


Mark Rutherford School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Author:	Mrs K Foster
Governor's Committee:	Curriculum and Standards
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Signed (Chair of Committee):	
Signed (Headteacher):	
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ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

We believe that we can improve the life chances of **ALL** students by ensuring that **ALL** staff, students (including Sixth Form) and parents/carers are aware of the importance of and take responsibility for regular attendance and punctuality.

Aims:

- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- To ensure we maximise the potential of all students through promoting excellent attendance and punctuality.
- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at the school in line with agreed targets.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to students and parents/carers through effective use of the Education Welfare Service.
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions that aim to help the school to manage behaviour, promote positive behaviour and encourage good attendance and punctuality
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority with staff, student's parents/carers and students.

LEGISLATION AND DfE GUIDELINES ON WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education Act 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour, Safeguarding and Student Welfare) and Governing Body are responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at our school.

- Reporting school-level absence to the school's Governing Body.

Pastoral staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy to manage attendance.
- Monitoring students' attendance.
- Updating the Attendance Officer (where needed) on pastoral/welfare issues that may impact on a student's attendance to school.
- Liaising with parents/carers and external agencies around attendance concerns.
- Supporting students and their families, offering advice and guidance where needed.
- To ensure all high risk students are accounted for each morning.
- To lead on Attendance Action Plans with students and parents/parents when attendance is below 90%.

The school's Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the pastoral team.
- Works with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Supports pastoral staff in calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.
- Advises pastoral staff when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class Teachers/Tutors:

- Class teachers and Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a lesson by lesson basis, submitting this information via SIMS within the first 10 minutes of the lesson.
- Tutors are responsible for having discussions with their tutees and parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality to school.
- Class teachers are responsible for dealing with lateness and persistent lateness to their lessons.
- Sanctions can be applied by class teachers or Tutors where students do not have a valid reason for lateness. See our Behaviour Policy for possible sanctions.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Promoting excellent attendance and punctuality to school.
- Supporting the school in improving their child's attendance by example by attending meetings or responding to communication.
- Communicating with the school about any issues that may impact upon their child's attendance.
- Informing the school, daily before 7.30 am, if your child is not going to be present for that day/part of that day via the absence hotline on **01234 290200 and then pressing 1.**
- Obtaining medical evidence to support their child's absence when they are absent for four or more days.
- Providing medical evidence for urgent medical appointments during the school day.
- Communicating with your child's Tutor and Year Office if they have any issues to deal with regarding attendance.
- Keeping child home when they have been sick for 24 hours (after last bout of sickness) unless a bug, then 48 hours.

LETTERS HOME

Letters will be sent home to students with low attendance, students with medical evidence for long term illnesses will be taken into account.

- **Letter 1**
 - Under 95% - Initial letter advising and offering support.
- **Letter 2**
 - Under 92% - Advising attendance has not improved and medical evidence may be required if it falls further.
- **Letter 3**
 - Under 90% and requesting medical evidence for all absences thereafter.
- **Letter 4**
 - Fixed Penalty Notice warning letter.

APPROVAL OF TERM-TIME ABSENCE

We know that from analysis of our school results that attendance and attainment are linked. We recognise that exceptional circumstances take place and we acknowledge that applications for leave during term time may be made. Individual circumstances will be looked at and exceptional circumstances will be considered at the discretion of the Headteacher. Please note, that no term time holidays will be authorised, and a fixed penalty notice may also be applied for.

Any applications for exceptional leave in term time will need to include an application to explain the circumstances in taking your child out of school during term time; this can be found in Appendix 1.

The following Bedford Borough link offers parents information about leave of absence in term time:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare-service/school-attendance-and-the-law/leave-of-absence-in-term-time/>

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

Our attendance register is on SIMS, all students on roll are placed onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day (Tutor Time), at the start of each lesson and at the start of the afternoon tutor time. It will mark whether every pupil is:

1. Present
2. Late
3. Attending an approved off-site educational activity
4. Absent
5. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 5 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was

made.

An authorised absence is defined as when the school has given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be absent, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence. Only a school can decide whether an absence is authorised.

An unauthorised absence is when a student is absent from class or school without a satisfactory explanation.

An unauthorised late is when a student arrives to school after the register has closed, which is 30 minutes after the school day starts. At Mark Rutherford School this is 9.00 am.

LEAVING THE SCHOOLS GROUNDS DURING THE DAY

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the day except in cases of emergency. Any students leaving school during the school day must have permission from parents/carers, with the agreement of the Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour, Safeguarding and Student Welfare) or the Head of Year.

If a student leaves site without permission, a sanction may be applied.

If a student is ill, they must always tell a teacher and they will refer them to Student Reception where their condition will be reviewed. Parents/carers will always be contacted prior to the school sending a student home.

Parents should avoid making non-urgent dental/medical appointments during the school day. If a student is late due to an appointment they will receive an authorised absence mark for the whole session unless they have attended morning registration at 8.30am.

A student who arrives late due to such an appointment, or who needs to leave during the school day for an appointment, will need a letter or phone call from home for the school to be able to authorise the absence and the student **must** sign out at the attendance office and leave via Main Reception. Students **must** sign in at the attendance office upon their return having arrived via Main Reception. We would encourage students to register in school prior to any medical appointment to get their attendance mark, which will limit the impact on their overall attendance.

PUNCTUALITY

Students must be on the school premises for 8.25am and be in tutor bases for morning registration by 8.30am. If a student arrives after this point they will be marked late. The registers will be closed at 9.00am and after this point the student will receive an unauthorised absence mark, unless they are late due to an authorised absence, such as a medical appointment.

Lateness to school and lessons is also monitored. We encourage good punctuality by ensuring students are rewarded in line with the school's Reward Policy with regular attendance/punctuality rewards in assemblies.

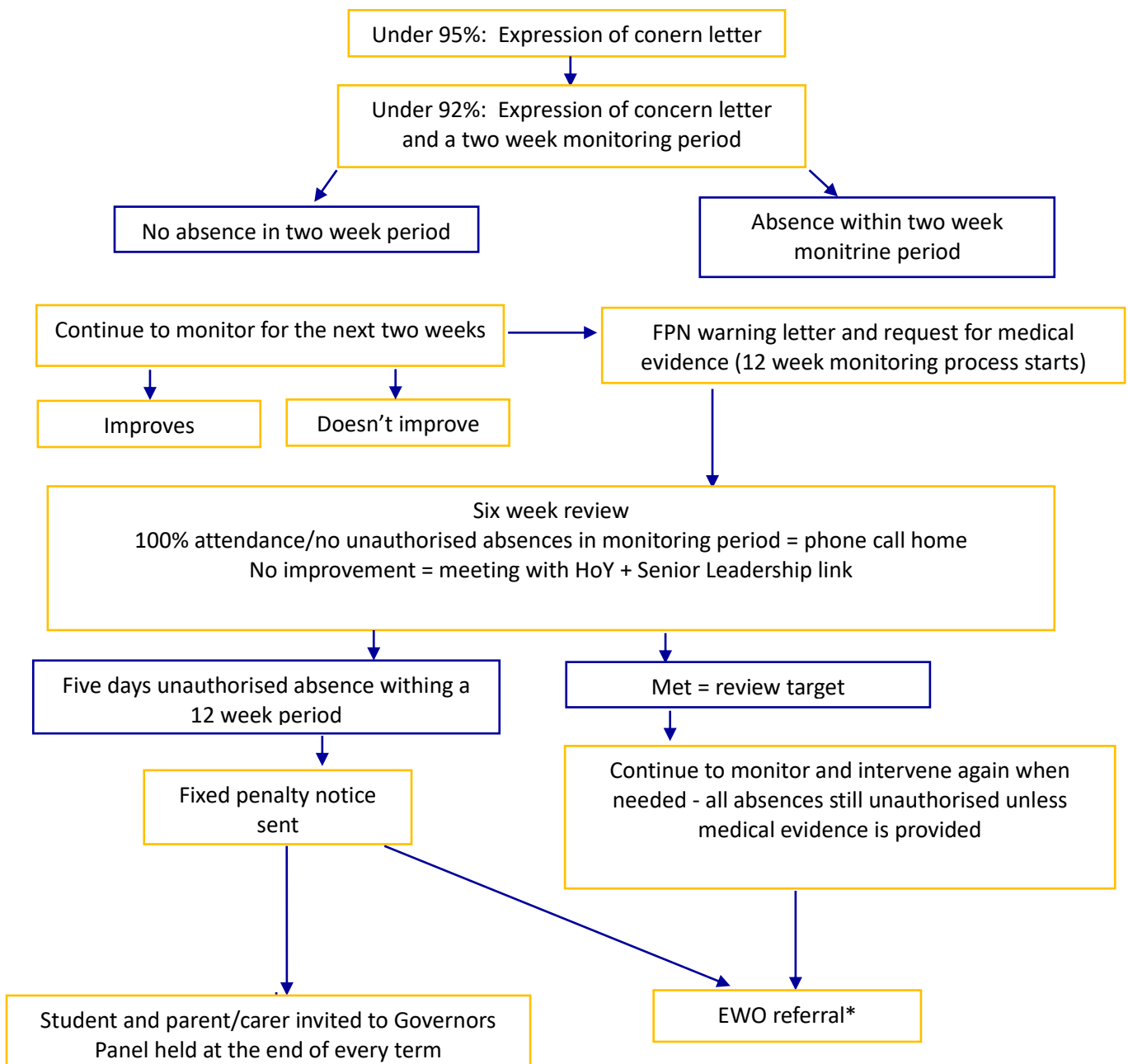
TRUANCY

Truancy is when a student absents themselves from school or a lesson without good reason and without permission from home or school. This will be dealt with by a sanction and recorded on Class Charts (see Truancy Protocol Appendix).

REDUCING ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Absence from school is a major concern as it impacts directly on the achievement and attainment of students.

Please see below the escalation pathway when school attendance falls below 95%.



* Mark Rutherford School have the right to involve the EWO at any point within the attendance referral process.

Within the school we have a number of staff that will help support this process and deal with attendance and punctuality issues. The school's Attendance Officer is the first point of contact for all parents/carers when their child is absent. Parents/carers will be contacted via our In Touch messenger service if no reason for absence is provided that morning. Parents/carers may also receive a phone call from the school to discuss the reason of the absence for that day.

Where we have concerns about attendance and/or punctuality these will be addressed through fortnightly meetings with the student's Head of Year, the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer. It is at these meetings that persistent absentees (any students with attendance below 90%) are identified and support is put in place.

Any support which is put in place can only be successful with the parent/carer's support and we are keen to work collaboratively to maintain a high level of attendance of at least 95%. It is therefore vital that concerns are addressed early so that they can be supported.

LEGAL SANCTIONS

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a school, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute.

REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

It is important to ensure that students are rewarded for positive attendance. Mark Rutherford School reinforces positive attendance in the following ways:

- Punctuality certificates are rewarded each term to students that are on time every day and for every lesson within the previous term.
- Reward assemblies focus on tutor group attendance whereby classes are rewarded and recognised on improvement in attendance over time.

APPENDIX 1

Leave of Absence Request Form: Term Time

Dear Parent/Carer,

Time off from school for a family holiday is not a right as a parent/carer. Please complete this form and return it to us at least four (4) weeks before the date of when you are requesting the period of absence to start.

In relation to your request, please note:

- We may ask that you attend an interview with the Headteacher or another senior member of staff.
- You are required to provide supporting evidence, e.g. confirmation of travel details.
- You must complete a separate application for each child in our school.

Holiday absences that have not been agreed will be coded as unauthorised and may be referred to Bedford Borough Council for a penalty notice or other action to be considered.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Rutherford School

Section 1: Child's Details

Child's Full Name:

Year/Tutor Group:

Date of Birth:

Home Address:

.....

Period of Absence (inclusive):

From:

To:

Section 2: Reason for Request

Please outline the reason for requesting a leave of absence during term time. If this is for a family holiday, please outline why this is an exceptional circumstance.

Section 3: Leave of Absence Return Slip

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your term time leave of absence has been carefully considered. Please find outlined below our decision.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Rutherford School

Child's Full Name:

Year/Tutor Group:

Requested Period of Absence (inclusive):

From:

To:

Leave of absence:

Has been granted

Has not been granted

Reason (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....

Signed (Headteacher):

Date:

APPENDIX 2

Improving Attendance – Action Plan

Date of Meeting:

Present:

Pupil:	Form Group:	
Name of Parent:	Form Tutor:	
Contact Number:	Head of Year:	
Attendance Level (%)	Authorised (%)	Unauthorised (%)

Reasons for Absence:	Illness
	Friends/Peers
	Teachers
	Lessons
	Getting to School
	Family
	Medical
Other	

Strategies to improve attendance	
Target Attendance for period ending:	
Review Date: Meeting with parents /Phone call home	

Signature:

Parent.....Student.....School.....

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

	Strategy	Comments	Dates
Parents/Carers			
1	Alarm clock/get up earlier		
2	Change in bedtime routine		
3	Do not book holidays in term time		
4	Provide rewards/privileges for good attendance		
5	Visit GP		
6	Make more time to talk to student		
7	Provide assistance with getting to school		
8	Bring into school and ensure meets member of staff		
9	Phone school if absent or suspect may not arrive.		
School			
10	Attendance Report		
11	Mentor/link Person		
12	Buddy		
13	Place of safety		
14	Special responsibility		
15	Discussion with Tutor/subject teacher		
16	Modification of registration		
17	Modification of curriculum/timetable		
18	Change of tutor group		
19	Extra-curricular activities		
20	Additional careers advice		
21	Work experience		
22	Targeted first day response		
23	Meet with school nurse		
25	Customised reward/privilege for good attendance		
Student			
26	Make sure you are ready for school		
27	Complete own attendance chart		
28	Discuss any problems as soon as possible with member of school staff		
29	Keep diary – bullying, difficulty with lessons, etc.		

APPENDIX 3

Timings of the school day

Lesson	Timings
Tutor	08.30 – 09.00
Period 1	09.00 – 10.00
Period 2	10.00 – 11.00
Break	11.00 – 11.20
Period 3	11.20 – 12.20
Period 4	12.20 – 13.20
Lunch	13.20 – 13.50
Period 5	13.50 – 14.50
Tutor	14.50 – 15.00

APPENDIX 4



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

BEDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL AUTHORITY

PENALTY NOTICE

CODE OF CONDUCT

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In law an offence occurs if a parent/carer* fails to secure a child's attendance at school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Parents/carers are supported by school, Local Authority Services and Partner Agencies to overcome barriers to regular attendance.

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated Local Authority Officers, Headteachers (and Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by them) and the police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004. Penalty Notices (Sections 444A & 444B) supplement the existing sanctions to enforce attendance at school currently available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.

The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to requirements of the Human Right Act 1998 and all other Equal Opportunities legislation.

The Local Authority has the prime responsibility for developing a protocol within which all partners named in the Act will operate and has responsibility for the overall administration of the Penalty Notice Scheme.

This local code sets out the procedures and terms under which Penalty Notices can be issued in Bedford Borough. Authorised persons should issue Penalty Notices in compliance with this code in order to ensure that the powers are consistently applied.

PROCEDURES FOR ISSUING PENALTY NOTICES

Bedford Borough Education Welfare Service, in consultation with schools (and other agencies where appropriate), will be responsible for the decision to issue Penalty Notices. This will ensure consistency in the delivery of the scheme; avoid school-home conflicts and ensure that the Penalty Notices are not being issued when the process towards court prosecution has already started. The Education Welfare Service will receive requests to issue Penalty Notices from schools, the police and neighbouring Local Authorities. These requests will be considered provided that:

- All relevant and evidential information is supplied.
- The circumstances of the pupil's absence meets the requirements of this protocol.
- The issuing of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies or other enforcement sanctions already being processed.
- The requirements of the cross border protocols are met.

The Education Welfare Service will respond to all requests within ten working school days of receipt and where all criteria are met will:

- Give a formal written warning to the parent/carer* of the possibility that a Penalty Notice will be issued.
- In the same letter, where relevant, set a period of fifteen school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
- Issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the fifteen day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of **unauthorised** absence.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate:

- When the pupil has taken holiday during term-time and the absence has not been authorised by the school, providing the school has taken into account government and Local Authority guidance to inform its decision making.
- Following a Truancy Patrol when the school has recorded the absence of the pupil as unauthorised.
- In the early stages of intervention where the School or Education Welfare Service believes that the sanction will lead to an improvement in attendance, e.g. persistent late arrival at school; parents/carers failure to attend/co-operate at a parenting contract meeting.

In the case of poor attendance the use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per pupil in an academic year. If more than one parent/carer* has parental responsibility, both parents will receive a Penalty Notice (i.e. one per parent/carer per child). In situations where there is more than one pupil in a family with irregular school attendance, multiple Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parents during the year. However, this action must be subject to careful consideration and co-ordination. There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a warning on the possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

If the Penalty Notice is being issued for unauthorised leave of absence (coded in the register with G) then a Penalty Notice can be issued for each period of leave of absence during an academic year. Subject to the criteria below.

To ensure consistent delivery of Penalty Notices, the following criteria will apply:

- At least ten sessions (five school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the last twelve school weeks.
- Except in cases of unauthorised leave of absence or exceptional circumstances, the parent/caer* will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being given and a maximum of fifteen school days to effect an improvement.

PROCEDURE FOR WITHDRAWING PENALTY NOTICES

A Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- When it has been issued to the wrong person.
- When the use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this protocol.
- It contains a material error.
- When it has not been paid, and the Local Authority has not and does not intend to instigate proceedings.

PAYMENT OF PENALTY NOTICES

The arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice (a notice served by post is deemed to have been received on the second day after posting it by first class post).

The Local Authority will retain any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs.

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the immediate prosecution of parents/carers* under the provisions of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 unless:

- The notice was materially defective.
- The Local Authority has not started legal proceedings and has no intention of doing so.

POLICY AND PUBLICITY

The deployment of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Local Authority's Attendance Strategy. **All school attendance policies should include information on the deployment of Penalty Notices which should be brought to the attention of parents/carers.** The Local Authority will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional information material.

REPORTING AND REVIEW

The Education Welfare Service will report at regular intervals on the deployment and outcomes of the use of Penalty Notices. The Service Annual Report will include information and analysis of the use of the Notices.

A review of the deployment of the Penalty Notices will be undertaken at regular intervals and the strategy amended as appropriate.

*Definition of a parent:

Section 576, Education Act 1996 defines a parent as:

- All natural parents, whether named or not.
- Any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in Children Act 1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of the child or young person. A person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered a parent in education law.

Throughout this document 'parent' means each and every person referred to within this definition.

September 2014

APPENDIX 5

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious

		observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day