

Federation of Fairfield and Colneis

Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Fairfield Infant School and Colneis Junior School are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The schools will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.
- 1.4 **Safeguarding** – The welfare of our pupils is paramount. The full policy and names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and alternates are in the schools’ “Whole School Safeguarding Policy”.

2. Schools’ roles and responsibilities

2.1 As schools we aim to:

- Create a happy and secure working environment for all;
- Stimulate pupils to learn effectively and with enjoyment;
- Deliver a broad, balanced and creative curriculum which meets statutory requirements;
- Enable children to reach the highest levels of achievement in all areas of the curriculum and to celebrate their success;
- Develop independent learners;
- Encourage children to be aware of their own needs and also the needs of others;
- Achieve the best in standards of behaviour, courtesy and consideration;
- Instil the skills and attitudes necessary to form successful relationships with others;
- Work closely with parents as our partners in children’s learning;
- Treat with equality all members of the school community.

- 2.2 All staff (teaching and support) at both schools have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.3 Attendance Leader

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader (AL), will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing

body half termly. The AL will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.4 Registration

- i) The schools are required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes as stated in Appendix 3.
- ii) The register will be called promptly at **9.00am** and **1.15pm** by each classroom teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- iii) The registers will close at **9.15am** and **1.30pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see section 4.6).

2.5 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with a member of the senior leadership team (Head or Deputies).
- ii) Both schools recognise the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. They recognise that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence. It will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,

- in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see section 5 for the school's policy on term-time holidays);
- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand;
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- (f) the pupil lives more than two miles away from the school (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight), it is their catchment school, and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- (g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- no explanation has been given by the parent;
 - the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
 - the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
 - the pupil is shopping during school hours;
 - the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
 - the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
 - the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.6 Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.7 Staff Training

The school Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. **Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body (see 2.3 above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by class and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

4. **Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at both schools and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 Both schools have procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. They are referred to the Attendance Officer.

4.3 First-day calling

Both schools have in place a system of first-day calling. Parents are asked to call the school before 10.00am on the first day of absence, if we do not receive a call, parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

4.4 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.5 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence (see para. 4.3). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.7 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office where the parents will be asked to complete the late book. If a child arrives late on a regular basis, the Attendance Leader will contact parents to discuss ways to improve attendance.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late must therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late following this procedure.**

4.9 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day also report to the school office.

4.10 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Both schools take this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately. If the school is unable to contact the parents the police will be contacted.

5. **Term-time Holidays**

5.1 Term-time holidays are intended only for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

5.2 Both schools will consider every application individually although its policy is **NOT** to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

5.3 Both schools will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.5 Both schools will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

5.6 Both schools will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, e.g. SATS.

6. Extended leave of absence

6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas both schools will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the challenges in making the visit are more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;
- where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

7. Parents'/Carers' responsibilities

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by both schools.

7.2 Both schools expect parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly and punctually;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify the relevant school on the first day of absence by telephoning the school office to report the absence by 10.00am;
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;

- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Both schools will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Pupils' responsibilities

- 8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.
- 8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.
- 8.3 Pupils from both schools will keep their class rules and playground rules which are negotiated with them every September:

9. Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2) of the Education Act (2002) states:

- 9.1 "The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school."

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the outcomes of *Every Child Matters*:

Be healthy –

- attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy

Stay safe –

- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly

Enjoy and achieve –

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings

Make a positive contribution –

- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others

Achieve economic well-being –

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year.

Appendix 1 A Guide for Parents

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **9am** and the afternoon register at **1.15pm**.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at **9.15am** in the morning and **1.30pm** in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between **9am** and **9.15am** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **9.15am** he/she will be marked **absent**.

If your child arrives between **1.15pm** and **1.30pm** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **1.30pm** he/she will be marked **absent**.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office, and a note will be made in the late book. If a pupil is late on a regular basis a meeting will be arranged with a member of staff to discuss reasons.

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. However, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

6. Term time holidays

- 6.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

6.2 Both schools will consider every application individually although its policy is **NOT** to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

6.3 Both schools will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

6.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

6.5 Both schools will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

6.6 Both schools will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS.

7. Implementation of Penalty Notices

Suffolk County Council will be issuing fixed penalty notices in the following situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- Where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school;
- Where a pupil has missed more than five half days/sessions due to unauthorised absence, including unauthorised holiday, in a school year.

In every case a pupil will have lost more than five half days/sessions of unauthorised absence during the current term before a Penalty Notice is considered.

The head retains the discretion to refer such cases to the Attendance Officer for action.

8. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

The schools operate a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

9. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

Both schools recognise that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact your child's class teacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

Both schools would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Headteacher then approves the visit.

10. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home a homework diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

11. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher or Attendance Leader immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Attendance Officer. The school may also refer you to an Attendance Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Attendance Officer is based at:

108 Queens Road
Felixstowe
Suffolk
IP11 7PG

Tel: 01394 605060

Appendix 2 A Guide for Pupils

ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY

A GUIDE FOR PUPILS

1. Attending regularly and on time

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities at school. It will help you keep up with your school work and get the best results you can.

Remember, your attendance at school is shown in your School report in July.

2. Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- illness
- emergency dental/medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement

Looking after your brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

You will also need a note from your parents to explain ALL absences from school. You will also need a note if you arrive at school after 9.15am in the morning. If you do not bring a note, or the explanation on the note is unsatisfactory, the absence will count as unauthorised and will be shown on your end of year report.

3. Need help?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. **TALK TO SOMEONE** – your class teacher, another member of staff, your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

Appendix 3 Register Codes

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 4 APPENDIX 4: SCC Penalty Notice Protocol

See:

[http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/suffolk.gov.uk/Education%20and%20Careers/Children%20and%20Young%20People/2014%20SCC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct%20revised%20Nov.doc](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/suffolk.gov.uk/Education%20and%20Careers/Children%20and%20Young%20People/2014%20SCC%20Penalty%20Notice%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20revised%20Nov.doc)

http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/do_download.asp?did=13728

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 PENALTY NOTICE PROTOCOL

1. Legal Basis

- 1.1 The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 23 empowers designated Local Authority (LA) Officers, Headteachers (and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.
- 1.2 The Act places specific responsibility on the LA for developing a protocol, or code of conduct, within which all parties will operate.
- 1.3 The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to the protocol and with all requirements of Human Rights and Equal Opportunities legislation. The scheme must therefore operate consistently across the Authority.

2. Purpose of the Penalty Notice Scheme

- 2.1 Regular school attendance is vital in ensuring that children maximise the educational opportunities available to them. It is also an important element in safeguarding them from harm.
- 2.2 Parents have a legal responsibility (Education Act 1996, Section 7) for ensuring their children receive a full-time and efficient education, and LEAs have a duty to enforce this where necessary.
- 2.3 'Parent' is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of that child. (Education Act 1996, Section 576).
- 2.4 The Penalty Notice Scheme is intended to supplement, not replace, the existing powers of enforcement under the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices are intended to be early deterrents to patterns of unauthorised absence. Their most effective use is likely to be for parents who are able but unwilling to ensure their children's regular attendance at school.

3. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued

- 3.1 The criteria for issuing Penalty Notices will be –
 - i) where a child has been identified for the first time as having more than 5 sessions (a session being a morning or an afternoon) of unauthorised absence in the current term;

- ii) where there have been more than 5 sessions (a session being a morning or an afternoon) of unauthorised absence in the current term **and** all or part of this absence is the result of a holiday taken in term-time without prior permission from the school;
- iii) where a child has had more than 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in the current term **and**, in the company of a parent, has been stopped under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (i.e. during a 'truancy sweep' conducted by Police and Education Welfare Officers) and the parent has failed to give a satisfactory explanation for the child's absence which the school has confirmed is unauthorised.

3.2 Parents who meet the criteria under 3.1(i) and 3.1(ii) above will, in the first instance, be issued with a warning. Warnings will therefore be issued to parents –

- i) whose child(ren) is/are identified for the first time as having more than 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in the current term. The warning will inform them that if there are any further unauthorised absences during the following 15 school days, a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- ii) who take their child(ren) out of school in term-time without permission. The warning will inform them that any future term-time holidays taken without permission could result in a Penalty Notice being issued where the total amount of unauthorised absence during that term is more than 5 sessions (including those sessions of unauthorised absence accounted for by the holiday).

3.3 Parents who meet the criteria under 3.1(iii) above will receive no warning prior to **being issued with a Penalty Notice**.

3.4 Penalty Notices will not be used in the case of unauthorised absence of Looked After Children.

4. Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices

4.1 Any Penalty Notices or warnings issued under this scheme will be issued on behalf of the LA by Officers of the Education Attendance Service. These Officers will not issue a Penalty Notice unless:

- all terms of the protocol are applied;
- all relevant information required is supplied to them by Headteachers (or Deputy Headteachers authorised by them) and/or by Police Officers;
- no other strategies are in place or being enforced at the same time. Education Attendance Service managers will be aware of all proceedings contemplated or commenced under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (the offence of failing to secure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil).

This will serve to –

- ensure consistency across the Authority;
- avoid the issue of duplicate Notices;

- reduce the possibility of Notices having to be withdrawn because they had been wrongly issued or issued in cases which would make prosecution following non-payment of penalties difficult;
 - ensure that Notices were not issued when proceedings for an offence under the Education Act 1996, Section 444 are being planned or have started.
- 4.2 Headteachers (or Deputy Headteachers authorised by them) will notify the Education Attendance Service of any child whose parent(s) they believe meet the criteria under 3.1(i) or (ii) above for receiving a Penalty Notice or under 3.2(i) or (ii) for receiving a warning. These children may also be identified by Education Welfare Officers. The Education Attendance Service will issue a Penalty Notice or warning to the parent(s) if satisfied that the criteria are met. Headteachers will need to demonstrate clearly that leave from school has not been granted.
- 4.3 The Police may refer to the Education Attendance Service any child whose parent(s) they wish to be considered for a Penalty Notice. The Education Welfare Service will examine those cases and issue Penalty Notices where the criteria are met.
- 4.4 Neighbouring LAs where Suffolk children might be registered at school or stopped on truancy sweeps will be asked to refer to Suffolk Education Attendance Service those cases it considers meet the criteria for a Penalty Notice or warning.
- 4.5 All warnings and Penalty Notices will be issued by first class post.
- 4.6 Parents will not receive more than one Penalty Notice per child in any 12 month period.

5. Withdrawal of Penalty Notices

5.1 A Penalty Notice will be withdrawn only in the following circumstances;

- the Notice was issued outside the terms of the protocol; or
- the Notice was issued to the wrong person.

5.2 There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

6. Payment of Penalty Notices

6.1 The penalty is payable to the LA (details for payment will be contained in the Notice). The amount of the penalty is –

- £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the Notice;
- £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the Notice.

6.2 Payment of a Penalty Notice cannot be made by instalments.

6.3 Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's liability for the period to which the Notice relates.

6.4 Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the parent being prosecuted for the child's unauthorised absence during the period of the Notice.

6.5 Penalties will be payable to Suffolk County Council. The LA will retain the

revenue collected to cover the cost of issuing Notices and of prosecuting parents who fail to pay the penalties.

7. Review of the Penalty Notice Scheme

- 7.1 The Penalty Notice Scheme will be reviewed at regular intervals (at least every 2 years) with amendments made as appropriate.

Appendix 5 Penalty Notice Referral Form



Penalty Notice Referral Form

Pupil's Legal Surname: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____ _____ Tel No: _____	Forename: _____ DOB: _____ Ethnicity: _____ First Language: _____
--	--

School: _____ Unique Pupil Number: _____	Year Group: _____
---	-------------------

Name(s) and DOBs of parent(s)/carer(s) with whom child lives:

_____	_____
_____	_____

Name(s), address(es), tel nos and DOBs of others with PR:

(1) _____ _____	(2) _____ _____
--------------------	--------------------

Attendance over last 12 weeks:

WB	Mon	Tue s	Wed	Thur s	Fri

I hereby certify that on or betweenday of 20..... to the..... day of20..... inclusive, he/she had unauthorised absence from school for a reason that comes within NUMBER.....(see below) in Suffolk Code

Signed: _____
(Referrer)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Education Welfare Officer)

Date: _____

of Conduct for Penalty Notices.

The local Code of Conduct sets out the procedures and terms under which Penalty Notices can be issued in Suffolk. Authorised persons should issue Penalty Notices in compliance with this Code in order to ensure that the powers are consistently applied.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate:

- (1) Where a child has been identified for the first time as having more than 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in the preceding 12 school weeks;
- (2) When the pupil has taken holiday during term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school;
- (3) Where a child is stopped with their parents on a truancy sweep and the school has recorded the absence of the pupil as unauthorised.

In all cases listed above, a Penalty Notice will only be issued to the parent/s if the pupil has had at more than 5 sessions lost to unauthorised absence within the previous 12 school weeks.

In the first two circumstances, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being given and a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement.

Parents will not receive a warning in the third circumstance.

PENALTY NOTICE PROCEDURE

1. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued

1.1 The criteria for issuing Penalty Notices will be –

- i) where a child has been identified for the first time as having more than 5 sessions (a session being a morning or an afternoon) of unauthorised absence in the preceding 12 school weeks;
- iv) where there have been more than 5 sessions (a session being a morning or an afternoon) of unauthorised absence in the preceding 12 school weeks **and**

all or part of this absence is the result of a holiday taken in term-time without prior permission from the school;

- v) where a child has had more than 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in the preceding 12 school weeks **and**, in the company of a parent, has been stopped under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (i.e. during a 'truancy sweep' conducted by Police and Education Welfare Officers) and the parent has failed to give a satisfactory explanation for the child's absence which the school has confirmed is unauthorised.

1.2 Parents who meet the criteria under 3.1(i) and 3.1(ii) above will, in the first instance, be issued with a warning. Warnings will therefore be issued to parents –

- iii) whose child(ren) is/are identified for the first time as having more than 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in the current term. The warning will inform them that if there are any further unauthorised absences during the following 15 school days, a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- iv) who take their child(ren) out of school in term-time without permission. The warning will inform them that any future term-time holidays taken without permission could result in a Penalty Notice being issued where the total amount of unauthorised absence during that term is more than 5 sessions (including those sessions of unauthorised absence accounted for by the holiday).

3.3 Parents who meet the criteria under 3.1(iii) above will receive no warning prior to being issued with a Penalty Notice.

3.4 Penalty Notices will not be used in the case of unauthorised absence of Looked After Children.

4. Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices

4.1 Any Penalty Notices or warnings issued under this scheme will be issued on behalf of the LA by Officers of the Education Attendance Service. These Officers will not issue a Penalty Notice unless:

- all terms of the protocol are applied;
- all relevant information required is supplied to them by Headteachers (or Deputy Headteachers authorised by them) and/or by Police Officers;
- no other strategies are in place or being enforced at the same time. Education Attendance Service managers will be aware of all proceedings contemplated or commenced under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (the offence of failing to secure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil).

This will serve to –

- ensure consistency across the Authority;
- avoid the issue of duplicate Notices;

- reduce the possibility of Notices having to be withdrawn because they had been wrongly issued or issued in cases which would make prosecution following non-payment of penalties difficult;
 - ensure that Notices were not issued when proceedings for an offence under the Education Act 1996, Section 444 are being planned or have started.
- 4.2 Headteachers (or Deputy Headteachers authorised by them) will notify the Education Attendance Service of any child whose parent(s) they believe meet the criteria under 3.1(i) or (ii) above for receiving a Penalty Notice or under 3.2(i) or (ii) for receiving a warning. These children may also be identified by Education Welfare Officers. The Education Attendance Service will issue a Penalty Notice or warning to the parent(s) if satisfied that the criteria are met. Headteachers will need to demonstrate clearly that leave from school has not been granted.
- 4.3 The Police may refer to the Education Attendance Service any child whose parent(s) they wish to be considered for a Penalty Notice. The Education Welfare Service will examine those cases and issue Penalty Notices where the criteria are met.
- 4.4 Neighbouring LAs where Suffolk children might be registered at school or stopped on truancy sweeps will be asked to refer to Suffolk Education Attendance Service those cases it considers meet the criteria for a Penalty Notice or warning.
- 4.5 All warnings and Penalty Notices will be issued by first class post.
- 4.6 Parents will not receive more than one Penalty Notice per child in any 12 month period.

5. Withdrawal of Penalty Notices

- 5.1 A Penalty Notice will be withdrawn only in the following circumstances;
- the Notice was issued outside the terms of the protocol; or
 - the Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- 5.2 There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

6. Payment of Penalty Notices

- 6.1 The penalty is payable to the LA (details for payment will be contained in the Notice). The amount of the penalty is –
- £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the Notice;
 - £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the Notice.
- 6.2 Payment of a Penalty Notice cannot be made by instalments.
- 6.3 Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's liability for the period to which the Notice relates.
- 6.4 Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the parent being prosecuted for the child's unauthorised absence during the period of the Notice.
- 6.6 Penalties will be payable to Suffolk County Council. The LA will retain the

revenue collected to cover the cost of issuing Notices and of prosecuting parents who fail to pay the penalties.

7. Review of the Penalty Notice Scheme

- 7.1 The Penalty Notice Scheme will be reviewed at regular intervals by the LA (at least every 2 years) with amendments made as appropriate.

Appendix 6 Leave of Absence Request



Felixstowe Schools Leave of Absence Request Colneis Junior School and Fairfield Infant School

Please note: In line with recent Government legislation, any holiday requests received from September 2014 onwards will not be authorised in any Felixstowe school including Fairfield and Colneis.

Please complete and return no less than 3 weeks before absence is due to start.

Pupil's Name	Class	School

**Please include children in the family who attend other schools

From:	To:	Total Number of School Days:
Exceptional reason for requesting leave during term time (continue on reverse if necessary): Signed: Relationship to child(ren) Date:		

Both parents will be notified of the outcome of the request.

For Office Use Only	
Number of requests received	
Number of 'Authorised Absence' this academic year	
Number of 'Unauthorised Absence' this academic year	
Authorised	Unauthorised
Signed: Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher	Date:

NB: Please be aware that following the local authority decision, unauthorised absence of more than five half days will result in a fixed penalty notice and a fine of £60 per parent for each child who is absent from school. For example, a family of 2 parents who take their 3 children on holiday during term time for a fortnight will incur a fine of £360.

Appendix 7 Example unauthorised absence letter to parents

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child..... was absent from school on the following dates.....

We did not receive a phone call from you to let us know why they were absent and when we tried to contact you, we did not get an answer. We sent a note home to you to request a reason for their absence but have received no reply.

Our absence procedures are that you phone the school on the first day of absence to let us know the reason that your child is away. On their return to school, you must send a letter explaining the reason for their absence. If your child is absent from school for any reason other than illness, an absence form must be completed **prior** to their absence from school.

Please send a letter to explain the reason for the above absence. If we do not hear from you within the next few days, the absence will be marked as **unauthorised**.

Regular attendance is very important for your child's education and is a matter that we watch over with great concern. Attendance is also closely monitored by Suffolk County Council's Attendance Officer. Obviously we understand that young children are sometimes unwell and any absence for this reason will be authorised. If your child is away from school for **any** reason, it is essential that you inform us at school.

Please note that more than 5 half day of unauthorised absence in a school year may result in a fixed fee penalty notice from Suffolk County Council.

We look forward to hearing from you and if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 8 Example poor attendance medical evidence request

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re:

Class:

I am writing to you because NAME's attendance has fallen below 85% and some of these absences may be unauthorised. The current level of attendance for NAME is % and this has now triggered the school's attendance process. This figure is calculated from the start of this academic year. If this continues evidence suggests your child will only have a 30% chance of getting 5 GCSE's.

Once a pupils attendance drops below 85%, the equivalent of 6 weeks or half a term absent a year, medical evidence will be required in certain cases. Medical evidence supplied can be in the form of:

- Copies of prescriptions
- Hospital discharge letter
- Note from doctor or practise nurse
- Medical certificate
- Medicinal packaging with date
- Medical appointment cards

In certain circumstances this may mean that we will ask for clarification from your doctor to be provided. This is to help support you with your child's attendance so that clear evidence of absence can be provided to the Education Welfare Officer who regularly checks pupil attendance. Where necessary the school will support your child in catching up with any missed work.

Any medical evidence provided will be stored in your child's student file. Please also ensure that you continue to follow the standard procedure of telephoning the school office to report your child's absence on the first and subsequent days of illness.

We realise how important the attendance of your child is to you and know that you would only keep them off school when it is absolutely necessary. Therefore we must ask that all further absence is supported by medical evidence as stated above. If the level of unauthorised attendance falls below 80% it is likely that the Local authority will choose to issue a Fixed Penalty Fine or start Prosecution procedures.

If you have any concerns or wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact either me, Mrs Marks, Mr Rimmer or Michael Knight (EWO).

Yours sincerely

Appendix 9 Example below 85% attendance letter

Date

To the parent or guardian of

Dear Parent / Guardian

As you know, regular attendance at school is very important in helping your child to reach their full potential whilst in education. To this end, we are meeting with our Educational Welfare Officer on a regular basis to monitor children's attendance against the guidelines set by her. These guidelines ask that we monitor every child whose attendance falls below 85%.

Currently, your child's attendance stands at% and I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance will be monitored over the coming weeks. If you would like to meet with me and/or the Education Welfare Officer to discuss this matter and how we may help you in improving it, please contact the school office to make an appointment. However, if there is no improvement then the matter will be passed on to the Educational Welfare Officer for further investigation.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 10 Example persistent lateness letter to parents

Date

To the parent or guardian of

Dear Parent / Guardian

Our records show that your child NAME has been late for school on several occasions in the last few weeks. It is important for your child to be at school at the start of the day when the class are having registration and settling into their routines.

Regular lateness not only disrupts the class but is detrimental to your child's learning as it takes them longer to settle down to work and become part of the group.

Please would you make every effort to ensure your child arrives at school promptly and help them to establish a regular routine of being on time which will enable them to make the most of every opportunity offered at school.

We monitor lateness as part of our school attendance procedure and it is also monitored by the Education Welfare Officer as part of his monitoring visit each half term. If your child continues to arrive late for school we will need to refer the matter to her for further investigation.

Yours sincerely