

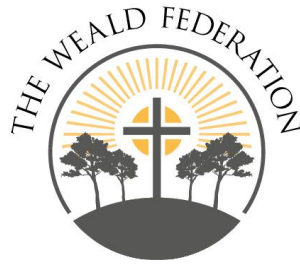


Temporary change to this policy

Any reference to the Executive Head Teacher and/or Head of School can be read as Acting Head Teacher for the period from 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021 until such time as a new Executive Head Teacher is in post. The Acting Head Teachers are bestowed with the same powers and actions as that of the EHT during this period. This decision was approved by the Governing Board on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Chair of GB	<i>Emma Harrison</i>
Acting Head Teacher #1	<i>Joanna Challis</i>
Acting Head Teacher #2	<i>Jo Warren</i>

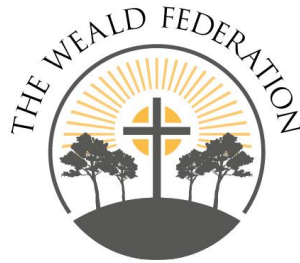




# The Weald Federation – Attendance Policy

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## The Weald Federation Attendance Policy

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## **The Weald Federation Attendance Aims:**

Good attendance is essential in order for pupils to have access to the high quality education that The Weald Federation provides and children are entitled to. Our Christian ethos underpins a unique curriculum found in each of our four schools and we are committed to establishing purposeful learning environments where all pupils feel inspired, safe, valued and a sense of belonging. Our school communities consistently strive for high attendance for all pupils and expect parents and carers to ensure that their child(ren) attend school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. We believe that the discipline of regular and punctual attendance prepares children for the expectations of any future employer and high attainment, confidence, positive relationships and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

### **This Policy is written in line with the following documents:**

- School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (DfE, May 2022)
- East Sussex County Council School Attendance: Roles and Responsibilities (December 2019)
- East Sussex County Council: Guidance on School Attendance (May 2022)
- East Sussex County Council: Penalty Notices Guidance for Schools and Academies (December 2020)

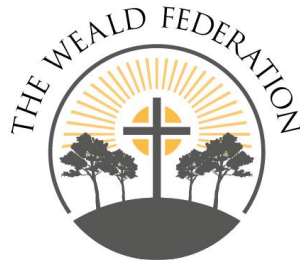
## **Good Attendance is Important Because:**

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- pupils with good attendance make better social and academic progress which has a positive impact on their emotional wellbeing, attitudes to learning and aspirations
- regular attendance supports children to successfully manage school routines, learning opportunities and relationships with others
- pupils with good attendance are more successful in transferring between key stages, to secondary school and future employment

## **The Weald Federation will Promote Good Attendance by:**

- agreeing a named 'Attendance Leader' in each school (usually the Headteacher or Head of School)
- promoting a strong attendance ethos





- having in place a clear Attendance Policy that is communicated effectively to all stakeholders
- recording and sharing attendance and absence accurately in line with Local Authority and DfE guidance
- ensuring regular and robust monitoring of attendance, absence and punctuality
- safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- providing clear information about attendance in our Policy, newsletters and on our websites
- reporting to parents on how their child is performing in school and their rate of attendance and punctuality
- celebrating good and improved attendance
- acting early to address patterns of absence and lateness
- supporting pupils and their families when there is a risk of low or persistent absence (below 91%)
- liaising with relevant agencies/professionals when required e.g. ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM, ISEND, Social Care, Police, GRT Team

<b>The Weald Federation Attendance Leaders</b>	
Five Ashes	Darren Gurr
Frant	Joanna Challis
Mark Cross	Alma Scales
Mayfield	Joanne Warren
Governor	Michael Asquith

<b>School</b>	<b>Whole School Attendance 2022-2023</b>	<b>Whole School Attendance Target 2023-2024</b>
Five Ashes	<b>95.1%</b>	<b>97%</b>
Frant	<b>95.4%</b>	<b>97%</b>
Mark Cross	<b>95.4%</b>	<b>97%</b>
Mayfield	<b>93.3%</b>	<b>97%</b>





## **Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Leader:**

- to maintain and promote high expectations for all pupils to have good attendance
- to ensure that The Weald Federation's Attendance Policy is consistently applied
- To provide office staff with a priority list of vulnerable pupils
- to ensure that attendance is accurately recorded by office staff
- to ensure that attendance, absence and punctuality is regularly and robustly monitored
- to act early to address poor attendance and punctuality
- support pupils and their families to improve attendance when required
- to complete a Child Missing in Education (CME) referral, alongside office staff, if there is an unknown absence and no communication with the parent/carer for more than 10 consecutive days
- to seek guidance from ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM when required
- to work alongside office staff to manage Withdrawal from Learning and Fixed Penalty Notice requests
- to share safeguarding concerns promptly with relevant staff and agencies in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- to ensure adherence to ESCC off-rolling procedures (moving schools, CME and Elective Home Education (EHE))

## **Responsibilities of Office Staff:**

- to accurately maintain the whole school admissions and attendance registers, using the correct codes, in line with ESCC Guidance on School Attendance
- to contact parents to establish reasons for pupil absence with reference to the school's priority list of vulnerable pupils
- to complete a Child Missing in Education (CME) referral, alongside the Attendance Leader, if there is an unknown absence and no communication with the parent/carer for more than 10 consecutive days
- if a child is on the priority list for vulnerable pupils is absent, ESCC Guidance should be followed (See Appendix 1)
- to provide attendance data for the Attendance Leader when requested
- to organise written communication to parents/carers as required by the Attendance Leader
- to seek guidance from ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM when required
- to work alongside the Attendance Leader to manage Withdrawal from Learning and Fixed Penalty Notice requests
- to alert safeguarding concerns promptly to the Headteacher and DSL





- to adhere to ESCC off-rolling procedures (moving schools, CME and Elective Home Education (EHE))

### **Responsibilities of the Class Teacher:**

- to ensure that all pupils are registered accurately, twice each day on SIMS
- to liaise with office staff and the Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality
- to communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- to support pupils' emotional wellbeing, engagement and learning on their return to school
- to work collaboratively with outside agencies if required

### **Responsibilities of Parents/Carers:**

It is a legal responsibility for parents of children aged 5-16 years to ensure that they receive a suitable full time education. When registered at a school, pupils are legally required to attend regularly and to be punctual for lessons. Parents/carers should:

- support the school, with their child, in aiming for 100% attendance each academic year
- inform the school office by 9am on the first day and subsequent days of your child's absence (by telephone or email)
- provide the school with a reason for absence so that the correct code can be recorded in the attendance register
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, using the school's Withdrawal from Learning form (available from the school office or the school's website). Withdrawal from Learning forms should be completed at least 14 days in advance of the requested absence
- register the reason for their child's lateness and sign their child out, at the office, if taken out during the school day
- discuss with the class teacher any concerns that may have an impact on their child's attendance or punctuality
- attend meetings with school staff, to support improved attendance, when required
- inform the school, in writing, of their intention to leave the school or home educate

### **Responsibilities of Pupils:**

- to attend school every day unless they are ill or have an agreed authorised absence
- to arrive at school in time for registration and be ready to start their learning





- to speak to a trusted adult if anything is worrying them that may affect their attendance
- if not with a parent when arriving late to school (Year 5 and 6 only), take responsibility for registering at the office

## Types of Absence:

National codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way that complies with government regulations. There are two main categories of absence: authorised and unauthorised absence.

- **Authorised Attendance:** when the school has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory reason for absence or given approval in advance for the leave. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- **Unauthorised Attendance:** when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a pupil's absence from school following a parent/carer's request. This includes reasons such as tiredness, birthday celebrations, holidays or visiting family. It also includes occasions where no reason has been given and when a pupil arrives after the close of the register without an approved reason.

The school can change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice-versa if new information is presented.

## Punctuality:

All pupils are expected to arrive on time for the start of the school day as we start learning promptly. If pupils are late it causes disruption to the learning of both the individual and others in the class. It can also have an impact on the pupil's wellbeing.

School	Arrival Time	Morning Registration	Close of Register (no later than 30 minutes after registration)
Five Ashes	8.40-8.50am	8.50-8.55am	9.10am
Frant	8.40-8.55am		9.10am
Mark Cross	8.40-8.55am		9.10am
Mayfield	8.40-8.50am	8.50-8.55am	9.20am

- Arrival after the end of morning registration will be marked as Late (Code L).
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as Unauthorised (Code U) in line with the ESCC attendance guidance.







## Requests to Withdraw Pupils from Learning:

Any absence from school disrupts pupils' learning and development and can also have a negative impact on other pupils' in their class.

**The DfE and Local Authority only allows Headteachers the discretion to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.** These occasions are rare; visiting family, celebrating birthdays and reduced priced holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances. The Weald Federation is aware that many of our parents/carers work and employers may limit leave dates but know that they are mindful to ensure that where possible, employees with children can have some leave during school holiday dates.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence are required to complete a Withdrawal from Learning Form at least 14 days in advance of the requested absence. This can be found on the school's website or can be collected from the school office.

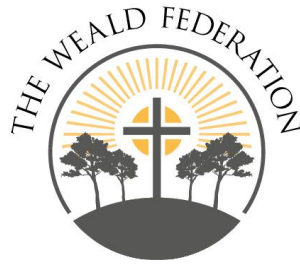
The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School will then make the decision whether the absence is considered to be an exceptional circumstance and inform parents/carers of the decision. If it is not considered an exceptional circumstance, the pupil's absence will be unauthorised and the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School may request the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if the absence is for 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) or more (see Appendix 6). This is a fine of £60 per parent for each child. This amount is increased to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the fine is unpaid, please be aware that court action may follow. If the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School decides to request a fine, parents/carers will be informed on the Withdrawal from Learning form and by an accompanying letter (see Appendix 5).

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School may request a Penalty Notice unless evidence of exceptional circumstances is provided by the parent/carer. (See Appendix 7)

## Pupils who are reluctant to go to school:

Children are sometimes reluctant to go to school for a number of reasons that might include: anxiety, difficulty with school work, friendship issues, bullying, family difficulties, mental health, attachment or SEND needs. Any problems with regular attendance are best addressed between parents/carers, the child and the school. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never better for parents to provide an excuse for them not attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. In the first instance, parents/carers should arrange to meet with the class teacher to discuss their





concerns. Depending on the situation, the SENDCo/ Executive Headteacher /Headteacher/Head of School may be involved in the discussions and support and in some cases, the school may make a referral to an outside agency. It is really important that the reason for the child's reluctance to attend is identified and that all parties work together to improve the situation in order for the child to feel safe and confident enough to access and enjoy their education.

## **Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality:**

The school has a legal safeguarding duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent, without an explanation, for 10 consecutive days to the Local Authority.

The school monitors pupil attendance thoroughly.

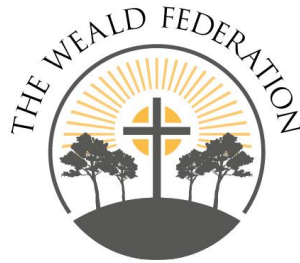
- At the end of each term, the Attendance Leader will write to parents/carers of pupils whose attendance is below 95%, regardless of the reasons for absence. (See Appendix 2) This is because research suggests that gaps in learning begin to affect attainment when attendance falls below this percentage. There will be an opportunity for parents/carers to discuss with the school, ways in which we can work in partnership to improve their pupil's attendance.
- When attendance falls below 91%, it is categorised as 'persistence absence'. A letter will be sent to the parents/carers (see Appendix 3) inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss the situation and complete an Attendance Improvement Agreement (see Appendix 4) outlining what the parents/carers and the school will do to support the improvement of the pupil's attendance. A signed copy of the Attendance Improvement Agreement should be shared with the parent/carer by email with warning that if absence continues to be an issue, the school may refer the matter to ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM or request a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority if 10 unauthorised sessions occur within 10 school weeks of the completion of an Attendance Improvement Agreement. Following this, their attendance will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

## **Leavers:**

If your child is leaving the school (other than transferring to secondary school) parents/carers are required to write to the school to inform them of their plans, so that arrangements can be made to take the pupil(s) off roll and transfer relevant documents to the new school. The letter, addressed to the Headteacher/Head of School, should include:

- Reason for moving schools
- Last day of attendance at our school
- New address and telephone number (If moving outside of East Sussex)





- New school's name and address
- New school's start date (when known)

If the school does not have the above information your child may be considered a 'child missing in education' and it may trigger a safeguarding investigation.

### **Home Schooling:**

On receipt of signed, written notification of the parent/carer's intention to home educate, the school must inform the local authority, providing the letter received from the parent/carer, so that the pupil can be deleted from the school's admission register and Teaching and Learning Provision are informed. If there are any safeguarding concerns, the school will contact the Children's Services Single Point of Advice (SPOA).

### **Religious Observance:**

Absence for religious observance should be authorised (Code R). The day should be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong.

### **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Absence:**

Traveller groups include: Roma English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

Code T is used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for other types of absence by these groups.

Children from these groups who do not travel are required to attend full time when registered with the school.

### **Reduced Timetables:**

Very occasionally, it may be in the best interests of a pupil to agree a part-time timetable. Outside agencies such as ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM are usually involved when this is required. Part-time timetables should be for a fixed period of up to 6 weeks and can only be implemented with the parent/carer's consent. Timetables should be reviewed regularly with the aim to increase the pupil's time in school.





## Appendices

Appendix 1: Absence Flowchart for Vulnerable Pupils

Appendix 2: Model Letter for Parents/Carers (attendance below 95%)

Appendix 3: Model Letter for Parents/Carers (Persistent Absence <91%)

Appendix 4: Attendance Improvement Agreement form

Appendix 5: Model Letter for Parents/Carers whose request for absence has been unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be requested

Appendix 6: School Request to ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM to Issue a Penalty Notice

Appendix 7: Model Letter for Parents/Carers who have not requested leave of absence in advance



Five Ashes CE Primary School



Frant CE Primary School



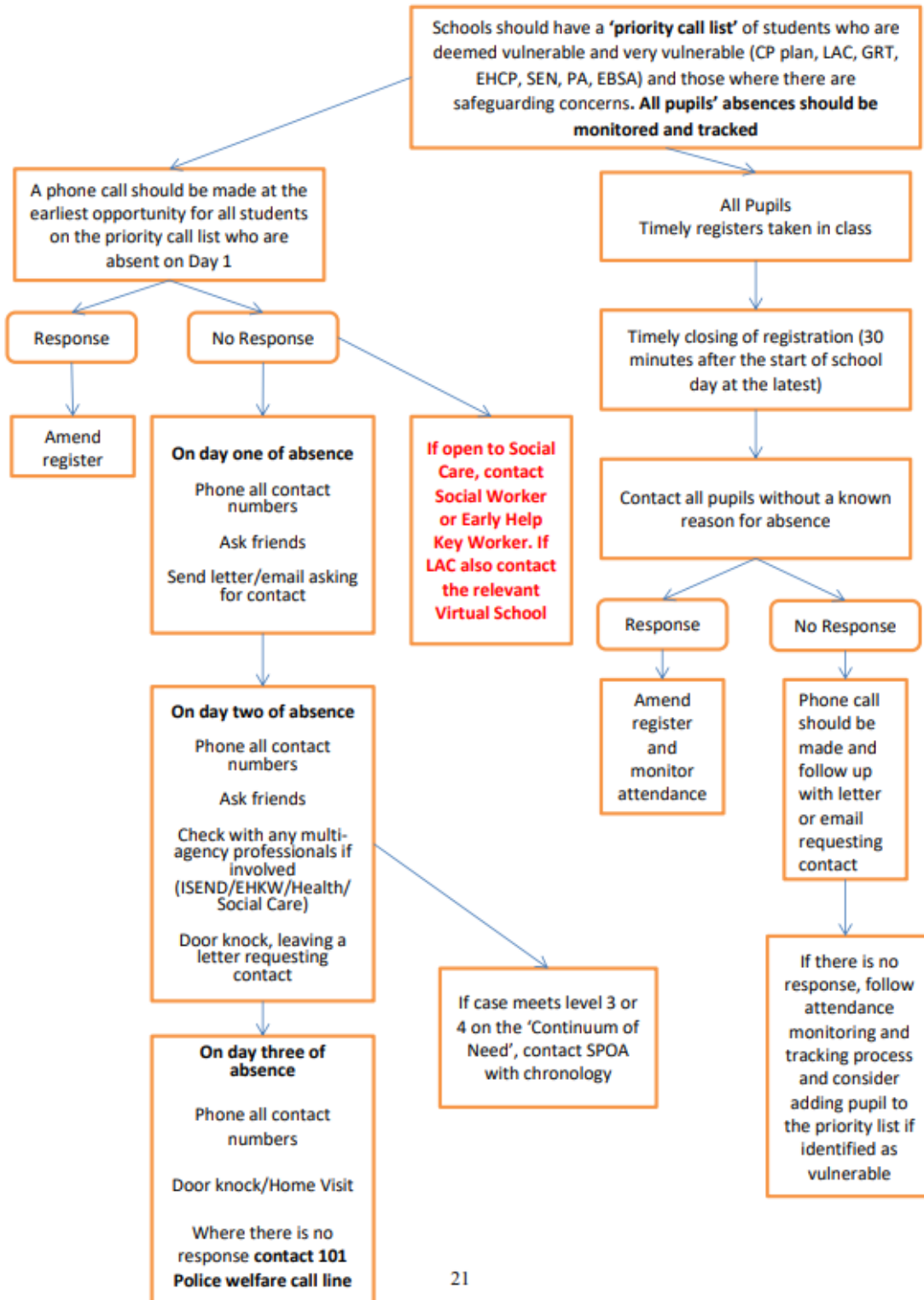
Mark Cross CE Primary School

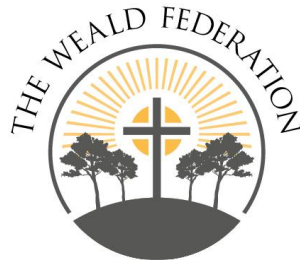


Mayfield CE Primary School



## Appendix 1: Absence Flowchart for Vulnerable Pupils





## Appendix 2: Model Letter for Parents whose child's attendance is below 95%

Dear Parent/Carer

Each term we monitor every child's attendance at XXXXX CE Primary School. We have noticed that XXXXX's attendance has fallen below 95%, the Local Authority's indication of good attendance. We recognise that there may be a variety of reasons for this, but we are required to bring this to your attention.

When schools are externally judged and as part of safeguarding requirements, their attendance figures are scrutinised. We have a duty to work with parents/carers to ensure that their child's attendance is as high as possible so that they have access to a full education.

XXXXX's attendance at the end of Term XXX was XXX%. Please find attached a print out of our register, which details when and why your child has been absent from school.

The table below highlights how absence from school has an impact on children's learning.

<b>Attendance during one school year</b>	<b>means this many days absence</b>	<b>which is approximately this many weeks absent</b>	<b>which means approximately this many hours of learning lost</b>
95%	9 Days	2 weeks	50 hours
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 hours
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 hours

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance or there is any way in which we can support you to reduce your child's absence, please make an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Kind regards,

Headteacher





### **Appendix 3: Model Letter for Parents/Carers whose child's attendance is below 91% (Persistent Absence)**

Dear Parent/Carer

Each term we monitor every child's attendance at XXXX CE Primary School. We have noticed that XXXX's attendance has fallen below 91%. This is categorised as persistent absence by the Local Authority. We recognise that there may be a variety of reasons for this, but we are required to bring this to your attention.

When schools are externally judged, and as part of safeguarding requirements, their attendance figures are scrutinised. We have a duty to work with families to ensure that children's attendance is as high as possible so that they have access to a full education.

Please find attached a print out of our register, which details when and why your child has been absent from school.

The table below highlights how absence from school has an impact on children's learning.

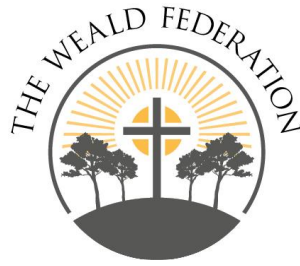
<b>Attendance during one school year</b>	<b>Means this many days absence</b>	<b>Which is approximately this many weeks absent</b>	<b>Which means approximately this many hours of learning lost</b>
95%	9 Days	2 weeks	50 hours
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 hours
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 hours

I would like to invite you to attend a meeting on XXXX at XXX to discuss your child's absence and to complete an Attendance Improvement Agreement to support the improvement of your child's attendance. If you are unable to make this appointment, please contact the school office to arrange an alternative date for the meeting. I look forward to working with you on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher





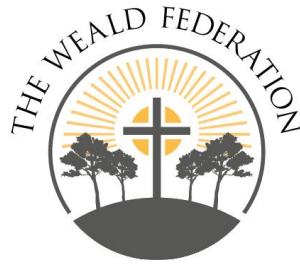
## Appendix 4: Attendance Improvement Agreement form

Child's Name:	
Year Group:	
Parent/Carer(s) Name:	
Staff responsible for writing the Attendance Improvement Agreement:	
Pupil's Current Attendance:	
Pupil Voice:	
Parent Voice:	
Agreed pupil actions to support improved attendance:	
Agreed parent actions to support improved attendance:	
Agreed school actions to support improved attendance:	
Date of next review: (approximately 2 weeks)	

I understand that if there is no improvement in my child's attendance and absence continues to fall or remain below 91%, the school may refer the matter to ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM or request a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority if 10 unauthorised sessions occur within 10 school weeks of the completion of an Attendance Improvement Agreement.







Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 5: Model Letter for Parents/Carers whose request for absence has been unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be requested**

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for completing a Withdrawal from Learning form to request leave of absence for your child(ren) during term time. Your request has not been authorised on this occasion as the reason provided for absence is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

I realise that you will be disappointed by my decision, but Government guidance means that, as a head teacher, I am unable to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Your child's absence during this period will be recorded as unauthorised in our register and we may request a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority should your child(ren) be absent during the requested period. The fine is £60 per parent for each child. This is increased to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days.

Should you wish to present further evidence of exceptional circumstances, please contact me **before** the absence is taken.

Please note that once a Penalty Notice has been issued there is no right of appeal.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher





## Appendix 6: School Request to ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM to Issue a Penalty Notice

(see Appendix 3 of East Sussex County Council: Penalty Notices Guidance for Schools and Academies (December 2020))

*parent includes a step-parent or other carer and can include an absent parent	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>
<b>Parent/Carer Full Name:</b>		
<b>Address:</b>		

### Pupil Details

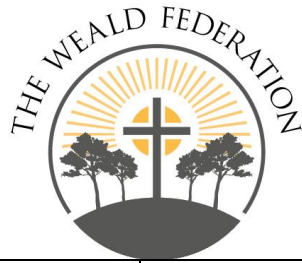
<b>Pupil Name:</b>	<b>Year:</b>
<b>School:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	

### Absence Details

Please complete one of the following sections:-

<u>Holiday in Term Time</u>	<u>Unauthorised Absence and/or Lates</u>
Date of Decision Letter:	Date of Warning Letter:





Number of unauthorised sessions:  Period (dates) from:            to  <b>MINIMUM 10 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS (5 DAYS)</b>	Number of unauthorised sessions:  Period (dates) from:            to  <b>MINIMUM 10 SESSIONS OVER A 10 SCHOOL WEEK PERIOD FOLLOWING ISSUE OF WARNING LETTER</b>
---	---

**Evidence Attached**

<b><u>Holiday in Term Time</u></b>	<b><u>Unauthorised Absence and/or Lates</u></b>
Withdrawal from Learning Form: <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised decision letter sent to parent: <input type="checkbox"/> Registration Certificate: <input type="checkbox"/> Any additional evidence: <input type="checkbox"/> Please specify:	Warning Letter(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Registration Certificate: <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of support offered/provided: <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:

**Name:**

**Date:**

Please email this form and all relevant paperwork to [legal.interventions@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:legal.interventions@eastsussex.gov.uk)



Five Ashes CE Primary School



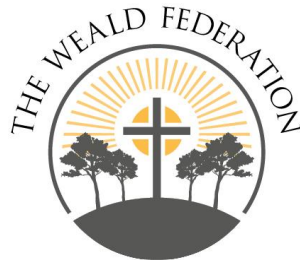
Frant CE Primary School



Mark Cross CE Primary School



Mayfield CE Primary School



## Appendix 7: Model Letter for Parents/Carers who have not requested leave of absence in advance

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing in regard to **[pupil]**'s absence between **[dates]**.

It is our understanding that **[pupil]** was on holiday during the above dates. This letter is to advise you that I am unable to authorise this as pupil absence during term time is for exceptional and unavoidable circumstances only.

Government guidance means that, as a Head Teacher, I am unable to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances and family holidays do not fall into this category.

Should you wish to present evidence of exceptional circumstances for the absence, please contact me by **[date]** so that the information can be considered. If I do not hear from you by this date we will request a Penalty Notice be issued by the Local Authority. **Please note that if a Penalty Notice is issued this will be to *each* parent (for each child) incurring a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within 21 days.**

Please note that once a Penalty Notice has been issued there is no right of appeal.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

