Excellence, Aspiration and Care in Partnership

School Attendance Policy

Ratified – September 2026

Next Review Date – September 2027

Osidge School

A member of Ashmole Trust

School Attendance Policy

1. Mission statement

Osidge School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and wellbeing of all children.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to education law and guidance and our school attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance produced by the Welsh Government. For information relating to this legislation and guidance, see Appendix 2.

The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for 185 days in any school year. Registration will take place at the start of the morning session and following the last lunch period.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets as identified by the Governors, local authority and the Government.

This policy will contain the procedures that the school will use to work towards meeting its attendance targets, as set by the local authority.

2. Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents, carers and pupils.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them, both now and in the future; we will offer reward schemes for individual learners, classes and year groups who have high levels of school attendance, no unauthorised absence and/or have shown to significantly improve their attendance rates.

We will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual pupils and assist to overcome any barriers that may be preventing the expected level of attendance. These strategies may be school-based or may be implemented jointly with other partners to ensure the most appropriate support for the individual and their family.

By enrolling at Osidge School, parents and carers agree to ensure children are at school, in accordance with this attendance policy.

The consequences of not meeting the expectations will be regularly communicated to parents throughout the academic year in various ways such as text messages, telephone calls, emails, letters, the school website, newsletters and at parents' evenings.

3. School procedures

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Head Teacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unexplained (N code) and promptly followed up by the school as part of its early intervention and safeguarding strategies. This will be in the form of a text message, telephone call or email to the parent or carer to enquire about the whereabouts of the pupil. If no reason is given by the end of 5 school days or the reason given is not reasonable, the pupil will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (O code).

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education as in Appendix 1.

4. Punctuality

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.50am. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes from this start time, in accordance with Government guidance. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U code) unless there is an acceptable explanation. In addition, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered (M code in this instance).

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the 30-minute registration period will be coded as late (L code).

Afternoon registration will be at 12.25pm for Reception, 1.10pm for Years 1-2, 1.25pm for Years 3-6 and any pupil arriving after these times will be marked as present but late (L code) if they arrive within 30 minutes, or an unauthorised absence (U code) if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of the afternoon session.

In the event of three late arrivals, the school will contact the parent by letter to inform them of the impact on their child's attendance and subsequent attainment. Should the pupil continue to arrive late for registration after being issued with this letter, the school will issue a second letter inviting the parent or carer to a meeting to discuss the barriers that are preventing punctual arrival and offer support where appropriate. Following this meeting, if the pupil is late again, parents and carers will be invited to a meeting with the Head Teacher or attendance lead to discuss the matter and possibly take further action. Governors may be involved in these meetings also.

Parents and carers are reminded that the local authority may issue a fixed penalty notice for unauthorised lateness after the close of the register in accordance with the local authority's Code of Conduct for the Issuing of Fixed penalty Notice for Non-School Attendance (in Appendix 3), if the number of unauthorised absences or lates (O or U codes) is 10 sessions or greater in 10 weeks.

5. First day absence

Parents and carers are reminded that they should contact the school by 8.40am if their child is not able to attend school on that day. Parents and carers must state the **full** reason for the child's non-attendance (not just "feeling unwell") and indicate the likely date they will return to school. Parents/carers should be prepared for members

of the school staff to ask questions about the pupil's condition, the patterns or trends in their absences and any treatment they may be receiving.

If a parent or carer does not contact the school, staff will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence, after both morning and afternoon registration. This may include a telephone call, texting service, a home visit from a member of school staff or an Education Welfare Officer. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code (see Appendix 1 for the types of code).

Priority will be given to children who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, e.g. those known to Children's Services or are looked after (LAC). The local authority's Education Welfare Service will be notified of unexplained absences of five days or more, which will be reduced to only 24 hours if the pupil is on the child protection register, who may conduct an unscheduled home visit to determine if the pupil is safe and well.

Any learner may be subject to a visit from the Education Welfare Service where the school or Local Authority has any concern around attendance, or lack of contact from parents. These visits are intended to offer the right support to overcome any barriers to attending schools.

6. Absence notes and supporting evidence

Notes received from parents explaining the reason for the absence will be kept on file in line with school retention policies. Parents and carers are aware that only the Head Teacher or their representative can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter/appointment card from a GP or consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

7. Medical and illness absences

The school appreciates that there are times a pupil has to attend a medical appointment during the school day. In these instances, a copy of the hospital appointment letter should be provided to the school **prior** to the appointment date to inform the school of the set scheduled time. Ideally, routine GP or dental appointments should be arranged for times outside of the school day.

If a pupil is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request supporting evidence that the pupil is receiving the necessary medical treatment. An appointment

card, consultant letter, photograph of prescription medication, would all suffice as medical evidence. Without the necessary evidence, the school may notify the parent or carer that all future absences will be unauthorised until the necessary medical evidence has been provided, and a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.

8. Continuing and frequent absence

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher or attendance officer to be aware of and bring attention to the Head Teacher (or person to whom they have delegated responsibility for attendance), any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. This may involve inviting the parents/ carers and the pupil into school for a meeting. However, should this absence persist, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service when the attendance drops below 90% for the preceding six school weeks.

For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a 10-week period (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon), a fixed penalty notice may be issued in accordance.

9. Persistent absence

The Department of Education defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 10% (less than 90% attendance). These pupils will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. This plan may include a referral to the Education Welfare Service for additional support for the pupil and their family.

If the pupil and family do not engage with the action plan, court action may be taken against the main parent(s) or carer(s) via the Education Welfare Service.

10. Absence related to discrimination

As a school, we will monitor and report all discriminatory incidents each term and if the reason for a pupil's absence is related to any of the above issues, we will take action to deal with the situation.

11. Leave of absence/holidays in term time

Leave of absence during term time is actively discouraged as it negatively impacts on the pupil's ability to engage with the full curriculum. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for a family holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

The school will consider any application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances; parents and carers must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence. Any request for absence should be put in writing by parents/ carers to the school office. The Head Teacher will consider the request and respond in writing within 5 school days to inform the parent or carer whether the request has been authorised. Subsequently, a parent or carer can make an informed decision whether they wish to pursue the absence in the knowledge of any potential consequences.

Parents and carers are advised that a fixed penalty notice may be issued when permission for leave of absence has not been authorised by the school.

12. Fixed Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance at School

The school may issue a fixed penalty notice where a parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. A penalty notice can be issued against one of the following criteria:

1) Where there is a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in a 10-week period (these do not need to be consecutive) which includes pupils who are persistently arriving after the close of the registration period.
2) Where a parent(s)/carer(s) refuses to engage with a school in the interest of improving their child's school attendance levels.
3) Where a holiday in term time has been requested but has been unauthorised.

The Local Authority can issue a fixed penalty notice if:

1. Parents are intentionally and deliberately, taking leave at the same time every academic year or purposefully taking under the threshold of 10 sessions to avoid a fixed penalty notice.

Each pupil's absence will be considered on its own merits and if appropriate, a fixed penalty notice may be requested to encourage improved future attendance. If a

pupil's attendance is significantly low, a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be considered as an alternative to requesting a penalty notice.

13. Reintegration

The school will welcome back all pupils on return from an absence.

If the pupil has been absent for a considerable period of time, a reintegration plan will be introduced tailored to the needs of the individual.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Osidge School is aware that ensuring regular school attendance is a demanding area of work that depends on establishing and utilising close working relationships between parents/carers, pupils, schools, the local authority and other professionals who work with children.

A key part of any successful working relationship is a clear understanding of each person's role and responsibilities, and as such the following sets out to clarify the roles and responsibilities for those people engaged with tackling absence issues.

14.1 The Parent/Carer
Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent/carer is responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school, alternative provision or by elective home education (the parent can choose to provide education for their child).

A pupil's punctuality is also a legal requirement and parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late (after the close of the register) can also face legal proceedings. Sometimes, there are situations at home that may make it difficult for a pupil to arrive on time and as such due consideration is given to any help or assistance a family may need in these circumstances.

14.2 The School
Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to take an attendance register twice a day, at the **start** of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important in

order to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

The school has the responsibility to monitor individual attendance rates at least weekly and use their own intervention methods to tackle individual pupil attendance issues where the pupil's attendance rate is 91% and above. A referral to the Education Welfare Service should be made by the school when an individual's attendance falls to 90% or below over a six-week period and there is no exceptional reason for this (i.e. the majority of the absence is unauthorised). See point 12.

Head Teachers will be responsible for the strategic management of attendance across the school. They will scrutinise the data on a weekly basis, monitor trends and patterns across cohorts of pupils, and evaluate interventions for their impact and effectiveness and direct resources for the best possible outcome. The Head Teacher will present the data to the Governing Body on a termly basis for scrutiny.

Class Teachers will be responsible for completing the session registers fully and accurately during every registration. This practice ensures good safeguarding processes, enabling the school to know where every pupil is at the start of all sessions and for school clerks/office managers to commence the 'first day response' process if the pupil is not present. The school will capture and retain on file any additional details relating to the absence.

Office Staff will be responsible for the daily operational attendance duties. They will ensure that all registers have been completed by the classroom teachers on a daily basis and if not will escalate this to the Head Teacher for action. They will undertake the 'first day response' on each morning for those pupils whose families have not made contact. They will collate the supporting evidence, and chase any outstanding forms, absence notes, holiday request forms etc. The officers will compile the data in preparation for analysis by the Head Teacher/ Attendance Champion and make the referrals to the Education Welfare Service.

In order to request a fixed penalty notice, the school will monitor the individual attendance patterns of their pupils. If trends are identified that match the criteria stated in the local authority's Code of Conduct, a school has the opportunity to make a formal request to the local authority to issue a penalty notice.

14.3 The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The principal function of the Education Welfare Service is to improve attendance in all schools and alternative education provisions across the local authority by supporting pupils and their families to overcome their barriers to engagement.

The service provides support to schools, pupils and their families to ensure regular attendance and address any difficulties relating to absenteeism. The Education Welfare Service works collaboratively with a range of support services and agencies and provides an essential link between home and school to ensure that pupils benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.

The service acts on behalf of the authority in its statutory enforcement capacity and is responsible for a number of related duties that include:

- the regulating and issuing of child employment and performance licenses for school age children and young people, and their chaperones.
- to investigate, locate and track children who are referred as "Children Missing from Education and Children Missing from School".
- to oversee the education needs of vulnerable pupils e.g. Traveller families.
- to work in partnership with the Police in the arrangement and coordination of formal truancy operations in accordance with Crime and Disorder legislation.

15. Attendance initiatives

The school and local authority will work closely together to raise the awareness of school attendance, promote good attendance and tackle unauthorised absence.

The school will work with the Education Welfare Service to undertake local authority initiatives such as the Wellbeing Response Visits, Meet and Greet sessions and target groups.

16. Categorisation of absence

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- Authorised Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

Unauthorised absence

These codes are for those sessions where pupils were absent and no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

Authorised absence

These codes are for those sessions where pupils are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid. Evidence may be requested to support the reason given (e.g. medical evidence, appointment cards, etc.)

Approved educational activity

These codes cover types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school and/or the LA, where the session has been supervised by an approved tutor.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education at another venue
- Education arranged by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- (CAMHS)

17. Retention of records

Computer registers are preserved as electronic back-up copies. Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however, it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule.

18. Register checks

The local authority will formally check the school registers on a termly basis to ensure there is compliance with the national legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents, and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

19. Attendance targets

A system for analysing performance towards the targets has been established and the Head Teacher is responsible for overseeing this work. The school and Governing body will make use of the attendance data available from the Consortium and the local authority when reviewing its targets and analysis of the outcomes in comparison with similar schools from across the region.

The Head Teacher will present the attendance data in each of the termly reports to the Governing body for the figures to be scrutinised against the attainment data. The Governors will have the opportunity to challenge the data alongside the practices for managing attendance, in order to tackle the overall absence rates across the school and within specific cohorts of learners.

Our school attendance target is 96%+.

APPENDIX 1

The registration system

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

APPENDIX 2

Legislation and guidance

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

a. to his age, ability and aptitude and
b. to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.
Section 444 1, 1(a) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school or alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority.
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the framework for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.
The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (England) Regulations 2011

Registers and admission

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Education) Regulations 2024

APPENDIX 3

Fixed Penalty Notices Code of Practice

This Code of Practice governs the application of penalty notices issued to parents for school attendance matters in accordance with **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and subsequent amendments.**

Head Teachers continue to have the power to authorise leave of absence, but only in exceptional circumstances. While family holidays are enriching experiences, the school year is designed to give families the opportunity for these breaks without having to disrupt their children's education. It is for schools to consider the specific details and relevant context behind each request. Schools know their pupils best and are well placed to make those judgements.

The circumstances in which a penalty notice can be issued are set out in Table 1.

The Power to Issue:

By local agreement between schools, the police and the London Borough of Barnet, Barnet Education & Learning Service is the only agency administering penalty notices in respect of school-related issues.

Head Teachers decide whether to authorise leave taken during term time or not: and, if not, whether then to request a penalty notice from Barnet Education Learning Service.

The Regulations allow Head Teachers to delegate their decision-making power to request penalty notices to Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers or equivalent.

Method of Issue:

All penalty notices are issued by post only.

The Education Welfare Team maintains a record of penalty notices issued within the London Borough of Barnet's finance system. Schools must not keep records of penalty notices on children's academic records.

Timescale for issue:

Schools	To issue request within **three school weeks** of child returning to school.
BELS	To issue penalty notice within **three school weeks** of the request
Parent	To pay penalty notice within **28 DAYS** of penalty notice invoice
Dispute	To be resolved **within** the four-week payment period for parents.

Failure to pay:

Parents who fail to pay are liable to prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.
A summons must be requested within six months of the first date of absence.

Declining to issue:

The Education Welfare Team may decline to issue a penalty notice if:

- The incorrect code has been entered into the register for the period of leave
- If schools cannot substantiate the leave during term time
- If there is an error made on any of the information received from the school

Cancelling penalty notices:

The Education Welfare Team cancels penalty notices when suitable evidence is provided by the parent or, indeed, by the school itself that the notice has been issued incorrectly.

The Education Welfare Team Manager will write off cases where litigation is impractical or not in the public interest.

Income:

Income from penalty notices funds their enforcement. Where income exceeds costs, the surplus passes to the Council's general account. Schools receive no income from penalty notices.

Good Practice for Schools:

Head teachers should ensure that:

- Parents are aware of the school's policy on leave of absence.
- Each request for leave of absence is considered on its merits.
- Parents are informed of the reasons for refusal of their request.
- Parents failing to request leave of absence should be issued with a penalty notice.
- The child is of statutory school age.
- Requests for penalty notices for absences adjacent to school holidays have supporting evidence, such as parents not being contactable, international dial tones, or evidence from individuals, including the child in question.
- Exclusion correspondence reminds parents of their duty to supervise their excluded child during the first five days of exclusion.
- Only they, or those authorised by them, may sign the request form.
- School registers have the appropriate registration absence code (**G, O, U, or E, as appropriate)** as an extract from the register may be required in the event of court action.
- they should liaise with colleagues at the schools attended by siblings.

Head teachers are not compelled to request the issuing of a penalty notice even if they have refused to give leave of absence but should be mindful of the need for a consistent approach across all schools to support colleagues for whom attendance issues are of significant concern.

Good Practice for Parents:

Parents should:

- Follow the school's attendance policy.
- Make a request for leave of absence in good time so that it can be considered.
- Make travel arrangements AFTER permission has been given.
- Keep all travel documents and invoices to account for delays or disruptions.

- Make sure that they obtain medical evidence if their child is ill in the periods either side of an official school holiday.
- Ensure they can be contacted by school during periods of illness.
- Understand that, if school or Education Welfare staff visit the family home and the child is not there when reportedly too ill to attend school, a penalty notice will be issued.

Information for Parents:

A parent is defined by **Section 576 of the Education Act 1996** is any natural parent, person with Parental Responsibility under the **Children Act 1989** or a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of his or her relationship with the child.

All parents whose children attend a maintained, academy or independent school in Barnet are subject to the rules in respect of penalty notices.

For leave during term time, unauthorised absence and lateness:

Parents can be issued a maximum of 2 penalty notices each in three academic years, the threshold for a fixed penalty notice to be issued for unauthorised absence is a minimum of 10 sessions (5 days) in a 10-week period.

The first penalty notice is £80 if paid within the early-payment period, up to the 21st day after issue, rising to £160 up to the 28th day.

Where a penalty notice has been issued to the parent in respect of the same child in the preceding three-year period from the first fixed penalty notice, the amount of the penalty is £160.

On payment of a penalty notice, the parent cannot be pursued legally for the same period of evidence.

As with prosecution in a magistrates' court, penalty notices can only apply to offences relating to a child of statutory school age enrolled at a maintained school, academy, independent school or a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

For a child found in a public place without parental supervision whilst excluded:

The first penalty notice is £60 if paid within the early-payment period, up to the 21st day after issue, rising to £120 up to the 28th day.

Disputing a penalty notice:

There is no right of appeal for parents, but the Local Authority will examine any evidence provided that shows that a mistake has been made. Parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support an argument and must deal directly with the Local Authority as the matter will not be the responsibility of the school.

Recipients are advised to contact the Education Welfare Team by e-mail or in writing, using contact details on their invoice with any queries about payment or the reason for the penalty notice.

Penalty notices can only be withdrawn if they are issued in error or there are exceptional circumstances that common law would accept. The Local Authority must refund any payments made in respect of a wrongly issued penalty notice.

Parents with a credible claim not to have received a penalty notice may have the original replaced by a new notice, allowing time to pay the initial, lower, amount. Generally, however, a notice issued by second-class post is deemed to have been received within three to four days.

Penalty notices are used in the following circumstances at the request of the relevant party, as described below:

		Reason	School Action	Requesting Party
1	**Term time Absence without the school's or academy's permission**	A parent removes a child from school for the purpose of a holiday of any duration either without seeking the Head Teacher's permission or in defiance of the Head Teacher refusing such permission. Registration code: **G** A parent takes a child out of school to visit a home country for personal reasons not deemed to be exceptional. Registration code: **G**	Head teachers must decide whether or not to authorise requests for leave of absence on a case-by-case basis. There must not be a blanket ban on leave of absence. A decision not to give leave of absence should be explained by letter to the parent. Parents taking their children to countries of origin have no right to do so in term-time. While being mindful of cultural differences, head teachers should consider those parents' legal responsibility to ensure their children attend fully. Where a penalty notice is requested, the Head Teacher must ensure that the school's register is coded **G**.	Head Teachers, and those delegated by them. The request form must be completed by the Head Teacher or delegated senior colleague. Head teachers are not compelled to request the issuing of a penalty notice even if they have refused to give leave of absence but should be mindful of the need for a consistent approach across all schools to support colleagues for whom attendance issues are of significant concern.
2	**Unauthorised lateness to school**	A parent regularly fails to ensure a child is in school before the closure of registers. Registration code: **U**	Schools must advise parents in writing of the possible imposition of a penalty notice if their child has **six** unauthorised lates (U) in any **four-week period**. The request for the penalty notice must contain the original	Head Teachers, and those delegated by them. The request form must be completed by the Head Teacher or delegated senior colleague

			warning letter and the attendance register for the review period with the trigger number of U codes. *There must be liaison between the school and the Education Welfare Officer where the latter is already involved in casework with the parents to avoid legal confusion.*	
3	**Casework by EWT, school or academy**	A parent fails to improve his or her child's school attendance following casework carried out by an Education Welfare Officer or equivalent member of staff appointed by the principal of an academy. Absences to attend political protests of any kind should not be authorised. Registration code**: O and/or U (including G with no FPN issued by school)**	A penalty notice may be used as a disposal by the Chair of a Court Assessment Meeting in place of prosecution or the use of an Education Supervision Order. The right to protest does not override a parent's duty to ensure school attendance.	Chair of Legal Meeting (member of the Education Welfare Team) Head Teacher, Deputy or Assistant Head
4	**Inadequate parental supervision of excluded pupil**	A parent fails to ensure that his or her child is adequately supervised during the first five days of an exclusion. Registration code: **E, converted to O for court purposes. (E is an authorised absence, where parental supervision is expected)**	The Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 103 permits the use of penalty notices where an excluded pupil is found in a public place unsupervised by a parent during the first five days of an exclusion. If an excluded pupil is encountered by more	Head Teacher, Principal or delegated colleague Police Officer, or Community Police Support Officer Education Welfare Officer

			than one agency on the same day, only one offence will have been committed. Where a penalty notice is requested, the Head Teacher must ensure that the school's register is coded **E** for the period of exclusion.	

Guidance on categories where a penalty notice is applicable

1. Unauthorised leave of absence from school – CODE G

All parents should request permission from the Head Teacher in advance of their leave, the Head will then decide whether to grant permission. Where there has been no request for leave, the Head must write to the parents detailing whether the leave is authorised and the possibility of a FPN being applied.

Schools must provide the original request for leave where applicable, the letter provided to parents stating the leave was unauthorised and a fine may be applied and the attendance certificate along with the FPN request.

If a penalty notice requested by a school is unpaid and the case is referred to the Magistrates' Court, the requesting colleague would be the relevant witness and will write a statement and/or be required to attend court.

2. Unauthorised lateness to school – CODE U

The Local Authority has set a trigger point for schools to use when seeking a penalty notice for lateness. This trigger point is 6 unauthorised lates in any 4-week period. Parents must be informed individually of this possibility. Schools should remind **all** parents of the time registers are closed, after which the U code becomes effective.

Six unauthorised lates in four weeks is an absence rate of fifteen per cent. This would be an important factor for consideration by magistrates in the event that a penalty notice is unpaid.

The request for the penalty notice must contain the original warning letter sent to parents and the attendance register for the review period with the trigger number of U codes.

3. EWT and school/academy casework - CODE O/U/G

A penalty notice may be used as a disposal by the Chair of a Legal Meeting in place of prosecution or the use of an Education Supervision Order.

No consideration is given in respect of an individual school's policy in this case.

Where academies work independently of the EWT, they should have a process where a senior leader makes a Legal Meeting-type decision.

4. Inadequate parental supervision of an excluded pupil – CODE E

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 103 permits the use of penalty notices where an excluded pupil is found in a public place unsupervised by a parent during the first five days of exclusion. A public place includes school premises. Exclusion correspondence should include reference to the possibility of this sanction.

If an excluded pupil is encountered by more than one agency on the same day, only one offence will have been committed.

Police Officers and Community Police Support Officers use their own recording procedures, generating reports (Merlin) that the Education Welfare Team will check against the relevant school register. Penalty notices will be issued once these details are verified.

Dealing with requests for leave of absence:

All requests for leave of absence should be decided on a case-by-case basis. Requests from parents should be provided in good time and not last minute to allow for an opportunity to respond.

School staff regularly observe that parents' explanations for their children's absences are difficult to believe. Claims of lost passports, delayed flights and illness are common. Asking for details of original flights and any amendments acts as a useful check before requesting a penalty notice.

Requests for leave due to grave illness of a relative should be treated sympathetically unless the school identifies a pattern of leave at the same time every year or the death of the same relative, leave taken, and reasons provided can be kept as logs to help identify patterns.

Dealing with failure to request leave of absence:

Parents often fail to ask for permission from schools for their children to be absent, perhaps knowing that their request is unlikely to be agreed. All holidays taken in this way are subject to penalty notice regulations.

Parents who take leave without asking for permission, should be informed in writing, that the leave was unauthorised and they are liable for a fixed penalty notice.

Parents who claim that they had to leave in an emergency should be asked for proof of the emergency and travel documents that show late (and, therefore emergency) booking. In any event, most parents have access to phones and/or e-mail.

Dealing with sickness absence:

Many schools report spikes in medical absences around school holidays and should bear in mind:

- Lack of response to calls home
- International dialling tones
- Absence of child/family if a home visit is made
- Observations from school community or the child concerned.
- School attendance of siblings in different schools 22

Dealing with absence adjacent to religious holidays:

Taking extra time around recognised religious observances is not acceptable and should be coded **G**. Schools should consider the use of penalty notices for those who fail to ask for leave of absence beyond the actual religious observance. There may, of course, be occasions when a request for additional leave is deemed by the head teacher to be valid.

Legal references

Education and Inspections Act 2006
Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
Education Act 1996
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024