

Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST)

Attendance Policy for Eggbuckland Community College

Mission Statement

Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) holds a deep-seated belief in education and lifelong learning. Effective collaboration, mutual support and professional challenge will underpin our quest to ensure that all of the students and adults we serve are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential and succeed in life.

Person(s) responsible for updating the policy:	Richard Woodland, Director of Inclusion
Date Approved:	January 2023
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Status:	Guidance

WeST Core Values

WeST holds four core values which underpin the engagement, motivation and retention of employees, no matter what their role in the organisation.

- **Collaboration**
Creating a shared vision and working effectively across boundaries in an equitable and inclusive way to skilfully influence and engage others. Building and securing value from relationships, developing self and others to achieve positive outcomes.
- **Aspiration**
Having high expectations, modelling the delivery of high quality outcomes. Showing passion, persistence and resilience in seeking creative solutions to strive for continuous improvement and excellence.
- **Integrity**
Acting always with the interests of children and young people at our heart, and with a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles. Communicating with transparency and respect, creating a working environment based on trust and honesty.
- **Compassion**
Recognising need in others and acting with positive intention to promote well-being and improve outcomes.

Providing Accessible Formats

If you are unable to use this document and require it in a different format, please contact the Director of Inclusion.

Attendance Policy on a Page

Why is attendance important?

Excellent attendance at school is linked to better academic progress and attainment by ensuring pupils access a broad, balanced and knowledge-rich curriculum. It also ensures that pupils can benefit from the extra-curricular activities on offer at school that promote good social and emotional development.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child has an appropriate education. For most children in the UK this means full-time attendance at school.

How is attendance recorded?

Schools have a legal duty to take an attendance register twice a day. This is recorded on an electronic system called SIMS. Attendance is recorded each school day for an 'AM' and 'PM' mark. Where a pupil is absent from school the reason for this absence must be established as soon as possible and recorded on the SIMS attendance record.

When should pupils attend school?

Pupils should attend on all school days as set out in the term dates available on the school website. Pupils should arrive by 08.35am. The morning registration period is open for 30 minutes from this time. Pupils who arrive after this period will be marked as late (L – Late before the register closes. U – Late after the register has closed).

What should happen if a child cannot attend school?

Parents¹ should inform school as soon as possible that their child is unable to attend by 'phoning 01752 720053. If a child is absent for more than one day parents should continue to update the school of the reason why daily.

Can a child miss school for a medical or dental appointment?

Wherever possible medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours. Where absence to attend an appointment is unavoidable the pupil should miss as little of the school day as possible. School should be informed of the appointment in advance and the pupil should be 'signed-out' at the time of the appointment.

Parents should email studentabsence@egguckland.com (courtesy copy (CC) their child's tutor), stating:

- Date and time of appointment
- Time that they need to leave school
- If they are independently walking or being collected (if so, by whom).
- Time they are expected to return to school.

Can a child miss school for a family holiday?

The law only allows Headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. These reasons are listed in the main attendance policy. Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) does not support the authorisation of term-time holidays. If a parent is determined to take their child out of school for a family holiday, then they should use the correct form to inform the Headteacher in advance. Should a request for holiday be refused it is likely that a fixed penalty notice will be issued to both parents.

What about children from forces families?

WeST recognises that special consideration should be given to the children of members of our armed forces. Headteachers will follow government guidance when considering request from forces families for children to be absent from school.

¹ The definition of a parent can be found in the Education Act 1996, and this applies to the legislation to which this policy relates. In addition to the child's birth parents, references to parents in this policy include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) who has care of the child. To reflect this, this policy uses 'parent' to refer to both parents and carers

Who is responsible for attendance?

All staff members at Egguckland Community College have, the responsibility to promote, support and emphasise the importance of attendance.

Staff with explicit responsibility for overseeing attendance are:

Simon Crawford – Vice Principal for Pastoral

Voirrey Kinrade – Attendance & Student Movement Lead

Sharon Rees – Attendance Administrator

Holly Pinion - Attendance Administrator

Safeguarding

James Yates – Assistant Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Kim Gibson – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Jasmine Ball - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Purpose

Excellent attendance allows children to access the opportunities provided by the school through its curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

This policy sets out the responsibilities of all members of the school community in ensuring excellent attendance. It establishes the legal framework and the responsibilities of all parties to promote, maintain and monitor attendance. It also lays out the school's response to poor attendance.

Linked Documents and Guidance

DfE (September 2022) [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

Contents

- Section 1: The principles and legal framework around attendance.
- Section 2: Roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in improving attendance and punctuality.
- Section 3: Expectations and processes of managing attendance and following up on unexplained absence.
- Section 4: Absence, Persistent and Severe Absence and support for pupils and parents
- Section 5: Parental guidance for holiday requests.
- Section 6: Strategies for promoting school attendance
- Section 7: Post-16 attendance.
- Appendix 1: Template letters:
 - a) Stage 1 – Attendance Concern
 - b) Stage 2 – Persistent Absence
 - c) Medical Evidence
 - d) Lateness
- Appendix 2: Absence request form

Section 1: The Principles and Legal Framework Around Attendance

We expect the highest level of attendance and punctuality from every pupil. High levels of attendance will provide the opportunity for each pupil to develop their full potential during their time at school. Parents², staff, pupils and those in governance must do all in their power to ensure this objective is achieved in line with the legal framework governing attendance and punctuality

The legal framework governing attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full-time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance³ at school or otherwise.”

Section 444 further states that:

“The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law.”

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- The pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence)
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parent belongs
- The absence meets the criteria set out for children of Traveller groups such as Gypsy/Roma families

Failure to comply may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court where on conviction each parent would be liable to a fine up to £2500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

The Act also places a legal obligation on:

- The Local Authority (LA) to provide and enforce attendance
- Schools to register attendance and notify the LA of a child's absence from school without authorisation of 10 or more days.
- Those in governance to make sure that school registers are kept; one for attendance and one for admissions.

² The definition of a parent can be found in the Education Act 1996, and this applies to the legislation to which this policy relates. In addition to the child's birth parents, references to parents in this policy include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) who has care of the child. To reflect this, this policy uses 'parent' to refer to both parents and carers

³ Whilst there is no legal definition of 'regular attendance' this was addressed in the [Supreme Court judgement](#) around term-time holidays in the case of *Isle of Wight v. Platt*

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees of Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) will:

- Review and agree the Attendance Policy regularly following advice from the WeST Director of Education

WeST Hub Advisory Boards (HABs) will:

- Monitor the implementation of the WeST Attendance Policy, and local school procedures
- Monitor school-level attendance against WeST targets
- Monitor local school attendance data and procedures for equal opportunity issues

The WeST Director of Inclusion (DoI) will:

- Review and revise the WeST Attendance Policy regularly (in accordance with the review schedule) and ensure that local adaptations are in place across all schools in the trust
- Monitor the attendance at each school to identify any patterns in the attendance of groups of pupils which may require targeted intervention
- Work with staff in schools to implement targeted interventions to improve attendance
- Report to the HABs three times a year on the attendance of schools within the hub

The Headteacher will:

- Set a school attendance target as directed by the WeST Executive Leadership Team
- Monitor progress of attendance of all pupils

The Assistant Principal for Safeguarding and the Attendance Lead will:

- Oversee the attendance arrangements
- Work with school staff to ensure the efficient running of the attendance system
- Make periodic checks of the registers to monitor pupil absence
- Make periodic checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence
- Deal with issues of inadequate registering
- Arrange appropriate training for staff
- Determine whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made
- Notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence
- Initiate strategies to improve attendance and train staff accordingly
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) over persistent absentees after school action has taken place. Referrals to the service need to be made by electronic means.
- Liaise with the Local Authority (LA) and police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school

They may also carry out home visits to check on the welfare of a pupil

In secondary schools Heads of Year will:

- Ensure that all pupil absences are noted and that communication (absence notes/ emails/ calls) is received from parents
- Make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering
- Make regular checks on absence notes
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with
- Contact parents over pupil absences where appropriate
- Liaise with the senior leader in charge of attendance to review patterns of attendance/punctuality and agree appropriate intervention strategies

They may also carry out home visits to check on the welfare of a pupil

Tutors/Class Teachers will:

- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately
- Follow up cases of unaccounted for absence or unacceptable notes
- Inform appropriate colleagues (Senior Staff on Call) of any signs of suspected truancy
- Inform appropriate colleagues (Heads of Year or Inclusion Team) of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences and lateness
- Make pupils aware of their attendance at regular intervals

In schools using Lesson Monitor for lesson-by-lesson registration teaching staff will:

- Inform Redflag (Attendance & Inclusion staff members) of the names of pupils who are absent without notification
- Be responsible for the accurate official registration of pupils at the beginning of each lesson, using Class Charts
- Welcome any pupil with long term absence back into the classroom without question ensuring that they can be supported to catch up missed work

The Attendance Officer will:

- Enter attendance/absence data into SIMS
- Prepare attendance records for tutors
- Prepare reports as required for the Headteacher and others
- Contact parents on the first day of absence
- Support targeted pupils
- Use 'broken weeks' analysis to consider whether to advise targeted intervention where there are attendance concerns, especially early in the academic year when % attendance may be skewed by the low number of school sessions
- When attendance falls below 96%, consider whether to send a Stage 1 – Attendance Concern Letter (see appendix 1a) taking advice from colleagues as necessary
- When attendance falls below 90%, consider whether to send a Stage 2 – Persistent Absence Letter (see appendix 1b) taking advice from colleagues as necessary
- Notify tutors/class teachers of any patterns of absence
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) over persistent absentees after school action has taken place. Referrals to the service need to be made by electronic means.
- Monitor missing marks and notify the Assistant Principal, the teacher responsible for the register and their line manager weekly.

They may also carry out home visits.

The SENDCO will:

- Support pupils on the SEND register who have regular patterns of non-attendance
- Be involved in any re-integration programme, where deemed necessary
- Advise on or support with first day of absence calling for pupils with SEND

They may also carry out home visits to support the welfare of a pupil

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will:

- Liaise with the school staff regarding concerns over pupil absence
- Support the school in improving the attendance of its pupils
- Work with parents to ensure good school attendance
- Attend timetabled meetings with school staff to deal with attendance/punctuality and welfare issues
- Advise the school as to its legal obligations and complete appropriate paperwork for any legal proceedings

They may also carry out home visits.

Pupils are required to:

- Attend all sessions in the school year unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('Attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session)

Parents are required to:

- Be responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually in accordance with their legal obligations
- Make any request for leave of absence on the school's official leave of absence form
- Telephone school on the first day of absence and any subsequent days
- Provide a note to cover any absence
- Plan holidays outside of term time
- Attend any meetings organised by the school and/or EWO to create an action plan to improve attendance

Section 3: Expectations and processes of managing attendance and following-up on unexplained absence.

Expected Attendance

The Law requires schools to be open to pupils for 190 days each year. Each day a legal register is taken for the 'AM' and 'PM' session. In addition, registers are taken for lesson attendance. All registers are recorded electronically on a database called SIMS. This information constitutes the legal attendance register for the school as such is shared with the LA and government for their reporting and monitoring purposes. The times of the daily registration are:

- Morning session, 'AM Registration': from 08:40 to 09:10
- Afternoon session, 'PM Registration': from 12:25 to 12:55

Overall attendance is calculated on the legal requirement for pupils to attend 190 school days per year. As each day consists of two sessions ('AM' and 'PM') there are a total of 380 possible sessions in a school year. Therefore, if a pupil is ill for three days in a year, their attendance would be 98.4% because 3 days is 6 missed registration sessions and $(374/380) \times 100 = 98.4\%$ attendance.

The Department for Education defines any pupil with below 90% attendance as Persistently Absent, and any pupil with attendance below 50% as Severely Absent.

Monitoring

Parents may request an up-to-date attendance report at any time during the school year. Please contact the Attendance Officer to request this. Parents can also check their child's attendance, daily an in 'real-time', on the Class Charts App.

The school will have regular checks to monitor attendance, including;

- Daily checks for absence carried out by the Attendance Administrator. Parents of pupils coded N (no reason yet provided) or O (unauthorised absence) for that day will first receive an In-Touch message to the email address on record, from Sharon Rees, asking for an explanation for their child's absence. *In some cases, a further phone call to parents will made that day for safeguarding purposes.*
- Attendance concern letters will be sent to parents where the school has not received a reason for a student's absence from school (N – No reason yet provided). If no reason is provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (O – unauthorised absence).
- Attendance concern letters are sent to parents to inform them when their attendance falls below 96%, subject to consideration of individual circumstances
- Persistent absence letters are sent for information purposes, once a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, subject to consideration of individual circumstances
- Pupils falling below 90% attendance, are placed into an attendance priority category. These pupils, and their parents may be asked to meet with pastoral, SEND or attendance staff, where barriers to attendance will be discussed, targets set, and support agreed as appropriate to improve attendance.
- Each week the Attendance Lead will analyse data patterns of attendance across the school by pupil groups to highlight areas for improvement.
- In line with DfE school census guidance at the end of each academic year, registers are reset, and attendance is started again for the next academic year. However, attendance concerns will be considered on a rolling 12-month basis.

WeST has access to all school attendance registers daily. WeST schools are participating in the Department for Education (DfE) data sharing trial. As such school attendance records, held on SIMS, are being shared with the DfE via the WONDE platform. The school provides attendance data to the LA and DfE at regular intervals during the academic year as part of statutory school accountability processes.

Truancy

A pupil is deemed to be truanting when they are not where they are expected to be, as shown by their timetable, and does not have permission to be elsewhere.

- Pupils who truant from lessons, or leave the school site, are marked as an unauthorised absence
- Parents are informed
- Truancy will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy

Punctuality

It is important to make the distinction between a late that occurs during the official registration period and a late that occurs after the official registration period. The registration period covers the time between 08:35 and 09:05 during the morning session.

The Attendance Administrator will ensure the appropriate late code is recorded on SIMS:

- 'L' where a pupil arrives late but during the morning registration period (08:40 and 09:15). This does not affect the pupil's overall attendance figure.
- 'U' where a pupil arrives later after the morning registration period has closed (i.e. after 09:10 am)⁴. This will affect the pupil's overall attendance figure.

Pupils who become persistently absent will have parents contacted by the Attendance Administrator. After the day of contacting, any lateness will be marked U on SIMS.

Pupils that arrive late for morning registration (08:40-09:10) should go to Main Reception and be recorded as in school. Staff should record this late (L) and include the time, on Class Charts. A signing in slip will be given to the student, who should then report directly to the lesson in session at that time. The signing in slip should be presented to the class teacher.

Pupils who arrive late after the morning registration period (i.e. after 09:10) should also sign-in at Reception and will be marked as 'U'.

All students arriving late to school will be issued a same day, after school detention for 30 minutes. Parents will be notified via the Class Charts application. In instances where the reason for being late was unavoidable, please contact Main Reception (01752 779061). On occasions where the reason for lateness is a). unavoidable and b). not within the control of the student, the detention will be removed.

Signing out

There must always be an accurate record of all pupils on-site. Pupils must sign-out if they are leaving the school site.

Staff will follow normal safeguarding procedures to ensure the safety of pupils asking to leave the site. Pupils should be signed out at Reception, producing proof of why they are leaving (an appointment card, note or such) if it is not already marked on SIMS.

If no proof can be provided, it will be necessary for staff to contact parents to confirm.

A signing out slip will be provided in all instances where the student has signed out correctly at Main Reception. Failure to sign out correctly will be deemed as truancy and marked as an unauthorised absence.

Long-term Medical Absence

When a pupil is absent because of long-term illness, or an under-lying health condition an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) may be written alongside the parent and other appropriate stakeholders. This should provide a structure for the pupil to be re-integrated back into the classroom. An IHCP should only be completed once diagnosis is confirmed and the prognosis given by the medical team supporting the pupil.

⁴ There may be occasions where the 'C' code (other authorised circumstances) is used, e.g. if lateness is known to be the result of a pupil acting as a young carer. Such cases need to be carefully considered and a record of the decision-making should be available for external scrutiny.

Section 4: Absence, Persistent and Severe Absence and support for pupils and parents

Absence

We understand that pupils may be genuinely absent for obvious reasons, including: poor health or illness; bereavement; and other exceptional circumstances. Parents are required to inform the school as soon as possible of their child's absence. They must also give a reason for the absence. Pupils missing registration will be initially coded 'N' (No reason given), until an explanation has been given from the parent. It can then be changed to the appropriate code, for example 'I' (Illness). 'N' marks should be changed to 'O' (absent without authorisation) after 5 days if no reason has been identified for the absence.

Where a pupil becomes persistently absent (less than 90% attendance) due to illness, then the school may invite parents to provide medical evidence for any further absence. Medical evidence may include items such as a doctor's notes or certificates or hospital appointment letters.

Leave of Absence

The Headteacher can only grant leave of absence in very exceptional cases. Headteachers should make decisions with due regard for the individual circumstances and attendance profile of the pupil concerned.

Should families wish to apply for leave of absence, a request form (see Appendix 2) can be collected from Main Reception at least two weeks prior to the date leave is required. If you are unable to visit the school please contact the Attendance Administrator at studentabsence@eggbuckland.com, to request an electronic copy. The form should be returned to the Attendance Administrator, who will consult with the Pastoral Leader and the Attendance Lead before representing the case to the Headteacher. Parents will be advised of the outcome. Should parents wish to appeal this decision, this should be addressed in writing to the Headteacher as part of the WeST complaints process.

Support for pupils not maintaining expected levels of attendance

Pupils will face a graduated level of support to meet their need for improving attendance. The most effective support is when clear lines of communication are established between all parties involved. The strategies we can employ will include (but are not limited to the following)

Attendance above 97%:

- Regular discussions between pupil and tutors
- Rewards and incentives (see section 4)

Attendance below 96% (Attendance Concern):

- Having given due consideration to the individual circumstances the Attendance Administrator and Attendance Lead will send a Stage I - Attendance Concern letter (see appendix 1a) home to inform parents about their child's attendance, and that there is a risk of underachievement for their child if their attendance does not improve.

Attendance below 90% (Persistent Absence):

- Having given due consideration to the individual circumstances the Attendance Administrator and Attendance Lead will send a Stage 2 – Persistence Absence letter (see appendix 1b) home to inform parents about their child’s attendance, and that there is a serious risk of underachievement for their child if their attendance does not improve.
- Heads of Year will contact home and record reasons for absence.
- Heads of Year will meet with pupils to discuss barriers to attendance.
- Medical Evidence letters (see appendix 1c) may be sent.
- Parents may be invited to attend an Individual Attendance Plan meeting (IAP), a Team Around Me (TAM), or an Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) meeting, where barriers to attendance can be discussed and solutions offered.
- Where SEMH or other medical need is identified, referral to the appropriate agency may be supported. For example, counselling, CAMHS or other pupil services.
- Reduced timetables may only be offered pupils with a medical or SEMH need. They should only be used for the shortest time possible to allow a successful re-integration and must not be used as response to poor behaviour⁵
- Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority (LA) will be made aware and may contact families directly. They may also carry out home visits.
- Heads of Year, EWO and other staff may carry out a home visit to help support pupils and families.

⁵ See DfE Guidance (September 2022): [Behaviour in Schools](#)
WeST Attendance Policy (January 2023)

Section 5: Parental Guidance for holiday requests

WeST believes that students benefit from full-time attendance at school so that they can access a broad, balanced and knowledge rich curriculum that promotes academic progress and attainment. Excellent attendance also ensures that pupils can benefit from the extra-curricular activities on offer at school that promote good social and emotional development. As such, WeST does not encourage its Headteachers to authorise requests for term-time holidays. Whilst WeST recognises that Headteachers may legally authorise such request in exceptional circumstances it is highly unlikely that this will be the case. This stance is in line with DfE guidance⁶ (paragraph 30, page 13);

“As head teachers should only grant leave of absences in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday”

- From September 2013, the Government has legislated that no holidays will be authorised in term time⁷
- Holidays not agreed by the school, but taken, are unauthorised absences and shown in the register by code ‘G’
- If parents take their children on holiday during term time the Headteacher will request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)
- The school will act according to DfE and LA advice should there be any changes in legislation
- The school may undertake unannounced an home visit where there is reason to believe a child is absent because of an unauthorised holiday.

What parents should consider

WeST recognises that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term time leave for their children; this is not considered to be ‘exceptional circumstances.’ It is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while children of all ages may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

Any absence from school may lead to a child experiencing problems, such as difficulties securing basic skills of reading, writing and maths which are fundamental to progress through out school. However, absence at certain times of year can be particularly problematic, e.g.

- Closeness to exams or tests
- During GCSEs, A-levels and other examination courses
- During the first year at a new school
- At the beginning of a new school term

If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may lead to a £60/£120 fine per parent, for each child.

⁶ DfE (September 2022): [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

⁷ This was tested in the [Isle of Wight v. Platt case](#), upon which the Supreme Court made a judgement
WeST Attendance Policy (January 2023)

The Law

The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. However, in *exceptional circumstances* the Headteacher may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.

If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period, this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance. If the child is away from school for a total of 4 weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent to inform the school, as once removed from roll there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances.

Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but these should be arranged out of school hours if possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces⁸
- External examinations
- When Traveller children are of temporary 'no fixed abode' and the pupil's parent(s) are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place and therefore prevents them attending school (i.e. in accordance with the legal criteria set out in Section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996)

Other absence from school will not be authorised, for example:

- For any type of shopping
- Looking after siblings or parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Because holidays are cheaper in term time
- More than one day for a family wedding

Fixed Penalty Notices

The school will issue and administer penalty notices according to Local Authority procedures.

The penalty is £60, for each parent per child, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay may result in prosecution where on conviction parents would be liable to a fine of up to £2500.

- Penalty notices may be issued where it is determined that to do so would be an effective and appropriate addition to ongoing casework with a pupil and their parent. The Headteacher will be informed if this action is taken

⁸ Due consideration should be given to the guidance, [MOD advice to headteachers: term-time absence for service children](#)
WeST Attendance Policy (January 2023)

- Where feasible, parents should be warned of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued and invited to make representations to the school

Section 6: Strategies for promoting school attendance

WeST recognises that positively promoting excellent attendance (above 98%) will have the biggest impact on a pupil's attainment and wellbeing. Intrinsic motivators, such as a developing a pupil's own desire and ambition to attend school regularly and do well, are always preferably to extrinsic motivators such as school rewards systems. However, WeST recognises that in some circumstances rewards and incentives can play a role in promoting good school attendance by recognising pupil achievement, especially where attendance improves through a pupil's actions to overcome barriers to attendance. It is important to ensure that any such rewards and incentives are applied fairly and that they do not discriminate against either groups or individual pupils.

Schools in WeST will pay careful consideration to the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that individuals with protected characteristics are not discriminated against. As such, WeST does not agree with rewarding pupils for 100% attendance as this may discriminate against pupils, e.g. those with under-lying health conditions for whom 100% attendance is unachievable.

Rewards that may be used at our school are:

- Tutor recognition through Class Charts
- Positivity postcards
- Early lunch passes / queue jump passes
- Complimentary snacks or drinks
- Golden ticket
- Whole tutor group reward through Pastoral Leader assembly
- Entry into seasonal award celebrations.

Attendance Concern Letter Stage 1 (15 sessions of absence) Secondary letter

Date

Dear **parent name**

Excellent attendance is important in ensuring that pupils are safe and can access the opportunities at school that lead to success.

The attendance target for all pupils in Westcountry Schools Trust is 96%. This means having no more than 7.5 days (15 sessions) of absence across the school year.

Your child has now had 15 sessions of absence this year.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance in line with the school attendance policy, which is available on the school website. *Recommend schools insert hyperlink here.*

Please contact us to discuss your child's attendance. *Recommend schools insert generic contact details here.*

It is important that we understand the reasons for the absence and any barriers or difficulties that they face in attending school. We want to work together with you, so that your child can attend school regularly and achieve success.

Yours sincerely

Enc. Registration Certificate, Year to Date

Enc. Early Help Leaflet

Appendix 1b – Stage 2 Persistent Absence Letter (below 90% attendance)

Date

Dear

Stage 2 – Persistent Absence Letter

Excellent attendance is important in ensuring that pupils are safe and able to access the opportunities at school that lead to success.

The attendance target for all pupils in Westcountry Schools Trust is 96%. This means having no more than 7.5 days (15 sessions) of absence across the school year.

Where a pupil attends school for less than 90% it is defined by the government as persistent absence. This means having 19 days (38 sessions) or more of absence across the school year.

Since our letter of **date**, **Name's** attendance has dropped to **XX%**. They have had **XX** sessions of absence, of which **XX** have been unauthorised. I have enclosed a copy of **Name's** Registration Certificate.

In line with the school attendance policy, which is available on the school website, we:

[School to delete as appropriate to individual circumstances]

- Invite you to provide medical evidence to support any future absence. This could be a note or appointment card from the doctor, dentist, or hospital to confirm a visit to a medical professional was made.
- Where the absence results from a medical concern, invite you to complete an Individual Health Care Plan to support attendance to school.
- Invite you to an 'Early Help' meeting where barriers to attendance can be discussed and solutions offered. [the School will insert details relevant to local early help processes]
- Discuss supporting you with a referral to the School Nursing Team
- Have referred this case to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority (LA). The EWO may contact you directly, or conduct a home visit, to discuss **Name's** absence from school.

We still want to work together with you, to ensure that **Name** can attend school regularly and achieve success.

Yours sincerely

Eggbuckland Community College

Enc. Registration Certificate, Year to Date

Appendix 1c – Letter to Request Medical Evidence

Date

Dear

Request for medical evidence regarding absence from school

Excellent attendance is important in ensuring that pupils are safe and able to access the opportunities at school that lead to success.

The attendance target for all pupils in Westcountry Schools Trust is 96%. This means having no more than 7.5 days (15 sessions) of absence across the school year.

Name's attendance has dropped to **XX%**. They have had **XX** sessions of absence, of which **XX** have been unauthorised. This is shown on the copy of **Name's** Registration Certificate which I have enclosed.

We are concerned **Name's** absences are likely to affect their education. Due to the number of absences, we are now requesting that you provide medical evidence for us to authorise any further absence. A copy of the school attendance policy is available on the school website.

As of today, I am unable to authorise absences due to illness or medical appointments unless you provide evidence that the absence is genuine. This could be a note or appointment card from the doctor, dentist, or hospital to confirm a visit to a medical professional was made.

Such conformation will be required each time that you child is absent from school due to illness or medical reasons. If we do not receive this information your **Name's** absence will be recorded as unauthorised and this information will be shared with Education Welfare Officer.

Please contact us to discuss how we can work together with you, to ensure that **Name** can attend school regularly and achieve success.

If you believe that **Name** has an on-going medical condition which is impacting their ability to attend school regularly then please talk to us about this. We can consider together how we might develop an Individual Health Care Plan, alongside appropriate health care professionals, to support **Name's** education.

Yours sincerely

Eggbuckland Community College

Enc. Registration Certificate, Year to Date

Id – Lateness Letter

Date

Dear

Lateness to school

Excellent attendance is important in ensuring that pupils are safe and able to access the opportunities at school that lead to success. This includes arriving to school on time and attending all lessons punctually.

I am writing to express concern over **Name's** attendance this year. According to their Registration Certificate (enclosed) **Name** has been arriving late to school and/or lessons [**school to delete**].

Arriving late can have negative effects, including:

- Leaving pupils unsure about their schoolwork, finding it hard to catch-up and becoming anxious about getting left behind.
- Loss of curriculum time which can lead to poor results in tests or examinations.
- Disruption to friendship groups leading a pupil to feel left out.
- A less positive reference, as prospective employers or training providers often enquire about attendance and punctuality.

Please contact me to discuss **Name's** attendance and punctuality. It is important that we understand the reasons for **Name's** absence and any barriers or difficulties that they face in attending school or arriving at lessons on time. We want to work together with you, to ensure that **Name** can achieve success.

Yours sincerely

Eggbuckland Community College

Enc. Registration Certificate, Year to Date

Appendix 2: Absence request form

S2

Absence Request Form



Notes to parents/carers

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance and must be for exceptional circumstances. If you do not have Parental Responsibility and/or normally live with the child you must seek the consent of the parent who does and that person should complete this form. Schools will only consider requests from that parent and absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will only consider:

- The reason for the leave
• The time and duration of the leave
• Whether or not the leave could have been taken during the statutory school holiday periods
• Your child's record of attendance
• Learning that will be missed

To the Headteacher/Principal of Egguckland Community College

I wish to apply for

Name(s) of Child(ren) DOB..... Class.....
..... DOB..... Class.....
..... DOB..... Class.....

to be authorised as being absent from school from To..... Inclusive

Reason for request for absence during term time:
If this is a holiday request please explain the exceptional circumstances which mean that the holiday cannot be taken during a school holiday:

Signature of Parent/Carer Date

Signature of Parent/Carer Date

Authorised The School/College agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.

Absence dates ___/___/___ to ___/___/___

Unauthorised The School/College does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason(s):

Learning that will be missed		No Exceptional Circumstances	
The time and duration of the leave		Leave could have been taken during school holiday periods	

Signed..... Designation..... Date

Please read overleaf

Holidays in term time

Important: please read carefully the information below.

Warning: If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be issued a £60/120 Penalty Fine, per parent, per child.

As a Parent/Carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by, whenever possible, taking your holidays during school holidays.

The Facts	The Law
<p>We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term time leave for their children. However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the course work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>What you should consider</p> <p>There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term time leave such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closeness to exams or tests (Standard Attainment Tests in Year 2, 6 and 9). • During GCSE, and other examination courses. • During the first year at a new school. • At the beginning of a new school term. <p>If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may lead to a £60/120 fine per parent, for each child.</p>	<p>The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.</p> <p>However, in exceptional circumstances school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of 4 weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p> <p>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on the 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.</p> <p>Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances.</p>

Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents where the school is informed beforehand

Other absence from school will not be authorised:

- For any type of shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Because holidays are cheaper in term time
- More than one day for a family wedding.

Please contact your child's Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

The law requires schools to be open to pupils for 190 days each year, and every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to take holidays during term time.

MARCH 2015