

Lunsford Primary School

Application for Leave of Absence

Kent Local Authority policy requires all requests for leave to be made in writing and discussed with the Head teacher. All leave of absence will only be approved in **exceptional circumstances where it is unavoidable**.

Attached to this letter is a copy of the school's Attendance Policy. Please review this before completing the following. Once complete please return to the school office..

Child's name Class.....

Dates of requested absence No of school days.....

Have you made any other requests in past 3 years? Yes ?No

Details

Siblings at other schools (State child's name and school.)

Reason for requested absence.....
.....
.....

Why does the absence need to be during term time?.....
.....
.....

Why is the absence unavoidable?
.....
.....

What are the exceptional circumstances?.....
.....
.....
.....

Could the absence be shorter?.....
.....

Signed..... Date

Child's Name.....

Year.....

APPROVED

After discussion with the Headteacher the following leave of absence has been **approved** for the following reason

.....
.....
.....
.....

Dates agreed.....

Signed Head teacher

Dated

NOT APPROVED

After discussion with the Headteacher the following leave of absence has been **not been approved** for the following reason

.....
.....
.....
.....

Dates agreed.....

Signed Head teacher

Dated

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This attendance policy is the same agreed policy for all schools in the Malling Cluster and actively supported by the Local Authority.

Statement of Intent

- Lunsford Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all of 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. Lunsford Primary School actively promotes 100% attendance for all of our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role, and a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance and we promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies to resolve attendance problems. The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Lunsford Primary School.
- Overall our attendance policy is designed to promote excellent attendance and not to penalise pupils with recognised ongoing medical conditions.
- Where accepted by the school for those children with recognised ongoing medical needs the school would use its discretion on a case by case basis with regard to rewarding and celebrating good attendance within the school.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular 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 in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.50 am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.



Healthy School

The Role of the School Staff

At Lunsford Primary there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

Mrs Mead (Attendance Officer), alongside Mr Anscombe (Headteacher) has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. **Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).** Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies Mrs Mead of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Mrs Mead (Attendance Officer) 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 by text. If a response is not received from the parent a phone call is then made.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed monthly and/or termly of the child's attendance figure if it is of concern

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 90 - 95% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with Headteacher and/ or FLO with parents
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.



Healthy School

Lateness

At Lunsford Primary School pupils are expected to arrive by 8.50am. All pupils arriving after 8.50am should report to the school office. Parents should sign the late book.

Unless there is a valid reason, children who arrive after 9.30am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will result in the pupil receiving an unauthorised absence mark which may, in extreme circumstances, result in the intervention of the School Liaison Officer. Frequent lateness after the register has closed will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets 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(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:



- Persistent nonspecific 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
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings need to be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- *A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.*
- *A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.*
- *After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will 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)*



Healthy School

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

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 will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

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 Local Authority 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.

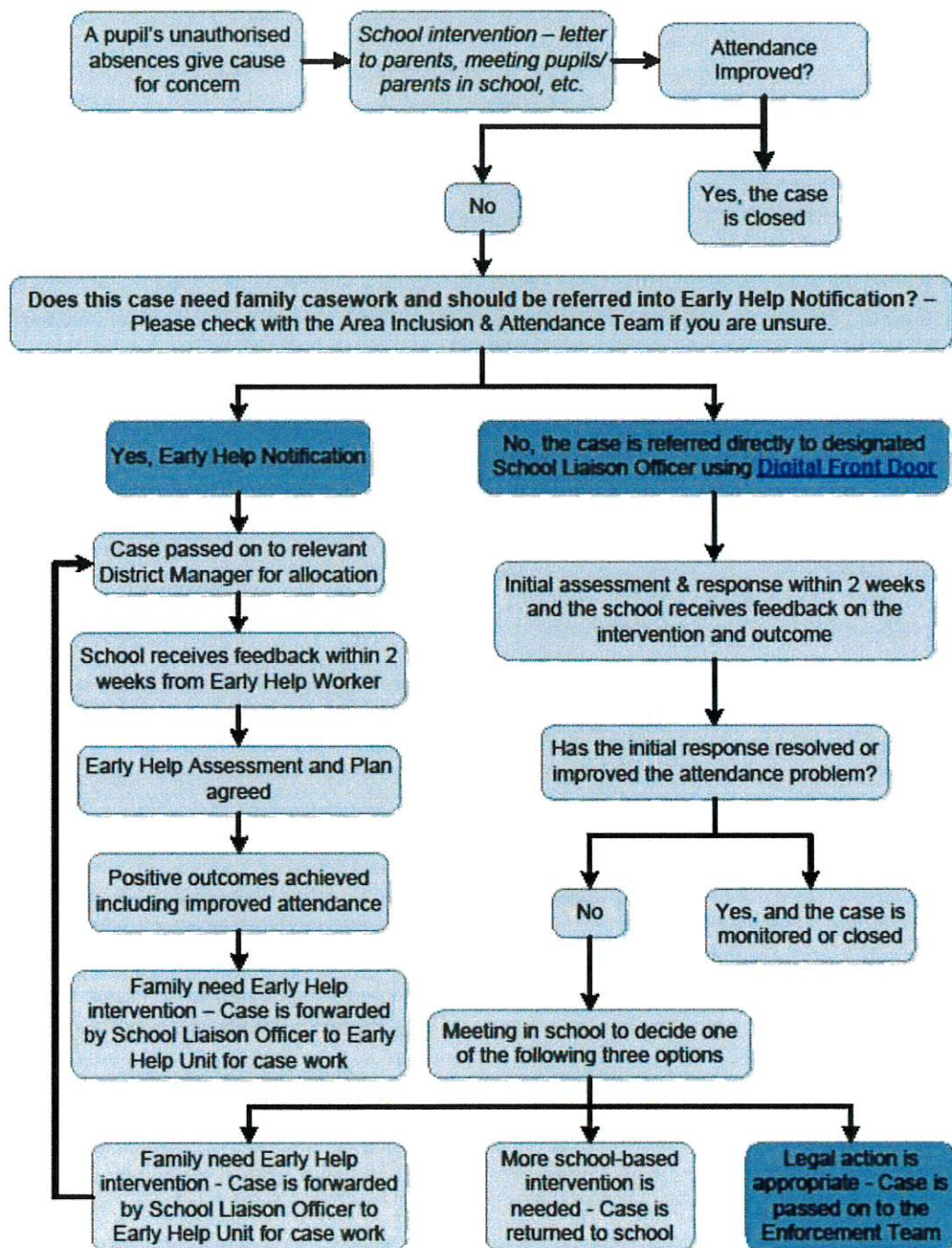
If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

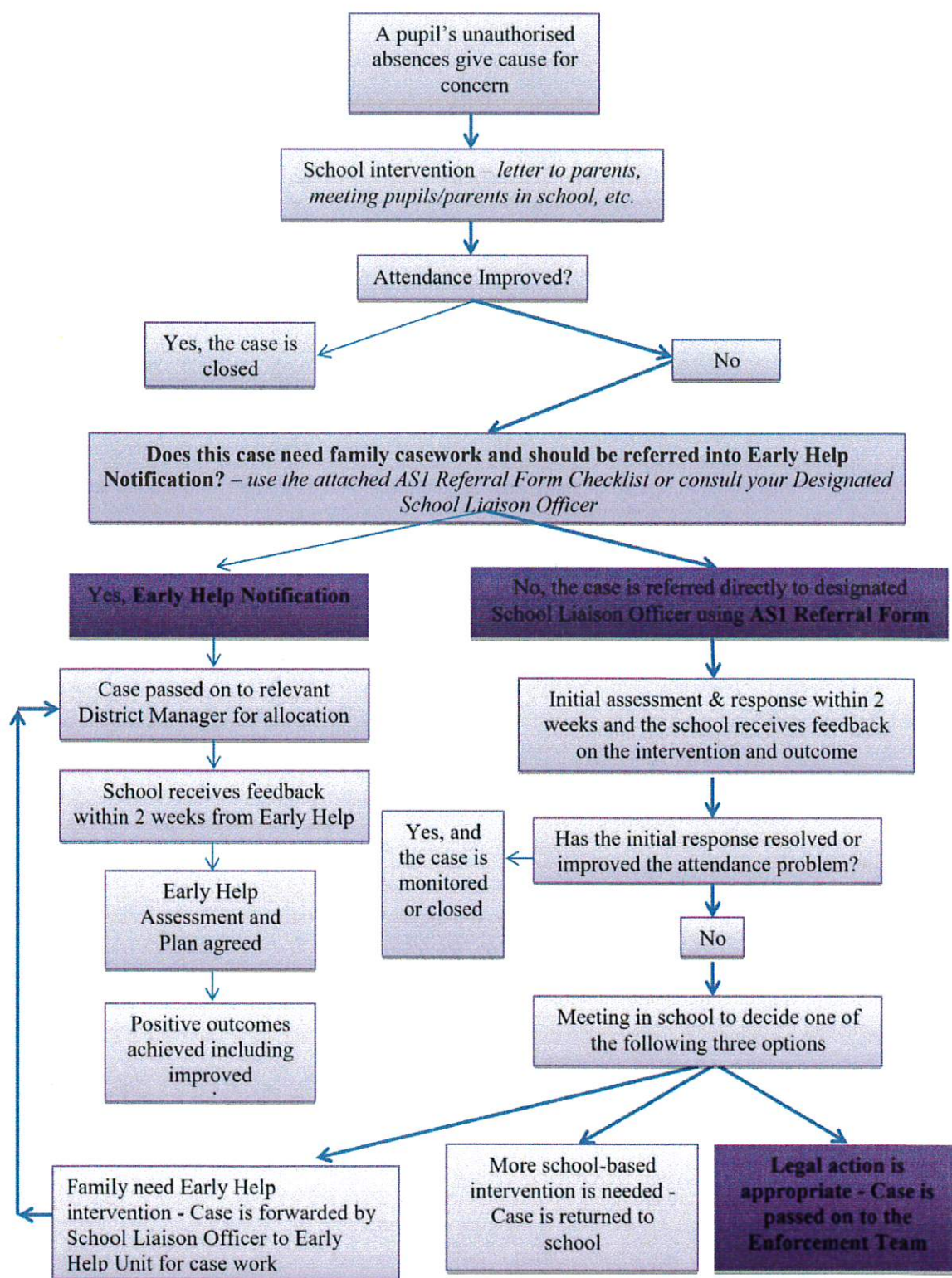
Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.



Appendix 6

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance






LUNSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Information for Parents/ Carers

September 2017

EVERY LESSON COUNTS

Days off school add up to lost learning and impact on your child's life chances.

175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR ETC)			175 DAYS AT HOME (HOLIDAYS	
190 SCHOOL DAYS EACH YEAR 190 days for your child's education EXCELLENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96-100% • Most effective way of success. Sets your child off to a good flying start. 	10 days absence	180 days of education CONCERNING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 96% • School monitors attendance; it is less than expected. 	19 days absence	Half a term missed 161 days of Education SERIOUS CONCERNS LESS THAN 85% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not fair on your child. Educational Welfare are involved and you could be fined.
			170 days of education WORRYING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 90% • Less chance of success: harder to make progress in learning, forming relationships with others and friendships. 	