



The Federation of Sacred Heart & St Mary's RC Primary School, Battersea

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved By	Governors
Reviewed On	March 2025
Review Due	March 2026
Review Cycle	Annually

Contents

1. Introduction – Our Aims	2
2. Key Members of Staff	4
3. Expectations and Daily Routines	5
4. How we Promote and Incentivise Regular Attendance	8
5. Tailored support	9
6. Formalised support.....	10
7. Useful Websites	14

1. Introduction – Our Aims

1.1 Our approach to improving attendance

The publication of school's attendance levels is a significant indicator of a school's performance. Regular attendance of pupils correlates closely to raising achievement thus underlying the importance of improving attendance rates in schools. All staff should be committed to the successful implementation of the whole school attendance policy as a necessary step towards improving overall attendance as part of the School Development Plan. If children are to derive maximum benefit from their education, they must attend school regularly and on time.

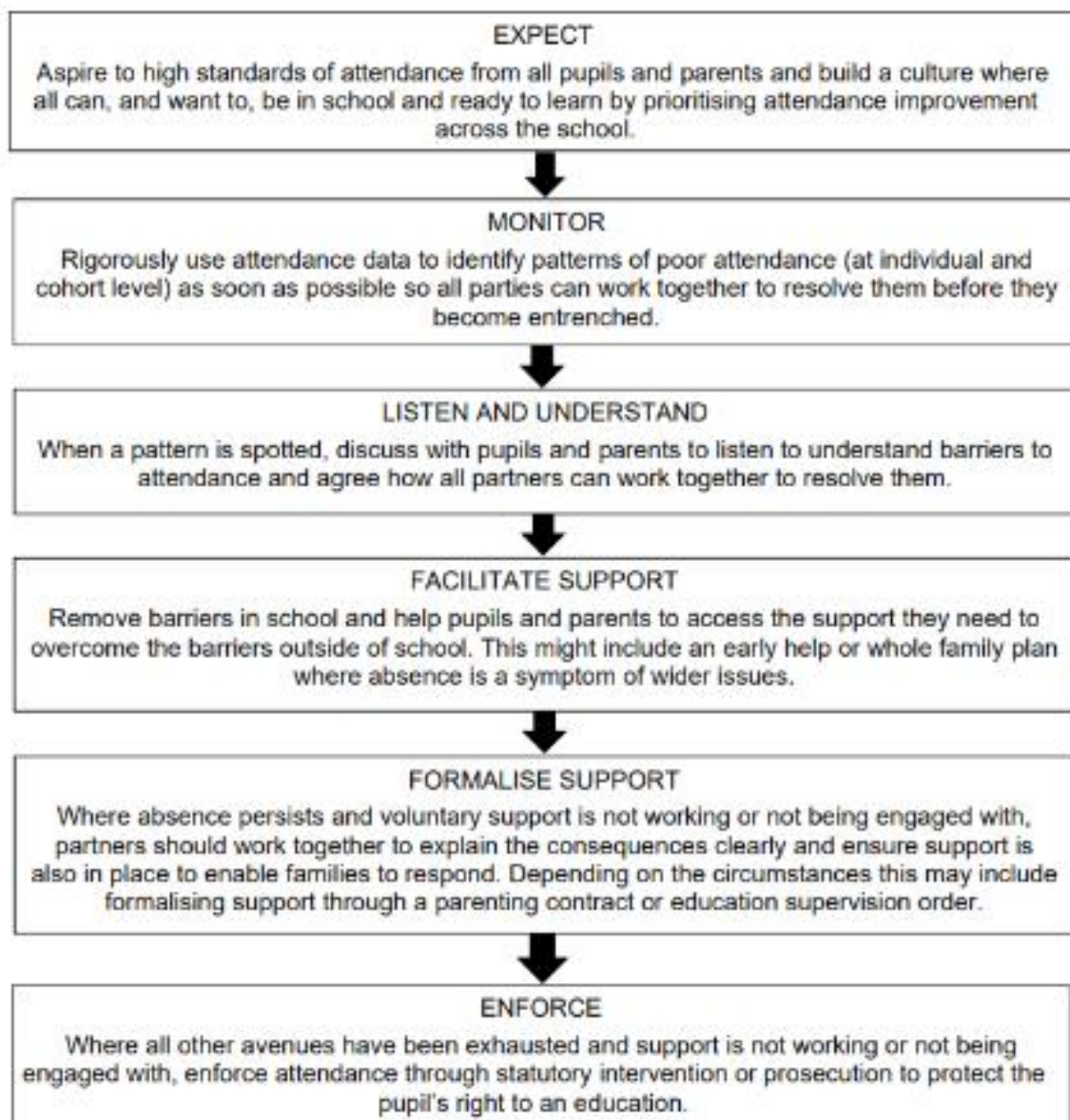
The Federation of Sacred Heart RC School and St Mary's RC Primary School is committed to providing full and efficient education to all pupils. We recognise that if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance are crucial. Problems which impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible. Our school is sensitive to the needs of families and will endeavour to communicate as openly and supportively as possible. We can only do our best work in conjunction with the support of parents/carers. The Federation of Sacred Heart RC School and St Mary's RC Primary School is committed to working with other agencies e.g. Education Welfare Officers, GP surgeries, health visitors etc., in order to secure the best attendance for its children.

At The Federation of Sacred Heart RC School and St Mary's RC Primary School, priority will be given to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. The vital role of parents is recognised. Where there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance, the school will investigate and strive, in partnership with parents and pupils, to resolve problems quickly and efficiently, aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

1.2 Our attendance objectives

Our school attendance policy:

- Is easy to understand by pupils, parents and staff
- Is clear and consistently applied, transparent and fair
- Considers the individual needs of pupils and their families
- Is easy to find so that the whole school community is aware of our attendance expectations
- Includes the contact details of key staff to make it easy for parents to get in touch
- Is reviewed by staff regularly and involves pupils and parents because attendance is everyone's business
- Is followed in accordance with the procedures in the flowchart below
- Meets all statutory requirements in regards to attendance



2. Key Members of Staff

Headteacher and Senior Staff

- On the gate every morning

Site Manager

- Open and lock main gate

Teachers

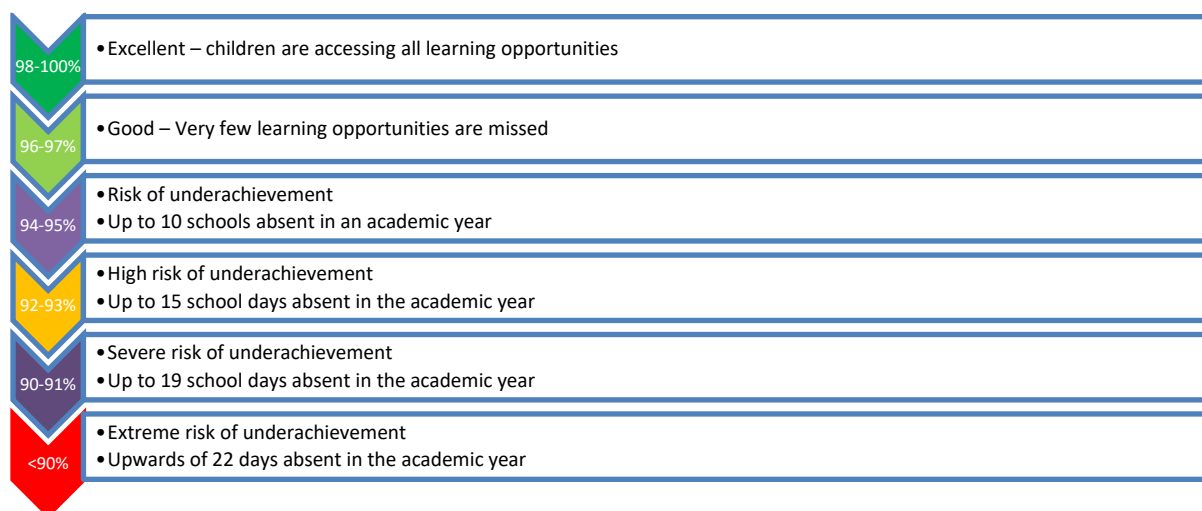
- Will ensure that all registers are taken accurately and immediately and saved for the office to access.
- They will form positive links with parents; positively promote good attendance within the classroom, communicate with the Associate Head and Senco and Attendance Officer.

Attendance Officer

- Will text parents/carers on the morning of first absence to ask for an explanation – text messages sent will be recorded on the system, including those where no response either by text or phone. If there has been response the Attendance Officer will call.
- They will also ask for notes/letters explaining absences and lateness.
- Will notify Associate Head of all daily absences and of any patterns of lateness and attendance that are causing concern.
- Will form positive links with parents and outside agencies.
- Will set up the registers at the beginning of the school year.
- Receive telephone or email communication from parents/carers, will record that information correctly and arrange for that to be communicated to the teaching staff or Associate Head for consideration or authorisation.
- Assist Associate Head in the collection of data.
- Assist Associate Head with the admission and off rolling procedures.
- Will notify Associate Head, Learning Mentor (SM) and the Wandsworth Education Welfare Officer of any patterns of lateness and attendance that are causing concern (including more than two days consecutive absence.)
- Make referrals to EWO service.
- Liaise with and prepare for School Attendance Panel meetings.

3. Expectations and Daily Routines

3.1 What we mean by 'good' attendance



3.2 Why regular attendance is important

Pupils who attend regularly (every day) are more likely to achieve better academic outcomes, are safer from risks in the community, such as exploitation and crime, as well as successfully transitioning from primary to secondary school, secondary school to further education, and the world of work.

3.3 Our daily processes

- All classes are required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning sessions and at the start of the afternoon session to record pupils present and absent. The attendance register is a legal document and it is imperative that it is accurate at all times. Registers can be used in a court of law.
- Requirements for completing the register are outlined to teachers during their induction at the beginning of the year. All pupils must have an appropriate mark by their name. Teachers should also undertake a head count to confirm the numbers of pupils present.
- Teachers must ensure that the register is taken within 10 minutes of morning or afternoon sessions starting.
- In cases of a pupil being sent home ill, a note will be made on sims/arbor, by the admin team.
- Where a child has 3 or more consecutive day's absence due to ill health, the school will request that the parents provide medical evidence. This can be a letter from the doctor, a copy of the appointment time or the prescription you were given by the doctor. Without this evidence the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.
- The School attendance target is 95%. The Government and DFE consider 90% or lower as persistently absent and a referral to Education Welfare will be made, leading to a possible legal action.

3.4 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Federation of Sacred Heart RC School and St Mary's RC Primary School will monitor and support pupils to maintain regular school attendance. The register must show whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

All other absences are treated as unauthorised.

- Absence should be authorised where appropriate, and when notification has been received, should be noted on the system, using the standardised symbols outlined. **Under no circumstances should an un-notified/unverified absence be regarded as authorised.**
- By law only the school can authorise an absence. A written note or telephone explanation by a parent/carer does not, in itself, oblige the school to authorise the absence if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. All reasons for absence must be recorded in the register and notes filed in an agreed place. There must be consistency throughout the school in what is authorised.

The following table outlines categories of absence which can be authorised. For the most up to date absence codes please consult

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Code	Reason
/	Present (morning session)
\	Present (afternoon session)
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
C	Other authorised exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence – regulated performance
C2	Leave of absence – part time timetable
D	Dual registered
E	Exclusion
G	Family holiday (not authorised)
I	Illness
J1	Leave of absence – interview e.g. employment
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late before registration closed
M	Medical Appointment
N	No reason provided for absence
O	Absence in other unknown circumstances
P	Participating in a sporting activity
Q	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangement
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Travelling with parent for occupational circumstances
U	Late after registration closed
V	Attending educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience
X	Not required to attend (not statutory school age)
Y1	Unable to attend – normal transport not available
Y2	Unable to attend – widespread travel disruption

Y3	Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure
Y4	Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure
Y6	Unable to attend – criminal justice detention
Y7	Unable to attend – unavoidable other than Y1 – Y6
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure (e.g. School holidays, INSET days)

Requests for special leave and overseas visits during term time.

(Please also refer to the document <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence> for more detail)

3.5 Lateness

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school every day and punctuality is monitored regularly via the school information system (Arbor/Sims).

At Sacred Heart if a pupil is late for school they should enter via the Este Road entrance and are required to sign in at the main office for Health and Safety reasons. KS1 pupils who arrive late to school but find the **Cabul Road gate** still open for **EYFS** may enter through this gate. Their class teacher will update the register accordingly, marking them with an **L code** for lateness.

At St Mary's, all late children enter via the main office and are signed in there.

Lateness	Comments	Code
Arrival within 10 minutes of start time.	Pupils who arrive within 10 minutes are counted as late.	L
Arrival after 30 minutes of start time.	Pupils who arrive after close of registers (30 minutes), the absence is unauthorised.	U

3.6 Roles and Responsibilities of the School, Parents/Carers and Pupils

Pupils will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time.

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly (target 95%).
- Ensure their child arrives and is collected on time for school.
- Contact the school on the first day of absence, if their child is unable to attend for a valid reason and/or provide a note if they wish the absence to be considered for authorisation.
- Ensure their child is prepared with the necessary uniform to attend school.
- Support the school in its aim to raise the achievement of their child through full school attendance.
- Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their child/children attend and stay at school.
- Collects their child from school on time every day

The Federation of Sacred Heart RC School and St Mary's RC Primary School will:

- Ensure efficient and accurate registration of pupils.
- Contact the parents/carers if a child fails to attend without a satisfactory explanation.
- Provide regular reports on the school's attendance statistics.
- Promote positive attendance by taking account of pupil's individual needs.
- Have in place clear communication routes to discuss any difficulties which may be preventing a pupil from attending school.
- Expect parents and carers to support the school to raise the achievement of their child through full school attendance.

Wandsworth Education/EWS will:

- Issue penalty notices where appropriate – including those for unauthorised 'holidays'.
- Ensure that parents/carers are fulfilling their statutory obligations as to their child's education including, where necessary, taking action through the courts (section 444 of Education Act 1996). Conviction following an offence under section 444 attracts a fine of up to £2500.
- Also apply, if necessary, to the Family proceedings court for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) (section 36 of the Children Act 1989). This will apply to cases of unauthorised absence invoking statutory backing for a planned programme for a child in collaboration with the parents/carers. The effects of an ESO will be to place a child under the supervision of the LA for a specifically defined period. At this time EWO are designated by the LA to be the named Supervising Officers in such cases. As such they are required to advise, assist and befriend the child, reinforce parental responsibility and give reasonable direction to ensure the child's proper education.

4. How we Promote and Incentivise Regular Attendance

At The Federation of Sacred Heart RC School and St Mary's RC Primary School, we give high priority to the collecting and publicising of data related to attendance and punctuality. At St Mary's, the most up to date attendance figures for each class can be seen in the weekly newsletter. We have a consistent and supportive attitude towards attendance and punctuality, and wish above all, to resolve any problems on a voluntary basis. We firmly believe that establishing contact with home on the first day of absence is crucial to improving our attendance figures, and the quality and consistency of the education each child receives.

All parents/carers know what are grounds for authorisation of absence and the attendance policy is available for all parents on our website.

We Record and Promote Good Attendance in the following ways:

- Attendance and punctuality figures are recorded on the report to Parents and Carers at the end of the academic year, along with positive comments for effort where appropriate.
- We ensure our parents/carers receive accurate and clear information about the child's education and how important it is that pupils attend school.
- At St Mary's, coloured letters are sent out each term. **Green letters indicate attendance of 95% and upwards. Orange letters indicate attendance of 90-95%. Red, letters indicate attendance of less than 90%.**
- At Sacred Heart, letters are sent out each term to those pupils who are below 90% attendance showing comparison figures for the pupil against the rest of the class, school and against their attendance for the previous school year.

We use clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve and address attendance. We make sure these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils.

Robust school systems provide useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give us an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst more vulnerable groups, such as:

- children who have a social worker, including looked-after children
- young carers
- children who are eligible for free school meals
- children who speak English as a second language
- children who have special educational needs, medical needs and disabilities

5. Tailored support

5.1 Our approach

We monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that interventions are delivered quickly to address absence (e.g. register inspections, code analysis, cohort and group monitoring, punctuality, lesson attendance across subjects and benchmarking).

We use attendance, pastoral and SEND staff who are skilled in supporting pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance.

We create action plans in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families, for example, children's social care and early help services. We also commission or deliver interventions in-house to improve attendance.

We monitor the impact of any interventions, making adjustments if necessary and using findings to inform future strategy.

Where interventions fail to address attendance issues, we identify the reasons why and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention.

We follow the local authority's Code of Conduct and procedures and make referrals for statutory intervention when voluntary interventions have not resulted in improved attendance in-line with our expectations – see Section 6.5.

5.2 In-school support

Learning Mentor (St Mary's only)

- Will work with persistent lates and absentees and vulnerable families.

Associate Headteacher

- Will oversee the implementation of the attendance policies and procedures.
- Ensure the collection of accurate statistical data, monitor, analyse and evaluate data collected.
- Form positive links with outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and Social Services and parents.
- Will refer pupils to the EWS using the referral form.
- Report termly to the governing body on attendance.

The Governing Body

- Will see that the registers are properly kept.
- Ensure that regular returns of attendance figures are made to Wandsworth.
- Produce an annual report to parents/carers in which the school's attendance figures are included.

5.3 Other services that can help

Services available from the local authority and further support we commission to help improve attendance include;

- The Education Welfare Service
- Early Help
- Social worker in School (St Mary's only).
- Unlocking Potential
- School Nurse
- Wandsworth Home and Hospital tuition service (WHHTS)
- Referral to the Family Information Service website: [Wandsworth Family Information Service](#)

6. Formalised support

6.1 School attendance panels / inclusion panels and parenting contracts

We plan in regular school attendance panels (SAPs) meetings to which parents are invited to discuss attendance concerns as part of an early intervention approach to improving attendance.

6.2 Education supervision orders

Where a voluntary early help plan, or voluntary parenting contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) may alternatively provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution.

ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

The supervisor of an ESO will usually be a professional already working closely with the family – or member of school staff.

6.3 The role of social care

Refer to: [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

6.4 Unauthorised leave

Refer to: [School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Unauthorised Absence

Type of Absence	Code	Comment
Unauthorised absence not covered by any other code or description.	O	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pupil's/parent's/sibling's birthday.○ Shopping.○ Haircut.○ Couldn't get up.
No reason yet provided for absence.	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Every endeavour should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence from school. Until a reason is obtained, the absence must be coded using Code N. If no reason for absence provided after a reasonable amount of time, Code N should be replaced with Code O (Normally a week.)
Holiday taken without authorisation OR extended holiday taken without prior authorisation. Usually results in a penalty notice of £60 per child.	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Absence is unauthorised if the school does not agree.○ Schools may agree a period of exceeding 10 days only in the most exceptional circumstances.○ Absence is unauthorised beyond the point of expected return if the pupil has been permitted to take a holiday and does not return when due. The DFE advise that a pupil can be taken off roll, if we don't receive communication from the family.

Examples of Absence that is Unauthorised

- Child's or family members' birthday/s.
- Shopping trips.
- Where there are excessive amounts of authorised absence due to illness (at the school's discretion but usually 5 or more days in a half term period).
- Where the child has gone to bed late and has 'slept in'.
- Parent/carer has an appointment and takes child with them.
- Another child in the family is ill, so all are kept off school.
- The child has to look after a younger sibling/child on a school day.
- Picking up someone from an airport.

6.5 Penalty notices and the local authority Code of Conduct

The point at which Penalty Notices for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with. Legal action will always be a last resort and the school and other professionals working with families should explore all avenues to engage parents and maximise the opportunities for support available to meet a family's needs first.

Information about the Council's Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices can be found online.

Fines

- The notice imposes a fine of £60 for each parent per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- If the fine is not paid each parent will be prosecuted for each child for the original offence of failing to secure regular attendance. If proven, the court can impose a range of fines up to £2,500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences, including imprisonment of up to three months, depending on the circumstances.

The general rule is no holidays will be authorised during term time. **There is no parental right to a ten-day period and schools are not obliged to agree to family holidays during term time.** The ten day period merely reflects the remit of the school to authorise the absence. Where pupils of compulsory school age are concerned, all applications should be carefully considered on their merits in the light of the need to maintain continuity of learning, e.g. Observance of religious holidays is likely to be approved, whereas booking holidays during term time because it is cheaper, is likely to be rejected.

Only in exceptional circumstances will special leave be granted in any one school year. All requests for special leave during term time should be made in writing to the Associate Head.

Penalty Notices Explained

If after reading this section, you still have questions please contact our Wandsworth Education Welfare Officer.

What is a Penalty Notice (PN)?

A PN offers a swift intervention that may be used to combat attendance problems before they become entrenched and where Wandsworth considers that prosecution may be inappropriate or unwarranted at that time. A PN can be a suitable intervention in circumstances where the parent is judged to be capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.

A PN will be paid to Wandsworth who will retain the revenue to cover the costs of issuing or enforcing the notices. **The penalty is £60 for each parent per child if paid within 28 days of receipt of invoice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of invoice.**

How can I be issued with a PN in relation to Attendance?

- Unacceptable amounts of unauthorised absences may lead to a penalty notice being issued. The school decides what constitutes an unacceptable amount.
- Every half term, the SAO and the Wandsworth Education Welfare Officer check the attendance of all children in the school.
- If attendance falls below 90% (approximately 10 school days) in a given period (usually ½ a term) due to unauthorised absence (code U, O, N, G - unauthorised holiday or excessive Code C) or excessive illness (5 days or more, code I)—a letter to parents from school indicating that EWS has been informed, will be issued.

- Parents/carers who fall into the above category may be invited to an attendance panel at the school with Associate Head and the Wandsworth Education Welfare Officer to discuss the attendance and inform parents of the next steps. We always use discretion here particularly where the child has been ill for over 5 days.
- If you take your child out of school during term time for a 'holiday' without the permission of the school you may be issued with a penalty notice upon your return.
- You can also be issued with a fine if there are 10 or more unauthorised absences (code U, O, G, N) or if your child is considered to be a persistent absentee.

How can I be issued with a PN over Punctuality?

- Every half term Associate Head will analyse lateness data.
- A penalty notice can also be issued if there are 10 or more U codes (late after 9:00am) on your child's attendance record.

Criteria for Court/Court Panel

Parents who have been invited in for an attendance panel at the school, and are then subject to a further 15 school days of monitoring, will be monitored closely again over the next half term period. If the child's attendance is still less than 90% over the next half term period, then the school will consider making a referral to the EWO. The EWO will then make contact with families and work with them to help improve attendance.

Prior to making a Referral to the EWO the following can take place:

- School contact.
- Invite to attendance panel.
- Phone calls/letters from EWO.
- Further specific monitoring by the EWO of your child within the school day.
- Letters from the Schools Attendance Officer.
- Referral to EWS.

If there is no/unsatisfactory improvement after EWO intervention, then the EWO will write to the parent/carer to advise of a referral to court panel.

All cases of children on roll but not attending, poor attendance and lateness are dealt with under section 444 of 1996 Education Act, through the use of first and second court warning notices – issued by the welfare officer as part of EWO contact.

All cases of children not enrolled are dealt with under Section 443 of the 1996 Education Act, through the use of the Attendance Order Procedure.

The LA can also apply for an Education Supervision Order under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989, to assist parents/carers to carry out their parental responsibility by working in partnership.

If the unsatisfactory improvement after one term is due to difficulties not attributable to the parents, the LA will advise.

7. Useful Websites

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

[School attendance and absence - childlawadvice.org.uk](https://childlawadvice.org.uk/school-attendance-and-absence/)

[Absence from school | Contact](#)

[Illness and your child's education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/illness-and-your-childs-education)

[Behaviour and attendance | Parentkind](#)