if this appointment is not suitable please contact the school office to arrange an alternative time.

Yours faithfully, Headteacher

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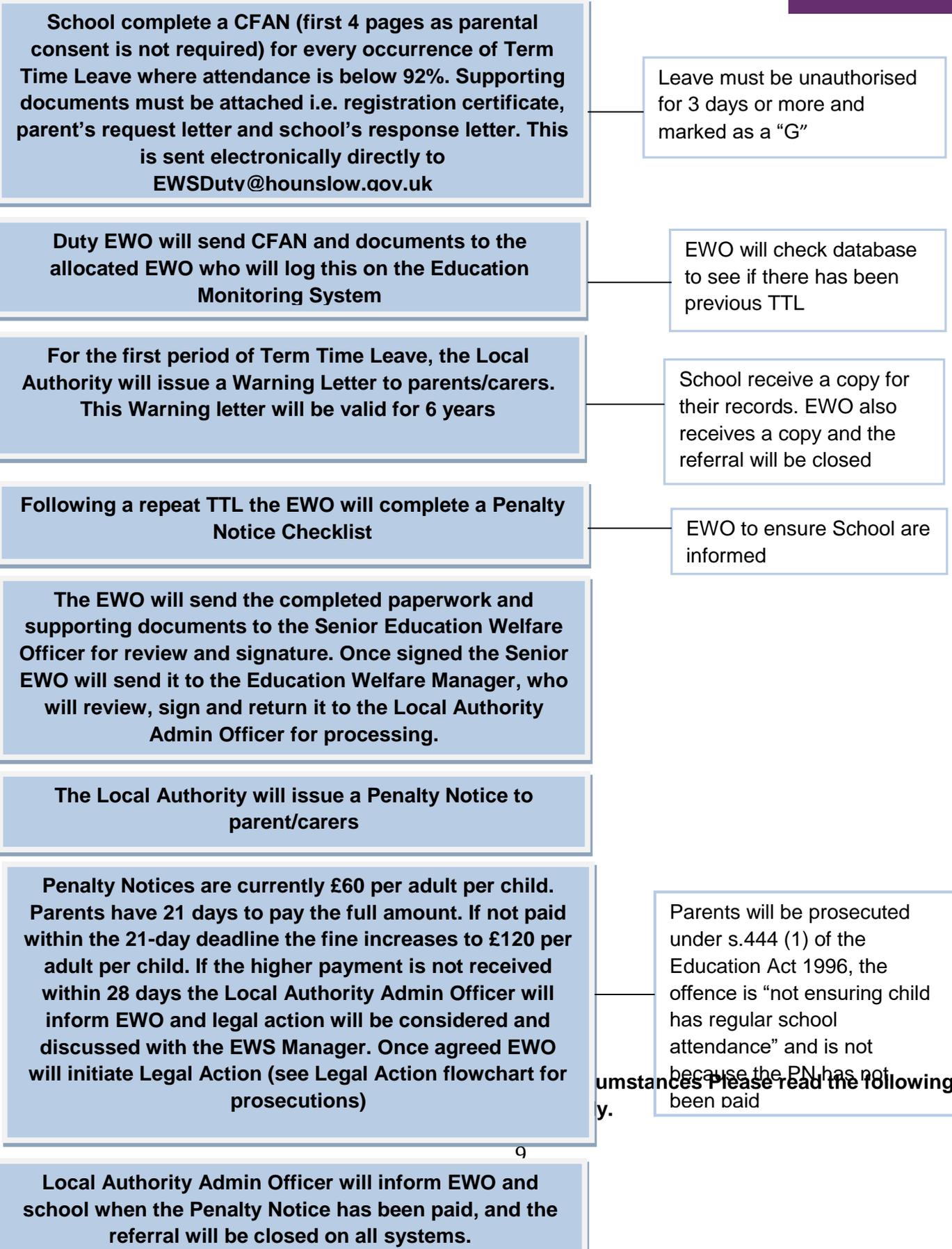
## School Action Non-attendance Flowchart



**Please note, referrals to Education Welfare will only be accepted if attendance is 90% or below, absences have been recorded as unauthorised and supporting evidence attached. For further information please refer to the guidance.**

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## Term Time Leave Penalty Notice Flowchart



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As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the year, pupils are at school for 190 days which means they are at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Please complete and submit this form to request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof of flights and medical detail to support any such request. The Head teacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully, and with due regard to your particular circumstances, including attendance and punctuality to date, and will notify you of the decision.

### **Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice**

<b>Name of Pupil</b>	<b>Class</b>
<b>Siblings in other schools (Name, DOB and name of school)</b>	
<b>Name of Parents:</b>  <b>Telephone number:</b>  <b>Email:</b>	
<b>Dates of exceptional leave request</b>	<b>From:</b> <b>To:</b>
<b>Why are you requesting exceptional leave of absence during term time?</b>	

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<b>Signed by Parent/Carer</b>	
<b>Print Name and Relationship to Child</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>For school use only</b>	
<b>Date request received</b>	
<b>Has the request been considered by the Head Teacher</b>	
<b>Has the request been discussed with the parent/carers</b>	
<b>Number of school days requested</b>	
<b>Number of days authorised</b>	
<b>Number of days unauthorised</b>	
<b>Signed and Date</b>	

New Oaks school day Timings

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Little Oaks	New Oaks
9am	9:15am
9:45am	10am
10:25am	10:45am
11am	11:15am
12pm	
1:15pm	
1:55pm	
2:10pm	

### High Oaks School Day Timings

9.15	Students arrive
9.40-10.20	Lesson 1
10.20 – 10.40	Communication and Snack
10.40 – 11.15	Lesson 2
11.15 – 11.50	Lesson 3
11.50 – 1.20	Lunch/leisure time
1.20 – 1.55	Lesson 4
1.55 – 2.30	Lesson 5
2.20 – 3.10	Lesson 6
3.10 – 3.20	Students Leave