



Attendance Policy

Phoenix Community Primary School

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Statement of Intent

Phoenix Community Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Phoenix Community Primary School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

Your child does not need to be absent from school if they have been prescribed medicine from their doctor which they need to take during school hours. Please bring the medicine to the school office and we will arrange for the medication to be given at the requested time.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 08.50am. All pupils that arrive late need to report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark those pupils who are present. The class teacher notifies the Safeguarding Team of any children whose attendance is causing a concern.

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding and Welfare Team to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is recorded as unauthorised
- Parents will be required to provide medical evidence when 5 or more consecutive days of absence are taken
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents informed termly of their child's attendance figure
- Pupils absences and lates are monitored and acted upon

- Referrals to the Early Help Team are made where appropriate
- The Safeguarding Team are made aware of attendance and late figures

Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance – Safeguarding team to investigate any concerns
- 90 - 95% attendance - monitored through regular attendance meetings
- Below 90% - consider Early Help referral
- Persistent absences will be reviewed by The Safeguarding Team

Children Missing Education

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance should be followed.

Lateness

At Phoenix Community Primary School the register is taken at 08.50am and 1.00pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 09.00am for morning registration and 1.00pm for afternoon registration. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will result in letters being sent to parents as well as being discussed with parents at open evenings and will be referred to the Early Help Team. It can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings

- 10 incidents of unauthorised absence including arriving after the registers have closed in a term may lead to a referral to the Attendance Service for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter is sent by the Attendance Service setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued by the Attendance Service (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. Where there is doubt, the Headteacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone call from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If no explanation is received the absences will not be authorised.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will **not** be authorised:

- Persistent non specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Travel issues (unless outside of parental control i.e. flight delays)

Attendance and Lateness

The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

'Five Steps'

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils and letters as appropriate.
2. Early Help Team to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness, allocation of Safeguarding Team support.
3. Invitation to meet with school staff
4. Consider completing a Common Assessment Framework
5. Referral to Early Help Team leading to prosecution if there is no improvement.

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Early Help Team is made, the administrator's log (SIMS) and school attendance meeting minutes will be available as evidence.

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term the school will consider the following:

Early Help Team Referral

This may include:

- Home visits,
- Multi agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Attendance Improvement meetings

Penalty Notice Referral

- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission);
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent);
- religious observance;
- failure by the LA to provide transport.

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Exceptional Circumstances

Family holidays, for whatever reason, cannot be approved, even if the parent is unable to take time off work at any other time. An "exceptional circumstance" would have to be defined as an unavoidable cause e.g., a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

Requests for holidays in term time will **NOT** be authorised.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Absence

- Attendance Service receives a referral for an unauthorised holiday of 10 or more school sessions (5 days)
- Attendance Service issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child)
- If Penalty Notice(s) is/are not paid within 28 days of issue, Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings

Appendix 1 – Excessive Late Letter (L)

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

Tel: 01233 622510 | Fax: 01233 739236

Email: reception@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk

Web: www.phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk

Twitter: @Phoenix_Ashford

**Phoenix Community
Primary School**

Belmont Road

Ashford

Kent

TN24 9LS



Date

Dear (NAME)

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that (NAME) has arrived late at school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days (NAME) was late. (Code L)

At Phoenix Community Primary School the register is taken at 8.50 am and at 1.00pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child when they disrupt the class on their arrival.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
Headteacher

Appendix 2 – Excessive Late Letter (U)

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

Tel: 01233 622510 | Fax: 01233 739236

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**Phoenix Community
Primary School**

Belmont Road

Ashford

Kent

TN24 9LS



Date

Dear (NAME)

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that (NAME) has arrived after the register has been closed. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late.

At «School» Community Primary School registration is at «Time»am and 1.00pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their continuity of learning, not only do they miss out on teaching but they are less prepared for future lessons. This leads to a high risk of under achievement which we must all seek to avoid. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Should «Name»'s punctuality/unauthorised absence continue to be a cause for concern I will need to inform the school's Early Help Officer which may lead to a Penalty Notice.

As from April 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child. On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve (Name) punctuality/attendance. If we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
Headteacher

Appendix 3 – Reason for Absence Needed Letter ‘N’

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

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 Email: reception@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk
 Web: www.phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk
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**Phoenix Community
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 Belmont Road
 Ashford
 Kent
 TN24 9LS



Date

Dear (NAME)

(NAME) was absent from school today and as yet we have not been given a valid reason for this absence. We expect parents/carers to call school on the first day of absence to explain the reason for the child's non-attendance. This is important so that we can ensure your child is safe.

Unfortunately you did not call the school today and although we tried to contact you we were unsuccessful.

Please return the slip below explaining (NAME'S) absence from school within 7 days. If we do not receive a valid reason the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Every day will show as 2 sessions of unauthorised absence and if (NAME) reaches 10 sessions in one term I will need to inform the school's Early Help Officer which may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued.

Please, in future, ensure you call the school immediately to explain your child absence. You can leave a message on the answer machine at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
 Headteacher

Absence reply slip

(NAME) was absent on the following date(s) for the reason stated:

Date	Reason

Signed..... Date.....

Name of parent.....

Appendix 4 – Reason for Absence Not Authorised Letter

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

Tel: 01233 622510 | Fax: 01233 739236

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Belmont Road

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Kent

TN24 9LS



Date

Dear (NAME)

At Phoenix Community Primary School we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Unfortunately, I am unable to authorise the absence for (NAME) on (DATE) as the reason you gave for his/her absence is not valid and therefore on this occasion (NAME's) attendance record will show (number) periods of unauthorised absence for (Date).

As from April 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child. On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA

In order to prevent a Penalty Notice from being issued it is imperative that unauthorised absences are kept to a minimum. With this in mind I would ask that you ensure (NAME) is in school everyday possible.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
Headteacher

Appendix 5 – Excessive Absence Letter

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

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Kent
TN24 9LS



Date

Dear (NAME)

I am writing to express my concern over the number of unauthorised sessions that (NAME) has had from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late.

A pupil's absence will seriously disrupt their continuity of learning, not only do they miss out on teaching but they are less prepared for future lessons. This leads to a high risk of under achievement which we must all seek to avoid.

Should «Name»'s absence continue to be a cause for concern I will need to inform the school's Early Help Officer which may lead to a Penalty Notice.

As from April 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child. On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve (Name) attendance.

If we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
Headteacher

Appendix 6 – Excessive Absence Letter – Below 95%

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

Tel: 01233 622510 | Fax: 01233 739236

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Kent

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Date

Dear (NAME),

In line with our Attendance Policy, I am writing to advise you that after a recent absence from school (NAME) attendance has fallen again and now stands at (percentage) for this academic year.

Our minimum attendance target is 95%, however, we are aiming for every child to have an attendance figure of above 98%. I attach a summary of attendance indicating the days that (NAME) was absent from school.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

We will continue to monitor (Name) attendance and would hope to see an improvement, however if (NAME) attendance falls below 92% a referral will be made to the schools Early Help team who may request to meet with you.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with us to improve (NAME's) attendance.

If we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
Headteacher

Appendix 7 – Medical Evidence in Future/Invite to Attendance Meeting Letter

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

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 Kent
 TN24 9LS



Date

Dear «Name»

Re: «Pupil's name»

I note with concern that (NAME'S) attendance at school is still below our minimum target of 95%. (Name) has missed «Number» sessions which will have a major impact on their education which we cannot ignore.

I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness will require medical evidence. If medical evidence is not provided, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for «Date» at «Time». It is important that you and «Name» attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around their poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

«Name»

«Name»

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me on 01233 622510 so that an alternative time can be arranged. If you do not attend this meeting a referral may be made to the Attendance Service resulting in a Penalty Notice being issued.

As from April 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child. On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
 Headteacher

Appendix 8 – 5 or More Continued Days Absence – Request Medical Evidence

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

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Date

Dear «Name»

Re: «Pupil's name»

According to our records (Name) has been absent from school with (reason) between (date) and (date).

In accordance with our Attendance Policy I need you to provide medical evidence to collaborate this information. Please bring this evidence to the school office within the next 7 days.

Unfortunately without this medical evidence I will not be able to authorise this period of absence meaning all (number) sessions will be recorded as unauthorised and a referral may be made to the Attendance Service resulting in a Penalty Notice being issued.

As from April 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child. On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA

I look forward to receiving the medical evidence required.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
 Headteacher

Appendix 9 – Request for Absence – Not Authorised

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

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Date

Dear «Name»

Request for leave during Term-Time «Child's Name»

I have received your request to take «Name» out of school between «Date» and «Date», a total of «Number» school sessions for (reason).

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will **not** be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «Name» out of school I will have to make a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Or

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «Name» to be absent from school. As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued by Kent County Council to **each parent** of **each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
 Headteacher

Appendix 10 – Request for Absence – Authorised

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

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Date

Dear «Name»

Request for leave during Term-Time «Child's Name»

I have received your request to take «Name» out of school between «Date» and «Date», a total of «Number» school sessions for (reason).

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will **not** be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request and I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will be authorised.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
Headteacher

Appendix 11 – Traveller Excessive Absence Letter

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

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Date

Dear «Name»

Traveller Absence

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times «Name» has been absent from school. Since «Date»,(Name)has missed «Number» half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «Number»%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Attendance Service if «Name»'s attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

If «Name»'s attendance does not improve and a referral is made to the Attendance Service, you could be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court unless you can prove that:

- the child has no fixed abode
- because of the nature of your trade or business (work) you have to travel from place to place and your child has attended school as often as possible
- your child has attended for at least 200 sessions in the past 12 months (for children aged 6 years and over)

If you would like to speak to me about «Name»'s attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
Headteacher

Appendix 12 – Request for Traveller Absence – No Return Date

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

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Primary School**

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Ashford

Kent

TN24 9LS



Date

Dear «Name»

Traveller Absence

Thank you for contacting me to say that «Name» will be absent from school from «Date» as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise «Name»'s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when «Name» is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 school days to confirm a date, I will have to refer «Name» as a Child Missing Education (CME) to the Local Authority once «he/she» has been absent for 10 consecutive days.

After 20 days absence, the Local Authority will give me permission to take «Name»'s name off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
Headteacher

Appendix 13 – Request for Traveller Absence – Return Date Provided

Headteacher: Mr James Tibbles

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Primary School**
Belmont Road
Ashford
Kent
TN24 9LS



Date

Dear «Name»

Traveller Absence

Thank you for contacting me to say that «Name» will be absent from school from «Date» to «Date» as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise «Name»'s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, if «Name» does not return to school by «Date», which is 10 school days after your planned return date, the Local Authority will give me permission to take «Name»'s name off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely,

Mr James Tibbles
Headteacher

Appendix 14 – Absence Request Form

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher’s ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances”.

The School’s Attendance Policy confirms that:
 agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
 each case will be judged on its merits
 my decision is final
 leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

If the absence is not authorised but the leave is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance and Behaviour Service who will issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service

NAME OF CHILD(REN)	
D.O.B.	
CLASS:	

Date of First Day of Absence: _____

Date of Return: _____

Number of Days Requested: _____

Reason for leave to be taken during term time:

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Name: _____

School/office use only:

Total sessions (i.e. half days) pupil absence this year:

Total unauthorised pupil absences this year: