

## Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) Template Attendance Policy

# Attendance Policy for Plymstock School

### Mission Statement

Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) holds a deep-seated belief in education and lifelong learning. Effective collaboration, mutual support and professional challenge will underpin our quest to ensure that all of the pupils and adults we serve are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential and succeed in life.

Person(s) responsible for updating the WeST template policy:	Richard Woodland, Director of Safeguarding
Person(s) responsible for updating this school-level policy:	Beth Evans
Date Approved:	July 2025 (for implementation in schools from 1/9/25)
Date of next review:	July 2026
Status:	<a href="#">Working Together to Improve School Attendance</a> is DfE statutory guidance

### WeST Core Values

WeST holds four core values which underpin the engagement, motivation and retention of employees, no matter what their role in the organisation.

- Collaboration**  
 Creating a shared vision and working effectively across boundaries in an equitable and inclusive way to skilfully influence and engage others. Building and securing value from relationships, developing self and others to achieve positive outcomes.
- Aspiration**  
 Having high expectations, modelling the delivery of high-quality outcomes. Showing passion, persistence and resilience in seeking creative solutions to strive for continuous improvement and excellence.
- Integrity**  
 Acting always with the interests of children and young people at our heart, and with a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles. Communicating with transparency and respect, creating a working environment based on trust and honesty.
- Compassion**  
 Recognising need in others and acting with positive intention to promote well-being and improve outcomes.

### Providing Accessible Formats

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# Attendance Policy on a Page

## Why is attendance important?

Excellent attendance at school is linked to better academic progress and attainment by ensuring pupils access a broad, balanced and knowledge-rich curriculum. It also ensures that pupils can benefit from the extra-curricular activities on offer at school that promote good social and emotional development. Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child has an appropriate education. For most children in the UK this means full-time attendance at school.

## How is attendance recorded?

Schools have a legal duty to take an attendance register twice a day. This is recorded on an electronic system called SIMS. Attendance is recorded each school day for an 'AM' and 'PM' mark. Where a pupil is absent from school the reason for this absence must be established as soon as possible and recorded on the SIMS attendance record.

## When should pupils attend school?

Pupils should attend on all school days as set out in the term dates available on the school website. Pupils should arrive by 08.35am. The morning registration period is open for 30 minutes from this time. Pupils who arrive after the registration period closes will be marked as late, with a 'U' code signifying an unauthorised absence.

## What should happen if a child cannot attend school?

Parents<sup>1</sup> should inform school as soon as possible that their child is unable to attend by 'phoning 01752 402679 or emailing [studentabsence@plymstockschool.org.uk](mailto:studentabsence@plymstockschool.org.uk). If a child is absent for more than one day parents should continue to update the school of the reason why daily.

## Can a child miss school for a medical or dental appointment?

Wherever possible medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours. Where absence to attend an appointment is unavoidable the pupil should miss as little of the school day as possible. School should be informed of the appointment in advance and the pupil should be 'signed-out' at the time of the appointment at reception. Pupil's will need to be collected by an adult and will not be permitted to leave school site unaccompanied.

## Can a child miss school for a family holiday?

The law only allows Headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) does not support the authorisation of term-time holidays. If a parent is determined to take their child out of school for a family holiday, then they should use the correct form to inform the Headteacher in advance. Should a request for holiday be refused it is likely that a fixed penalty notice will be issued to the parent(s) responsible for the absence of all children absent, in accordance with the national penalty notice framework.

## What about children from forces families?

WeST recognises that special consideration should be given to the children of members of our armed forces. Headteachers will follow [government guidance](#) when considering request from forces families for children to be absent from school.

## Who is responsible for attendance?

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of a parent can be found in the Education Act 1996, and this applies to the legislation to which this policy relates. In addition to the child's birth parents, references to parents in this policy include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) who has care of the child. To reflect this, this policy uses 'parent' to refer to both parents and carers

Every school must have a Senior Attendance Champion, who will take responsibility for attendance. At Plymstock School this is Miss Beth Evans, Assistant Headteacher (bevans@plymstockschool.org.uk). However, attendance is everyone's responsibility, every moment of every day.

## Purpose

Excellent attendance allows children to access the opportunities provided by the school through its curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

This policy sets out the responsibilities of all members of the school community in ensuring excellent attendance. It establishes the legal framework and the responsibilities of all parties to promote, maintain and monitor attendance. It also lays out the school's response to poor attendance.

## Linked Documents and Guidance

DfE (2024)	<a href="#">Working Together to Improve School Attendance</a>
DfE (2023)	<a href="#">Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance and examples of effective practice.</a>
MoD (2022)	<a href="#">Term-time absence for service children</a>
DfE (2025)	<a href="#">Keeping Children Safe in Education</a>
DfE (2023)	<a href="#">Working Together to Safeguard Children</a>

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## Section 1: The Principles and Legal Framework Around Attendance

We expect the highest level of attendance and punctuality from every pupil. High levels of attendance will provide the opportunity for each pupil to develop their full potential during their time at school. Parents<sup>2</sup>, staff, pupils and those in governance must do all in their power to ensure this objective is achieved in line with the legal framework governing attendance and punctuality

### The legal framework governing attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

*“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full-time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance<sup>3</sup> at school or otherwise.”*

Section 444 further states that:

*“The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law.”*

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<sup>2</sup> The definition of a parent can be found in the Education Act 1996, and this applies to the legislation to which this policy relates. In addition to the child's birth parents, references to parents in this policy include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) who has care of the child. To reflect this, this policy uses 'parent' to refer to both parents and carers

<sup>3</sup> Whilst there is no legal definition of 'regular attendance' this was addressed in the [Supreme Court judgement](#) around term-time holidays in the case of *Isle of Wight v. Platt*

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- The pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence)
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parent belongs
- The absence meets the criteria set for children of Traveller groups such as Gypsy/Roma families

Failure to comply may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court where on conviction each parent would be liable to a fine up to £2500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

The Act also places a legal obligation on:

- The Local Authority (LA) to provide school places and enforce school attendance.
- Schools to register attendance and notify the LA of a child's absence from school without authorisation of 10 or more days.
- Those in governance to make sure that school registers are kept; one for attendance and one for admissions.

## **Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities**

Trustees of Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) will:

- Review and agree the WeST template Attendance Policy regularly following advice from the WeST Director of Safeguarding.
- Through the Education Standards Committee hold executive and school leaders to account for attendance across schools in WeST.

WeST Community Committees (WCCs) will:

- Monitor the implementation of the schools' attendance policies and procedures
- Monitor school-level attendance against WeST targets
- Monitor local school attendance data and procedures for equal opportunity issues

The WeST Director of Safeguarding (DoS) will:

- Review and revise the template WeST Attendance Policy regularly (in accordance with the review schedule) and ensure that local adaptations are in place across all schools in the trust
- Monitor the attendance at each school to identify any patterns in the attendance of groups of pupils which may require targeted intervention
- Work with staff in schools to implement targeted interventions to improve attendance
- Report to the WCCs on the attendance of schools within the hub via the Trust's data dashboards

The Headteacher will:

- Set a school attendance target as directed by the WeST Executive Leadership Team
- Monitor progress of attendance of all pupils

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- Oversee attendance arrangements across the school
- Work with school staff to ensure the efficient running of the attendance system
- Make periodic checks of the registers to monitor pupil absence
- Make periodic checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence
- Deal with issues of inadequate registering of pupils and recording of attendance procedures
- Arrange appropriate training for staff
- Determine whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made
- Notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence
- Initiate strategies to improve attendance and train staff accordingly
- Oversee school liaison with the WeST Education Welfare Officer (EWO) over persistent and severe absentees after school action has taken place (i.e. at stage 4 of the WeST attendance support process).
- Liaise with the Local Authority (LA) and police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school.

- Liaise with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that the termly safeguarding reports for those in governance are completed correctly with regards to attendance-related data.

In secondary schools Heads of Year will:

- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Analyse attendance data of year group fortnightly and highlight students whose attendance and punctuality are a cause for concern
- Ensure that all pupil absences are noted and that communication (absence notes/ emails/ calls) is received from parents
- Make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering
- Make regular checks on absence notes
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with
- Contact parents over pupil absences where appropriate
- Liaise with the senior leader in charge of attendance to review patterns of attendance/punctuality and agree appropriate intervention strategies

They may also carry out home visits to check on the welfare of a pupil.

Tutors/Class Teachers will:

- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately
- Follow up cases of unaccounted for absence or unacceptable notes
- Inform the pastoral and attendance teams via ClassCharts of any signs of suspected truancy
- Inform the pastoral and attendance teams of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences and lateness
- Make pupils aware of their attendance at regular intervals
- Welcome students back to school after any period of absence

In schools using Lesson Monitor for lesson-by-lesson registration teaching staff will:

- Inform the appropriate member of staff of the names of pupils who are absent without notification
- Responsible for the accurate official registration of pupils at the beginning of each lesson, using SIMS Lesson Monitor
- Welcome any pupil with long term absence back into the classroom without question ensuring that they can be supported to catch up missed work

The Attendance Manager and Officer will:

- Enter attendance/absence data into SIMS, using Lesson Monitor
- Prepare attendance and punctuality records for tutors
- Prepare reports as required for the Headteacher and others
- Contact parents on the first day of absence
- Support targeted pupils
- Use 'broken weeks' analysis to consider whether to advise targeted intervention where there are attendance concerns, especially early in the academic year when % attendance may be skewed by the low number of school sessions
- Use the WeST attendance support process to inform parents where a pupil's absence falls below the acceptable level
- Notify tutors/class teachers of any patterns of absence
- Liaise with the WeST Education Welfare Officer (EWO) over persistent/severe absentees after school action has taken place (i.e. at stage 4 of the WeST attendance support process).
- Monitor missing marks and notify the Assistant Headteacher, the teacher responsible for the register and their line manager weekly.
- Process absence requests and FPNs where necessary

They may also carry out home visits to check on the welfare of a pupil.

The SENDCO will:

- Support pupils on the SEND register who have regular patterns of non-attendance.

- Be involved in any re-integration programme, where deemed necessary.
- Advise on or support with first day of absence calling and home visits for pupils with SEND.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will:

- Ensure that the school's Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) is set-up with the sub-categories for attendance as set out in the WeST guidance on the use of CPOMS.
- Ensure that the relevant WeST Education Welfare Officer (EWO) has access to CPOMS to both read and record on CPOMS profiles.
- Ensure that the termly WeST safeguarding reports for governance, which include data on attendance, reduced time-tables, alternative provision and elective home education are completed and returned to the WeST DoS on time.
- Work closely with attendance team members to ensure that home visits are prioritised for vulnerable pupils, e.g. those looked after by the local authority or subject to a s17 child in need or s47 child protection plan.
- Ensure that the correct procedures, including the Local Authority safeguarding checks, are followed and recorded on CPOMS where parents request to electively home educate their child.

The WeST Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will:

- Liaise with the school staff regarding concerns over pupil absence.
- Support the school in improving the attendance of its pupils.
- Work with parents to ensure good school attendance.
- Attend timetabled meetings with school staff to deal with attendance/punctuality and welfare issues.
- Advise the school as to its legal obligations and complete appropriate paperwork for legal proceedings.

They may also carry out home visits to check on the welfare of a pupil.

Pupils are required to:

- Attend all sessions in the school year unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('Attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session)
- Attend all lessons promptly, unless they have a valid reason for not attending a particular lesson agreed by the school.
- Adhere to the school's procedures for signing-in and signing-out of school if arriving or leaving at a time other than the normal start and end of the school day.

Parents are required to:

- Be responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually in accordance with their legal obligations
- Make any request for leave of absence on the school's official leave of absence form (see appendix 2).
- Telephone school on the first day of absence and any subsequent days.
- Provide a reason to explain any absence.
- Plan holidays outside of term time.
- Attend any meetings organised by the school and/or EWO to create an action plan to improve attendance.

### **Section 3: Expectations and processes of managing attendance and following-up on unexplained absence.**

#### **Expected Attendance**

The law requires schools to be open to pupils for 190 days each year<sup>4</sup>. Each day a legal register is taken for the 'AM' and 'PM' session. In addition, registers are taken for lesson attendance. All registers are recorded electronically on a database called SIMS. This information constitutes the legal attendance register for the school as such is shared with the LA and government for their reporting and monitoring purposes. The times of the daily registration are:

- Morning session, 'AM Registration': from 08:40 to 09:10
- Afternoon session, 'PM Registration': from 12:40 to 12:50

<sup>4</sup> Under so called Academy freedoms schools in WeST may choose to assign one or more of these days for additional staff training (i.e. non-pupil INSET days)

Overall attendance is calculated on the legal requirement for pupils to attend 190 school days per year. As each day consists of two sessions ('AM' and 'PM') there are a total of 380 possible sessions in a school year. Therefore, if a pupil is ill for three days in a year, their attendance would be 98.4% because 3 days is 6 missed registration sessions and  $(374/380) \times 100 = 98.4\%$  attendance.

The Department for Education defines any pupil with below 90% attendance as Persistently Absent, and any pupil with attendance below 50% as Severely Absent.

## Monitoring

Parents may request an up-to-date attendance report at any time during the school year. Please contact the Attendance Officer to request this. Parents can also check their child's attendance on the ClassCharts App.

The school will have regular checks to monitor attendance, including;

- Daily checks carried out by the attendance officer of the SIMS registers. Parents of pupils coded N (unauthorised absence – reason for absence not yet provided) for that day may expect an email and a phone call from a member of the pastoral or attendance teams to ask for an explanation for their child's absence.
- Each week the attendance manager will analyse data patterns of attendance across the school by pupil groups to highlight areas for improvement using the WeST attendance tracker. With due consideration for individual circumstances, overseen by the Senior Attendance Champion, the following actions may be taken based on this weekly analysis:

Stage	Who is Responsible?	% Attendance	Total Number of Sessions Absent	Number of UNAUTHORISED Sessions Absent	Action
0	School	More than 97%	Less than 10	None	School continues to monitor and recognise good attendance.
1	School	96%	10 sessions	4 sessions	<b>CONVERSATION</b> to explore reasons, remind parent their child is now only just at expected attendance levels, and try to identify barriers around attendance,  OR explain concerns around unauthorised absence.
2	School	95%	15 sessions	8 sessions	<b>YELLOW LETTER</b> , stating that since the conversation child has now fallen below expected level of attendance,  OR unauthorised absences are too high.
3	School	92%	30 sessions	10 sessions	<b>AMBER LETTER</b> inviting parent to a <b>Supportive Attendance Meeting (SAM)</b> . Attendance Action Plan agreed and confirmed in writing, including a review period. This is followed by a review meeting (at which WeST EWO referral will be explained if there has been no further improvement.)
4	School (handing over to WeST EWO)	90%	40 Sessions  Or further unauthorised absences after SAM	More than 10 sessions	<b>RED LETTER - referral to WeST EWO</b> . EWO will contact parent and arrange either a <b>review meeting</b> (authorised absences) or a <b>formal meeting</b> (unauthorised absences).

- In line with DfE school census guidance at the end of each academic year, registers are reset, and attendance is started again for the next academic year. However, attendance concerns will be considered on a rolling basis.

WeST has access to all school attendance registers daily. School attendance records, held on SIMS, are also shared with the Department for Education (DfE) via the WONDE platform. The school also provides attendance data to the LA and DfE at regular intervals during the academic year as part of statutory school accountability processes.

## Truancy

A pupil is deemed to be truanting when they are not where they are expected to be, as shown by their timetable, and does not have permission to be elsewhere.

- Pupils who truant from lessons, or leave the school site, are marked as an unauthorised absence.
- Parents are informed.
- Truancy will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

## Punctuality

It is important to make the distinction between a late that occurs during the official registration period (marked as 'L') and a late that occurs after the official registration period (marked as 'U' and which constitutes an unauthorised absence). The registration period covers the time between 08:40 and 09:10 during the morning session.

The Attendance Officer will ensure the appropriate late code is recorded on SIMS:

- 'L' where a pupil arrives late but during the morning registration period (08:40 and 09:10). This does not affect the pupil's overall attendance figure.
- 'U' where a pupil arrives later after the morning registration period has closed (i.e. after 09:10)<sup>5</sup>. This will affect the pupil's overall attendance figure.

Pupils who become persistently absent through lateness will have parent(s) contacted by a member of the attendance or pastoral teams.

*Pupils that arrive late for morning registration (08:40-09:10) should enter school through "late gate" located at the Eco entrance and be recorded as in school. Staff should record this late, include the time, on SIMS. Students will then be directed to the late room located in Eco 2.*

*Pupils who arrive late after the morning registration period (i.e. after 09:10) should sign-in at Reception and will be marked as 'U'. Students who are significantly late to school, without a valid reason will be referred to Reset.*

## Signing-out

There must always be an accurate record of all pupils on-site. Pupils must sign-out if they are leaving the school site.

*Staff will follow normal safeguarding procedures to ensure the safety of pupils asking to leave the site. Pupils should be signed out at reception, producing proof of why they are leaving (an appointment card, note or such) if it is not already marked on SIMS and will need to be collected by an adult in order for them to leave school site.*

## Long-term Medical Absence

When a pupil is absent because of long-term illness, or an under-lying health condition an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) may be written alongside the parent and other appropriate stakeholders. This should provide a structure for the pupil to be re-integrated back into the classroom. An IHCP should only be completed once diagnosis is confirmed and the prognosis given by the medical team supporting the pupil.

## Section 4: Absence, persistent absence, severe absence and support for pupils and parents

### Absence

WeST understands that pupils may be genuinely absent for obvious reasons, including: poor health or illness; bereavement; and other exceptional circumstances. Parents are required to inform the school as soon as possible of their child's absence. They must also give a reason for the absence. Pupils missing registration will be initially coded 'N' (No reason given), until an explanation has been given from the parent. It can then be changed to the appropriate code, for example 'I' (Illness). 'N'

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<sup>5</sup> There may be occasions where the 'C' code (other authorised circumstances) is used, e.g. if lateness is known to be the result of a pupil acting as a young carer. Such cases needed to be carefully considered and made with the approval of the Senior Attendance Champion. A record of the decision-making should be on CPOMS, for external scrutiny.

marks should be changed to 'O' (absent without authorisation) at the end of the school day if no reason has been identified for the absence.

Where a pupil's attendance is a concern (e.g. less than 92% attendance)) due to illness, then the school may invite parents to provide medical evidence for any further absence as part of a Supportive Attendance Meeting. Medical evidence may include items such as a doctor's notes or certificates or hospital appointment letters.

### **Leave of Absence**

The Headteacher can only grant leave of absence in very exceptional cases. The Headteacher will make decisions with due regard for the individual circumstances and attendance profile of the pupil concerned.

Should families wish to apply for leave of absence, a request form (see Appendix 2) can be collected from the Attendance Officer or downloaded from the school website at least two weeks prior to the date leave is required. The form should be returned to the Attendance Officer, who will consult with Senior Attendance Champion and/or the Headteacher. Parents will be advised of the outcome. Should parents wish to appeal this decision, this should be addressed in writing to the Headteacher as part of the WeST complaints process.

### **Support for pupils not maintaining expected levels of attendance**

Pupils will face a graduated level of support to meet their need for improving attendance. The most effective support is when clear lines of communication are established between all parties involved. The strategies that may be employed will include (but are not limited to the following). In each case due consideration will be given to the individual circumstances of the pupil.

#### ***96 % attendance / 10 sessions of authorised absence / 4 sessions of unauthorised absence***

A conversation (stage 1) will take place to explore the reasons for absence, remind the parent of attendance expectations and try to identify any barriers around attendance.

#### ***95% Attendance / 15 sessions of authorised absence / 8 sessions of unauthorised absence***

A yellow (stage 2) attendance concern letter will be sent home stating that the pupil's attendance has fallen below expected levels.

#### ***92% attendance / 30 sessions of authorised absence / 10 sessions of unauthorised absence***

An amber attendance concern letter (stage 3) will be sent home inviting the parent to a Supportive Attendance Meeting (SAM). This is a meeting to discuss the barriers to attending and to agree actions to support and remove these barriers.

#### ***90% attendance / 40 sessions of authorised absence / more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence***

A red referral to WeST EWO letter (stage 4) will be sent home. The EWO will then make contact about the next step, e.g. a review meeting or a formal absence meeting.

### ***Other Strategies that may be used***

- Requests for additional medical evidence.
- Parents may be invited to attend a Team Around Me (TAM), or an Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) meeting, where barriers to attendance can be discussed and solutions offered.
- Where social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) needs or other medical needs are identified, referral to the appropriate agency may be supported. For example, counselling, CAMHS or other pupil services.
- Reduced timetables may only be offered pupils with a medical or SEMH need. They should only be used for the shortest time possible to allow a successful re-integration and must not be used as response to poor behaviour.<sup>6</sup>
- WeST Education Welfare Officers (EWO) may contact families directly. They may also carry out home visits.
- Heads of Year, EWO and other staff may carry out a home visit to help support pupils and families.

## **Section 5: Parental Guidance for holiday requests**

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<sup>6</sup> See DfE Guidance (September 2022): [Behaviour in Schools](#)

WeST believes that pupils benefit from full-time attendance at school so that they can access a broad, balanced and knowledge-rich curriculum that promotes academic progress and attainment. Excellent attendance also ensures that pupils can benefit from the extra-curricular activities on offer at school that promote good social and emotional development. As such, WeST does not encourage its Headteachers to authorise requests for term-time holidays. Whilst WeST recognises that Headteachers may legally authorise such request in exceptional circumstances it is highly unlikely that this will be the case. This stance is in line with DfE guidance<sup>7</sup>, para 38.

***“The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.”***

- From September 2013, the Government has legislated that no holidays will be authorised in term time<sup>8</sup>
- If parents take their children on holiday during term time the Headteacher will request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)
- The school will act according to DfE and LA advice should there be any changes in legislation

### **What parents should consider**

WeST recognises that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term time leave for their children; this is not considered to be ‘exceptional circumstances.’ It is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while children of all ages may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

Any absence from school may lead to a child experiencing problems, such as difficulties securing basic skills of reading, writing and maths which are fundamental to progress through out school. However, absence at certain times of year can be particularly problematic, e.g.

- Closeness to exams or tests
- During GCSEs, A-levels and other examination courses
- During the first year at a new school
- At the beginning of a new school term

If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may lead to a £160 (£80 is paid within 21 days) fine per parent responsible for the absence, for each child.

### **The Law**

The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. However, in *exceptional circumstances* the Headteacher may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.

If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period, this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance. If the child is away from school for a total of 4 weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness<sup>9</sup>. In these circumstances it is up to the parent to inform the school, as once removed from roll there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

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<sup>7</sup> DfE (2023): [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

<sup>8</sup> This was tested in the [Isle of Wight v. Platt case](#), upon which the Supreme Court made a judgement

<sup>9</sup> DfE9 (2016) [Children Missing in Education](#)

Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances.

**Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:**

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments  
(but these should be arranged out of school hours if possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces<sup>10</sup>
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents, where the school is informed beforehand

Other absence from school will not be authorised, for example:

- For any type of shopping
- Looking after siblings or parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Because holidays are cheaper in term time
- More than one day for a family wedding

**Fixed Penalty Notices**

The school will issue and administer penalty notices according to Local Authority procedures which are governed by the national framework for penalty notices.

The penalty is £80, for each parent responsible for the absence per child, if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay may result in prosecution where on conviction parents would be liable to a fine of up to £2500.

- Penalty notices may be issued where it is determined that to do so would be an effective and appropriate addition to ongoing casework with a pupil and their parent. The Headteacher will be informed if this action is taken.
- Where feasible, parents should be warned of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued and invited to make representations to the school.

## **Section 6: Strategies for promoting school attendance**

WeST recognises that positively promoting excellent attendance (above 97%) will have the biggest impact on a pupil's attainment and wellbeing. Intrinsic motivators, such as a developing a pupil's own desire and ambition to attend school regularly and do well, are always preferably to extrinsic motivators such as school rewards systems. However, WeST recognises that in some circumstances rewards and incentives can play a role in promoting good school attendance by recognising pupil achievement, especially where attendance improves through a pupil's actions to overcome barriers to attendance. It is important to ensure that any such rewards and incentives are applied fairly and that they do not discriminate against either groups or individual pupils.

Schools in WeST will pay careful consideration to the Equality Act 2010<sup>11</sup> to ensure that individuals with protected characteristics are not discriminated against. As such, WeST does not agree with rewarding pupils for 100% attendance as

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<sup>10</sup> Due consideration should be given to the guidance, [MOD advice to headteachers: term-time absence for service children](#)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

this may discriminate against pupils, e.g. those with under-lying health conditions for whom 100% attendance is unachievable.

Rewards that may be used at our school are:

- ClassCharts Positive Points that can be exchanged for tangible rewards
- Prize draws
- Celebration events e.g. breakfasts, assemblies

## Section 7: Elective Home Education

Parents have a legal right to request elective home education (EHE) for their child, in line with their statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure their child receives a full time, efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs. However, WeST strongly believes that the majority of pupils are best served by receiving their education in school, where they benefit from structured learning, social development safeguarding oversight. Where parents are considering EHE, they are encouraged to discuss this with school staff at the earliest opportunity to explore all options and implications. Should a parent formally request to de-register their child the school will initiate the appropriate Local Authority safeguarding checks and notify the WeST EWO. The EWO will then contact the parent to ensure they fully understand their responsibilities associated with EHE, and to offer support where appropriate.

## Section 8: Flexi-schooling

Flexi-schooling is a legal option for parents to fulfil their statutory obligation to provide a full-time and efficient education for their child. However, schools are not legally required to offer flexi-schooling arrangements, and the decision to do so lies solely with the Headteacher. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis, considering the child's best interests. In line with its general principles, WeST believes that the vast majority of children benefit most from a full-time school education. Parents should be aware that there is no right of appeal against the Headteacher's decision on flexi-schooling requests. If dissatisfied with the outcome, parents are advised to follow the WeST complaints procedure.

Version	Summary of Changes
Jan 2023	New policy for use across WeST schools
Sept 2023	Updated in line with the WeST attendance escalation process New template letters added in line with the WeST attendance escalation process
June 2024	Changes to WeST attendance support processes Changes in lines with the new statutory guidance <a href="#">Working Together to Improve School Attendance</a>
July 2025	Addition of Section 7: Elective Home Education and Section 8: Flexi-schooling

## Appendix 1 – Template letters for the WeST Attendance Support Process

### Stage 2 - YELLOW ATTENDANCE LETTER: 8 sessions unauthorised absence

«addressee»

«address »

Date

Dear «salutation»

«forename» «surname» «reg»

Date of birth: «date\_of\_birth»

Percentage attendance: «percentage\_attendance»% This equates to <<number of sessions>> missed, there are two sessions per school day.

At **name of School**, we recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality, and the positive impact this has on personal development and academic progress.

«forename»'s **tutor/teacher/head of year** has previously contacted you to discuss your child's attendance and how we can support «forename» in school. Unfortunately, «forename» has now missed «number sessions unauthorised» sessions due to unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absences are recorded when either no reason for the absence is given, or the reasons given are not authorised by the school. A pupil may also incur unauthorised absence for a whole session if they are late to school after the registers have closed, or a request for leave of absence is not authorised or not requested by you prior to the absence.

«forename»'s **tutor/teacher/head of year** will continue to work with you to try and resolve any challenges that they are facing. Working together is often the most effective way of making positive changes leading to improved engagement, enjoyment and ultimately attendance at school.

Please find enclosed/attached a copy of your child's attendance record for this academic school year for your reference.

Yours sincerely,

**Name of staff**

Senior Attendance Champion

### Stage 3 - AMBER LETTER: 30 sessions absence / 92% attendance

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Date

Dear «salutation»

«forename» «surname» «reg»

Date of birth: «date\_of\_birth»

Percentage attendance: «percentage\_attendance»% This equates to <<number of sessions>> missed, there are two sessions per school day.

Following our previous communications about «forename»'s absence, their attendance has fallen below the expected level. This is impacting on their experience and progress at school.

Name of colleague, has spoken to you already to arrange a meeting to discuss any challenges that your child is facing.

**This meeting will take place time, date and location of meeting.**

At this meeting we will agree an Attendance Action Plan. This will set out ways we have agreed we can work together to help «forename» improve their attendance.

#### **Further Absences**

Following this meeting further absences may only be authorised, if we are satisfied that the reasons for the absence were completely unavoidable. We will discuss this at the meeting. If you can provide us with additional information this will help us code further absence appropriately. For example, you could provide us with an appointment card from a medical practitioner or a copy of your child's prescription.

If you believe that your child has an ongoing medical condition which is impacting their ability to attend school fully, please tell us about this at the meeting. We will consider developing or amending an Individual Health Care Plan with you. We will also try and engage any appropriate health care professionals, to support your child with their education, if not already in place.

If there are other challenges which impact on «forename»'s ability to attend school regularly, then it may be possible to access some additional support under Early Help. If you would like us to explore this with you then we can discuss this at the meeting. Further information about Early Help is available at: [insert URL for appropriate LA Early Help offer](#).

Yours sincerely,

Name of Staff

Senior Attendance Champion

### Stage 3 - AMBER LETTER: 10 sessions of unauthorised absence

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Date

Dear «salutation»

«forename» «surname» «reg»

Date of birth: «date\_of\_birth»

Percentage attendance: «percentage\_attendance»% This equates to <<number of sessions>> missed, there are two sessions per school day.

Following our previous communications «forename» has had further sessions of unauthorised absence. They have now missed «number sessions unauthorised» sessions due to unauthorised absence. This absence is impacting on their experience and progress at school.

Name of colleague, has spoken to you already to arrange a meeting to discuss any challenges that your child is facing.

**This meeting will take place time, date and location of meeting.**

At this meeting we will agree an Attendance Action Plan. This will set out ways we have agreed we can work together to help «forename» improve their attendance.

I must advise you that under section 441 and section 441A of the Education Act 1996 it is an offence by the parents or carer if their child, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly. If your «forename»'s attendance does not improve, then we will refer this to the Westcountry Schools Trust Education Welfare Officer (WeST EWO). This could lead to a penalty notice (fine) being issued or other legal proceedings.

#### **Further Absences**

Following this meeting further absences may only be authorised, if we are satisfied that the reasons for the absence were completely unavoidable. If you can provide us with additional information this will help us code further absence appropriately. For example, you could provide us with an appointment card from a medical practitioner or a copy of your child's prescription.

If you believe that your child has an ongoing medical condition which is impacting their ability to attend school fully, please tell us about this at the meeting. We will consider developing or amending an Individual Health Care Plan with you. We will also try and engage any appropriate health care professionals, to support your child with their education, if not already in place.

If there are other challenges which impact on «forename»'s ability to attend school regularly, then it may be possible to access some additional support under Early Help. If you would like us to explore this with you then we can discuss this at the meeting. Further information about Early Help is available at: [insert URL for appropriate LA Early Help offer](#).

Yours sincerely,

Name of Staff

Senior Attendance Champion

**Stage 4 - RED LETTER: Referral to WeST EWO due to 40 sessions of absence / 90% attendance / unauthorised absence following a SAM / more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence**

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Date

Dear «salutation»,  
«forename» «surname» «reg»

Date of birth: «date\_of\_birth»

Percentage attendance: «percentage\_attendance»% This equates to <<number of sessions>> missed, there are two sessions per school day.

Following our meeting on [insert date](#) regarding our concerns about «forename»'s attendance where we set out an agreed attendance action plan there has been no significant and lasting improvement.

«forename» is now considered to be [in / or](#) at risk of falling into the category of a Persistent Absentee, as defined by the Department of Education. This means your child has missed 10% or more of the days they should have attended school.

This matter has now been referred to [name of EWO](#), Westcountry School's Trust Education Welfare Officer (WeST EWO), who will monitor your child's attendance alongside us and will be looking to support you and your child to improve their attendance. [Name of EWO](#) will contact you directly to discuss this matter further.

I must advise you that under section 441 and section 441A of the Education Act 1996 it is an offence by the parents or carer if their child, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly. If your «forename»'s attendance does not improve this could lead to a penalty notice (fine) being issued or other legal proceedings.

If you feel that there are genuine reasons for «forename»'s continued absence or you have significant medical evidence that you would like us to consider then you should provide this immediately.

Please find attached/enclosed a copy of your child's attendance record for your reference.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of staff](#)

Senior Attendance Champion



## S2 ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

### PART 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT/CARER

**Notes to parents/carers**

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Only a Head Teacher can agree to grant leave of absence and **permission must be sought at least 20 school days in advance** and must only be for **exceptional circumstances**. To request leave of absence you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent with whom the child normally lives. If you do not have parental responsibility and/or normally live with the child, you must seek the consent of the parent who does, and that person should complete this form. Schools will only consider requests from that parent.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will only consider:

- The reason for the leave (i.e. whether there are exceptional circumstances)
- The time and duration of the leave
- Whether or not the leave could have been taken during the statutory school holiday periods
- Learning that will be missed**

**WARNING: UNLESS YOU HAVE RECEIVED WRITTEN CONFIRMATION FROM THE SCHOOL THAT THE ABSENCE WILL BE AUTHORISED, YOU MUST NOT ASSUME THAT IT WILL BE. IF THE HEAD TEACHER REFUSES YOUR REQUEST AND YOUR CHILD IS STILL TAKEN OUT OF SCHOOL, THE ABSENCE WILL BE RECORDED AS AN UNAUTHORISED AND YOU MAY BE LIABLE TO A £80/£160 FINE. FINES ARE ISSUED TO EACH PARENT/CARER FOR EACH CHILD. IF YOU HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED A PENALTY FINE WITHIN A 3-YEAR ROLLING PERIOD, ANY FURTHER PENALTY NOTICES WILL BE CHARGED AT A RATE OF £160 WITH NO OPTION TO PAY A REDUCED RATE OF £80. PLEASE READ THE ADVICE OVERLEAF**

To the Headteacher/Principal of ..... **School/College**

I wish to apply for  
 Name(s) of Child(ren) ..... DOB.....School.....  
**(Include siblings attending other Schools)** ..... DOB .....School.....

to be authorised as being absent from school from ..... to ..... inclusive

**Reason for request for absence during term time. If this is a holiday request please explain the exceptional circumstances which mean that the holiday cannot be taken during a school holiday:**

Signature of Parent/Carer ..... Date .....

Signature of Parent/Carer ..... Date .....

### PART 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD TEACHER/PRINCIPAL

- Authorised** The School/College agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.
- Absence dates** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_
- Unauthorised** The School/College does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason(s):

<b>Learning that will be missed</b>	<b>No Exceptional Circumstances</b>
<b>The time and duration of the leave</b>	<b>Leave could have been taken during school holiday periods</b>

Signed..... Head Teacher/Principal Date .....

**HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME. IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THE INFORMATION BELOW**

**Warning: If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be issued a £80/£160 Penalty Fine. Both parents will be liable for a fine for each child taken on holiday during term time. In relation to education, s576 of the Education Act 1996 states that any person who has the actual day to day care and custody of the child such as a step-parent or partner, for example, is also included in the definition of a parent and will be liable for a fine. If you have already received a penalty fine within a 3-year rolling period, any further penalty notices will be charged at a rate of £160 with no option to pay a reduced rate of £80.**

The Facts	The Law
<p>It is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the course work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>What you should consider: There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term time leave such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Closeness to exams or tests (Standard Attainment Tests in Year 2, 6 and 9).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> During GCSE, and other examination courses.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> During the first year at a new school.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At the beginning of a new school term.</li> </ul> <p>If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and may lead to a <b>£80/£160 fine per parent, for each child</b>.</p> <p>Please contact your child's Headteacher if you wish to discuss your reasons for requesting the absence</p>	<p>The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.</p> <p><b>From 19th August 2024, changes to legislation have introduced a national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence that can trigger a penalty notice. There are 2 sessions in each school day.</b></p> <p>In <b>exceptional circumstances</b> a Head Teacher may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and the parent could be liable to a penalty fine or court action in relation to failure to ensure the regular attendance of their child.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of 4 weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p> <p><b>Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances.</b></p>

<p><b>Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Genuine illness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Days of religious observance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> External examinations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When the Traveller children go on the road with their</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other absence from school will not be authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> For any type of shopping</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Minding the house</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Birthdays</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Resting after a late night</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relatives visiting or visiting relatives.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Because holidays are cheaper in term time</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> More than one day for a family wedding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The law requires schools to be open to pupils for 190 days each year, and every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time. We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to take holidays during term time.</b></p>	

## Appendix 3 – Plymstock Template letters for the WeST Attendance Support Process

### Stage 2 - YELLOW ATTENDANCE LETTER: 8 sessions unauthorised absence

Dear «salutation»,

«forename» «surname» («reg»)

Date of birth: «date\_of\_birth»

Percentage attendance: «percentage\_attendance»%

This equates to «number of sessions» sessions missed (there are two sessions per school day).

A member of the pastoral team has previously been in contact with you to discuss <<forename>>'s attendance and explore ways we can support «forename» in school. Unfortunately, we note that «forename» has now missed «number sessions unauthorised» sessions due to unauthorised absence.

We fully appreciate that there may be genuine reasons why a student is not always able to attend school, and we understand that some of these challenges can be complex or difficult to manage. Please be assured that our intention is not to place blame, but to offer the right support to help «forename» re-engage fully with school life.

We are keen to work in partnership with you to understand any barriers that may be impacting «forename»'s attendance and to identify any practical steps we can take to help. Open and honest communication is key, and we are here to listen and support.

At Plymstock School, we recognise the vital importance of good attendance and punctuality. Consistent attendance plays a key role in students' academic progress, emotional wellbeing, and their overall personal development.

So you are aware, unauthorised absences are recorded when either no explanation for the absence is provided, or when the reason given cannot be authorised by the school. This can also include lateness after the morning registers have closed, or when a request for leave of absence is either not authorised or not submitted in advance.

A member of the pastoral or attendance team will continue to be in touch to support you and your child. Together, we hope to make positive changes that will lead to improved attendance, engagement, and enjoyment at school.

Please find enclosed/attached a copy of your child's attendance record for this academic year, for your reference.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of Staff]

Senior Attendance Champion

[School Name]

**Stage 2 - YELLOW ATTENDANCE LETTER: 15 sessions of authorised absence / 95% attendance**

«addressee»

«address»

[Date]

Dear «salutation»,

«forename» «surname» («reg»)

Date of birth: «date\_of\_birth»

Percentage attendance: «percentage\_attendance»%

This equates to «number of sessions» sessions missed (there are two sessions per school day).

A member of the pastoral team has previously contacted you to discuss attendance concerns and to offer support. Unfortunately, «forename» has continued to miss further time from school, and their attendance is now below the expected level.

We understand that there may be valid and sometimes complex reasons behind a student's absence, and we want to reassure you that we are here to help. Our priority is to work with you to understand any challenges that may be affecting «forename»'s ability to attend school regularly, and to offer appropriate support wherever we can.

We believe that working in partnership with families is the most effective way to bring about positive changes. With the right support in place, we hope to see improved attendance, increased engagement in learning, and greater enjoyment of school.

At Plymstock School, we recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality, and the positive impact these have on a student's academic progress, personal development, and future opportunities. Regular attendance supports not only learning, but also the formation of positive relationships and routines that are vital to long-term success.

We will continue to work closely with you. In the meantime, please find enclosed/attached a copy of your child's attendance record for this academic year for your reference.

Thank you for your ongoing support, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this further.

**Yours sincerely,**

[Name of Staff]

**Senior Attendance Champion**

[School Name]

### Stage 3 - AMBER LETTER: 30 sessions absence / 92% attendance

«addressee»

«address\_block»

[Date]

Dear «salutation»,

«forename» «surname» («reg»)

Date of birth: «date\_of\_birth»

Percentage attendance: «percentage\_attendance»%

This equates to «number of sessions» sessions missed (there are two sessions per school day).

Following our previous communications about «forename»'s attendance, unfortunately their attendance has not improved. As you are aware, consistent attendance is essential for ensuring students have full access to their education, make good progress, and feel connected to school life. Persistent absence can significantly affect a child's learning, wellbeing, and long-term outcomes.

We understand that there may be genuine and sometimes complex reasons why a young person may find attending school regularly difficult. Please be assured that we are here to listen and to help and that our intention is not to place blame, but to offer the right support to help «forename» re-engage fully with school life.

A member of the pastoral or attendance team will be in contact with you to confirm a meeting so that we can discuss any barriers that might be affecting «forename»'s attendance and how we can best support them moving forward.

This meeting will take place on **[time, date, and location of meeting]**.

At this meeting, we will work together to develop an **Attendance Action Plan**, which will set out agreed steps and support we can put in place to help «forename» improve their attendance and fully re-engage with school.

#### Authorising Future Absences

After this meeting, any further absences will only be authorised if the school is satisfied that the reason for the absence was unavoidable. We will explain this in more detail at the meeting. It is helpful if you can provide medical evidence such as appointment cards or a copy of a prescription where applicable, as this enables us to correctly record any absence.

If you believe that «forename» has a medical condition that is affecting their ability to attend school regularly, please let us know during the meeting. In such cases, we can consider creating or updating an **Individual Health Care Plan** and may also look to work alongside healthcare professionals to support your child's access to education.

#### Additional Support

If there are other difficulties or family circumstances contributing to «forename»'s attendance concerns, we may be able to explore wider support options through the Early Help process. This is a supportive service designed to help families overcome challenges before they escalate. If you would like to consider

this, we will be happy to discuss it further at the meeting. Further information about Early Help is available at: [Plymouth Early Help and SEND Advice line | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](https://plymouth.gov.uk/early-help-and-send-advice-line)

We value our partnership with you and want to work together to ensure «forename» has every opportunity to succeed. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

**[Name of Staff]**  
**Senior Attendance Champion**  
[School Name]

### Stage 3 - AMBER LETTER: 10 sessions of unauthorised absence

«addressee»

«address\_block»

[Date]

Dear «salutation»,

«forename» «surname» («reg»)

Date of birth: «date\_of\_birth»

Percentage attendance: «percentage\_attendance»%

This equates to «number of sessions» sessions missed (there are two sessions per school day).

A member of the pastoral or attendance team has previously been in touch with you to discuss «forename»'s unauthorised absence, unfortunately «forename» has continued to have further sessions of unauthorised absence.

We would like to arrange a meeting so we can better understand the challenges your child may be facing and how we can work together to address them. We understand that there may be genuine and sometimes complex reasons why a young person may find attending school regularly difficult. Please be assured that we are here to listen and to help and that our intention is not to place blame.

This meeting will take place on [time, date and location of meeting].

At this meeting, we will develop an **Attendance Action Plan** which will outline the support we can offer and the steps we can agree upon together to help «forename» improve their attendance and engagement with school.

#### Legal Responsibilities

While we are committed to offering support, it's important that we also remind you of your legal responsibilities. Under **Section 441 and Section 441A of the Education Act 1996**, it is an offence for a parent or carer to fail to ensure their child attends school regularly. If «forename»'s attendance does not show sustained improvement, the school may be required to refer the matter to the **Westcountry Schools Trust Education Welfare Officer (WeST EWO)**. This could result in a **penalty notice (fine)** or further legal proceedings.

#### Authorising Future Absences

After this meeting, any further absences will only be authorised if we are satisfied that the absence was completely unavoidable. Please support us by providing any relevant information or evidence, such as appointment cards from healthcare professionals or prescriptions, so that we can accurately code any future absence.

If you believe «forename» has an ongoing medical condition that is affecting their ability to attend school, please raise this during the meeting. Where appropriate, we can create or update an **Individual Health Care Plan**, and liaise with relevant medical professionals to support their continued access to education.

## Additional Support

If there are other difficulties that may be affecting «forename»'s attendance—such as challenges at home or within the community—we may be able to offer further help through **Early Help**. This is a supportive, non-judgmental approach that brings together services to work with families. If you feel this would be beneficial, we can explore this together at the meeting. Further information is available here: [Plymouth Early Help and SEND Advice line | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#)

We remain committed to working in partnership with you to help «forename» succeed and make the most of their time at school. Thank you for your time and continued support.

**Yours sincerely,**

**[Name of Staff]**

**Senior Attendance Champion**

[School Name]

## Punctuality Letter

«addressee»

«address\_block»

[Date]

Dear «salutation»,

«forename» «surname» («reg»)

Date of birth: «date\_of\_birth»

I am writing to share information on <<forename>>'s punctuality to school this half term. We are keen to see an improvement in <<forename>>'s punctuality and to understand what adjustments or support may help to improve their punctuality to school each day.

Name has been late to school on <<insert number of lates>> occasions this half term; this can also be seen on ClassCharts.

Building strong habits of punctuality are important in many areas of life and also to ensure full access to school activities and to minimise disruption to these activities. We do appreciate that there are occasions when punctuality can be affected by unforeseen events which lead to isolated cases of lateness. Where these occurrences are more frequent, often, small adjustments to routine can make a difference but there may be something more significant which is preventing punctuality and this is what we are keen to explore with you.

A member of the attendance or pastoral team will endeavour to make contact over the coming days to see whether there is any support that we can offer. In the meantime, please do contact your child's year team if you would appreciate any support or to discuss barriers to your child arriving to school on time.

We do appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

**[Name of Staff]**

**Senior Attendance Champion**

[School Name]