

# **SUCCESS STARTS BY BEING AT SCHOOL**

## **1.0. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT**

The purpose of this document is to set out clearly the LEA's Policy on what schools can do through the use of a whole school approach to promoting regular attendance. A Whole School Attendance Policy is one that requires commitment from all staff employed within the school, together with governors, parents, pupils and the community in which the school is located. The authority's Education Welfare Service will fully support this commitment.

**Section 2.0** - reflects the LEA's view of what a school attendance policy should include.

**Sections 3.0 to 7.0** - cites examples of good practice that schools should consider implementing to improve attendance and raise standards.

**Section 8.0** - describes the role of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and should be read in conjunction with the Description of Services and Quality Assurance Standards already issued to schools.

**Sections 9.0 to 11** - give some ideas for good practice

## **1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and securing it must therefore be a high priority for school, governors, LEAs, parents and the pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils diminish the value of the education provided for them; they may also damage the learning of others because fluctuations in the size of pupil group may restrict the scope for effective teaching.

Attendance is now increasingly regarded as a measure of the quality of the education offered by a school and the government has indicated that all schools should be aiming for a target of at least 90% for secondary schools and for 95% for primary schools.

Schools will wish to encourage and promote good attendance in as many ways and for as many pupils as they can, but they will need to balance this with measures to address the needs of those children who do - for whatever reason - find it difficult to attend. A whole school approach to attendance will focus primarily on promoting attendance but will also address the issue of truancy and condoned absence where it occurs.

The whole school approach to attendance relates to a wide range of other school issues including punctuality, rewards and incentives, re-integration of long-term absentees, curricular differentiation, home-school links, and the role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

## 1.2 LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations.

**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 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 in law. 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/parents belong
- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child’s home and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the LEA. The law relating to ‘walking distance’ effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Shropshire County Council and Telford & Wrekin Council have, however, chosen to define these distances as two miles for infant, junior and primary pupils and three miles for other pupils. Distances will be measured by nearest available walking route.
- a limited defence is available to the parents of travelling children (see appendix 3)

**The Act also places a legal obligation on:-**

- the LEA to provide and enforce attendance
- schools to register attendance and notify the LEA (or the EWS) of a child’s absence from school without authorisation of 10 or more days.
- the governing body to make sure that school registers are kept, one for attendance and one for admissions

**2.0 GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS IN DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR A WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Shropshire County Council and Telford & Wrekin Council recommend that every school should have a framework for a whole school attendance policy. The policy should promote regular attendance and improve standards. This is an example for your consideration, developed by the Education Welfare Service based on good practice in mainstream schools.**

**A FRAMEWORK FOR A WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The framework for a whole school attendance policy is based on the 5 ‘Ps’ - namely, PHILOSOPHY, PRINCIPLES, PROCEDURES, PERFORMANCE & PRACTICE.

**PHILOSOPHY**

..... school is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil’s attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

**PRINCIPLES**

The school will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session

- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence
- display attendance rates around the school and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence
- consult with all members of the school community and the EWS in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors
- send newsletters each term to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues
- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed
- have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members

### **PROCEDURES**

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will:

- contact the parent by telephone, or if the parent is unavailable send a standard letter requesting information
- send a second letter if an explanation has still not been received after three days of unexplained absence
- refer to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if no response is received after 5 days of absence.
- invite the parents into school after a maximum of 10 days absence, unless other action is planned. This meeting will include a senior member of staff, parent, pupil and the EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties, which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance
- help the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible

**In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education**

### **PERFORMANCE**

It is important to set realistic targets; these targets will be set in consultation with the LEA. The school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not:

- attendance has improved
- punctuality has improved
- parental response to absences has improved
- re-integration plans have been successful
- the school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community
- pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school
- attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal and Social Education (PSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

### **PRACTICE**

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- regularly analysing attendance data
- ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- liaising closely with the school's EWO
- recording carefully, all telephone messages

### **3.0 GOOD PRACTICE**

The LEA recommends that schools observe the following good practice:

#### **3.1 KEEPING THE REGISTERS**

##### THE STATUS OF THE REGISTER

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately, neatly and marked in ink. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It may also contribute data to pupils' end-of-term reports, to records of achievement, and to leavers' references.

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial if poor attendance and punctuality within a school are to be tackled. It is vital that pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day.

Registration may be perceived as a task to be completed as quickly as possible. All staff involved with the registration process should be aware that the law is very specific regarding the keeping of registers. Marking and keeping the register is of the utmost importance. The class teacher should not relegate it to the bottom of the list of priorities.

#### **3.2 MARKING THE REGISTER**

- a) no pupil should be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is called or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher
- b) spaces must not be left in the register
- c) registers should be closed at an agreed time each day. DfEE guidelines suggest 30 minutes after the start of each session
- d) where a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupil should be marked as late but counted as present for that session
- e) where a pupil misses registration (arrives after registration has closed) absence must be marked as an unauthorised absence - "@"
- f) where a pupil misses registration but provides an adequate explanation, s/he should be marked as late but counted as an authorised absence for that session
- g) pupils must not mark the register under any circumstances
- h) registers should be totalled at the end of each week and percentage attendance calculated and monitored

- i) the decision to authorise an absence should be made within a maximum of two weeks from the date of the absence

### 3.3 Computerised Registration:

Using a computerised system will not, by itself, improve attendance. It does, however, provide an accessible, accurate and easy to use record of information relating to the individual pupil or whole school attendance in the form of:

- an official monthly register which codes all absences allowing the reader to quickly identify patterns and trends in authorised and unauthorised absences
- an individual registration certificate which can be produced at any time in the school year and includes information on total percentage attendance and absence
- an absence-mapping facility which can be used to check a pupil's attendance against another pupil, or a group of pupils' attendance if there is a suspicion of multiple truancy
- a record of attendance for each class over any given period of time which will provide a percentage attendance figure for each session and data which could identify patterns of absence for individuals as well as the whole class

### 3.4 Removal from roll

Pupils should only be removed from the school roll and class registers under the following circumstances:

- a) Where a parent informs the school that they are moving out of the area and give a new address and school where they intend to register the child. Following the date given for the move the EWO will contact the new LEA to ascertain that the child is in fact living in the area and has been registered at a school. If confirmed, the EWO will then advise the headteacher that the pupil can be removed from school roll and registers, retrospectively from the date given for the move.
- b) Where a parent informs the school that they will be enrolling the pupil in another school in the area. A date for the transfer should be requested and a subsequent check must be made (possibly via the EWO) that the child is attending the new school. If confirmed, the pupil can then be removed from the school roll.
- c) Where a parent informs the school **in writing** that they intend to teach the child ***otherwise than at school***. The school must inform the LEA who will arrange for the educational provision to be checked by an appropriate adviser.

- d) Where a pupil has been continuously absent for not less than 4 weeks and both the school and the EWO after extensive enquiries have failed to locate the pupil. In such cases the EWO will make home visits and other enquiries to ascertain that the family are no longer living at their last known address. Removal of a pupil from the class register should only be undertaken when authorised by the head teacher after these enquiries have taken place. The school must notify the LEA in all cases of a pupil being removed from the school roll where a family has moved and cannot be traced.
- e) Where a pupil is registered in accordance with a school attendance order and the LEA substitutes another school.
- f) Where a pupil has been granted leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but has failed to attend school within the ten days immediately following the expiry of the leave (except by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause). Extensive enquiries by the school and EWO must be made in these circumstances to trace the pupil, prior to removal from the school roll. The school must notify the LEA in all cases of a pupil being removed from the school roll owing to non-return from leave of absence for a holiday.
- g) Where a pupil is certified by the School Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a state of health to attend before ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- h) Where the pupil has died.
- i) Where the pupil has been permanently excluded. The Pupil Discipline Committee must have met. 15 school days will then be allowed for a possible independent appeal panel hearing before the pupil is removed from the school roll.

**It is not lawful to remove a pupil from a school roll simply because the pupil has a poor attendance record.**

### **3.5 INSET DAYS**

Where schools are proposing to take an INSET day, it is good practice for head teachers to inform neighbouring schools and to ensure that parents are given sufficient notice of training days. This would enable parents make the appropriate child care arrangements.

## **4.0 ANALYSIS OF ATTENDANCE DATA**

Sampling weekly attendance at specific sessions may show up regular patterns of non-attendance and may reveal, for example, an association with certain subjects, teachers or teaching groups. Such analysis can also draw attention to the deterioration or improvement in the attendance of individual pupils. The analysis can help to target intervention more selectively and help to establish the cause of an absence.

All schools hold a great deal of information about attendance which is not always fully used. This information can be of great use in schools for strategic planning and can enable schools to manage attendance issues more effectively.

**Whole school attendance figures produced termly or yearly, based on year groups, can indicate factors such as:**

- declining attendance in years 10 and 11 respectively
- the effect of seasonal attendance e.g. attendance may decline in the colder months and preceding school holidays

**Weekly figures may illustrate:**

- the effect of staff absenteeism
- the fall in attendance preceding teacher training days, half terms, study leave or work experience
- the effect of ending terms on a Monday or Tuesday
- the effect of activity days, day trips, or residential trips
- the effect of the timing of the school day
- the effect of pupil holidays in term time

Continuous analysis of individual pupil's attendance and of the whole school can give scope to strategic planning. By identifying those levels which the school considers are indicators of persistent absenteeism or irregular attendance, it will be possible to identify the extent of the problem. The school can then target time provided by the EWO and pastoral staff more effectively by producing:-

- individual attendance records which highlight reasons for absence and the pattern and rate of unauthorised absence
- quickly obtain lists of all pupils with unexplained absence which can be fed back to the responsible member of staff

The pastoral staff will then be able to identify those pupils who give cause for concern.

Coded absence, broken down into a class and/or year group format, would allow identification of excessive unauthorised absences.

## **5.0 TYPES OF ABSENCE**

### **5.1 AUTHORISED ABSENCES**

**Only a school** can authorise an absence. Parents and the LEA do not have the power to authorise absences.

THE KEY POINTS SCHOOLS SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING TO AUTHORISE ABSENCE ARE:

- it is a legal requirement that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly and punctually
- schools are not obliged to accept a parental explanation for pupil absence where there is doubt as to the validity of that explanation
- parents should be aware that only the school has the right to agree family holidays in term time; each application for leave should be considered in view of the specific circumstances of the family. Family holidays taken in term time are discussed fully in Section 7.0
- schools should always expect regular and punctual attendance, even when the school is aware of family difficulties
- minding the house, looking after siblings, shopping or going on a trip will not normally be acceptable reasons for absence
- an explanation for every absence is required; if one is not forthcoming the absence should be treated as unauthorised
- where absence is authorised, schools should remain vigilant to emerging patterns of non-attendance
- lateness should be actively discouraged and persistent lateness treated in the same way as irregular attendance
- schools should develop a close working relationship with the EWS in order to promote regular school attendance

### **5.2 UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from an authorised representative of the school and includes all unexplained absences.

If a child is absent with the approval of the school, for whatever reason, no offence is deemed to have been committed. Thus, the decision taken by the school to give, or withhold, authorisation for an absence, is a critical factor in determining the LEA's decision to prosecute parents.

Schools need to exercise caution in the authorisation of absence. If they are suspicious of the explanation given by parents, the absence should be further

investigated and left unauthorised until the matter has been clarified to the satisfaction of the school. The decision taken by the school to authorise absence or not, is of critical importance in determining the level of involvement of the EWS. If the school has authorised a pupil's absence they have, in effect, given *leave*, **therefore there is no case in law for the parents to answer.**

### **5.3 PARENTALLY CONDONED ABSENCE**

Parentally condoned absence is, in many ways, more difficult to identify than any other form of pupil absence. This form of absence is equally as damaging to the pupil's educational experience as any other form of absence. The parents, in many cases, perceive that they are keeping their child away from school for legitimate reasons; they may feel that they are protecting their children. It is essential that, when school staff feel that a worrying pattern of non-attendance is emerging, they work closely with the educational, social and health support services to ensure that the most appropriate and effective intervention is available to the pupil and parents.

Parents of children from different cultures may feel that the school is not a safe, or proper, environment for their child. It is vital that schools investigate and endeavour to recognise cultural issues, which may prevent a pupil from attending school. There is a range of specialist support services, which will assist and advise schools and parents on ways forward when these difficulties arise.

### **5.4 FACTORS WHICH MAY CONTRIBUTE TO CONDONED ABSENCE**

- separation anxiety: the parent and/or child may be frightened of separation from each other. Domestic violence may also be a factor.
- the child may be needed to contribute to the family income by working either within the home or outside
- the child may be the only significant carer within the family
- the parent may be physically or psychologically ill
- there may be social issues which parents may feel are of more importance than educational issues
- the parent may not value education and prevent the child from attending school because of this belief
- the parent may be unwilling or unable to provide appropriate clothing (uniform, shoes, coats)

## 5.5 LATENESS

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late are guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if late arrival is not resolved.

Persistent lateness can be as damaging to a pupil's school career as persistent absence. Pupils who arrive late disrupt not only their own education but that of others and being persistently late may also lead to truancy. Poor punctuality may indicate problems within the pupil's home which the pupil may need help to deal with; chronic lateness may result in a pupil losing his/her attendance mark for the session and the absence will be noted as unauthorised. For some pupils, arriving punctually may be beyond their control. Often lateness is a result of a lack of firm parenting; the child is confused and often left to cope alone at a very young age.

There needs to be a careful balance struck between being too punitive and too accepting of a pupil's lateness. Once the reasons for lateness have been established, the parents, pupil and school need to work in partnership to resolve the difficulties. The dilemma for schools is that, if action is not seen to be taken against latecomers, other pupils may follow suit thereby exacerbating the problem.

Many schools operate a system, which punishes a pupil who is late three times per term with an after-school detention; for many children this is enough of a deterrent. For pupils who are late for school because of their domestic or family situation other forms of intervention may be more effective. For those pupils who have to catch specific transport, arrangements could be made for detentions to take place during lunchtime.

Working with the school community to develop incentive schemes to reward and encourage punctuality could be the focus of one such intervention.

Where a situation at home makes it difficult for the pupil to arrive on time, consideration should be given to an appropriate referral to an outside agency or voluntary service. Schools can request advice from their EWO on the issue.

Where the pupil is late due to family circumstances, for example where a pupil is the main carer in the family, the school may wish to use more supportive interventions. The difficulty with these cases is that children are often reluctant to discuss their home circumstances because they may be afraid that it might get their parents into trouble.

Setting up a support group for persistent latecomers within the school, where pupils can talk about their difficulties, could be one approach; children are more likely to talk to someone whom they perceive has experienced, or is experiencing, similar problems.

## **6.0 FOLLOWING UP ABSENCE**

Every school should have effective and recognised procedures for identifying and following up absences. All pupil absence should be followed up as soon as possible. The action taken, and the responses received, should always be recorded.

### **6.1 THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

The headteacher is responsible for following up absences; consistency of practice is helped where there is effective liaison between the class teacher and the head teacher.

### **6.2 SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Special measures will be necessary in the more complex organisation of a secondary school. The following are recommended:-

- a list of absentees should be produced as soon as possible daily. The list should be readily available to all teaching staff, in particular cover/supply teachers
- there should be regular spot checks and patrols by identified senior teaching staff during the day to detect and deter lesson truancy
- the school's senior management team should be seen to pay special attention to latecomers; this will demonstrate their conviction that being in school and in class on time is very important

### **6.3 THE ROLE OF THE YEAR TUTOR IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

The head of year/year tutor is normally responsible for following up absences, but consistency of practice is helped when the registration teacher liaises effectively with the head of year/year tutor.

- every group should be registered by subject teacher. This could be achieved by:-
  - i) a roving lesson register which passes with a monitor from lesson to lesson for marking by subject teacher. This could, however, be problematic for years 10 and 11; OR
  - ii) subject teachers being asked to complete a register at the beginning of each lesson

Subject teachers, when necessary, should inform the year tutor/head of year of a "suspicious" absence from lessons.

- making contact with the EWO and agree with the EWO the following:-
  - i) the way in which the school will work with, and support, a pupil whose attendance is poor

- ii) how the school and the EWO will approach and seek to work with the family of the poor attender, and
- iii) the procedure for referral to other agencies when appropriate, i.e. the Social Services Department

**The person who takes responsibility for ensuring good practice on attendance in the year should have regard to the following measures.**

- checking the registers on a weekly basis
- liaising with tutors so that a plan of action for poor attenders is agreed and acted upon

**In both primary and secondary sectors the following is recommended:-**

- when a child is absent without explanation the person responsible for attendance should contact the parent/carer **on the first morning of absence**,
- a standard letter should be sent home after three days of absence, unless the parent/carer has already indicated that the child is likely to be returning at a later, agreed date. This should be recorded with the date of sending in the register or similar if computerised
- a letter should also be sent when a pupil returns from absence without a letter of explanation
- after 5 days of absence, if no response is received, the matter should be referred to the EWO.
- notes, records of telephone calls, and medical certificates should be dated, named and initialled by the registration teacher/year tutor. These notes should be placed in an absence envelope at the back of the register or similar
- where explanations for absence are not satisfactory, or where absence persists, the headteacher/year tutor should invite the parent(s) to school to discuss any difficulties which may prevent a pupil from attending school. If parents do not attend or send apologies, a referral should be made to the EWO
- the headteacher/year tutor should contact the parent(s) where there are problems of lateness, either by telephone or by the standard letter. Persistent lateness can be as detrimental to a pupil's education as poor attendance
- each pupil's absence can be calculated on a weekly basis in the register so that cumulative absence can be seen at a glance and followed up consistently by the class teacher/tutor
- all contact with parents should be recorded, either in the register or in the school file

## **7.0 FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended) gives schools discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and, in law, have to apply for permission in advance. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school. Only in exceptional circumstances may the amount of leave granted exceed (in total) more than ten days in any one year.

DfEE guidelines clearly state that the reference to exceptional circumstances means that the parent must make out a strong case for taking the child away for more than two weeks a year. Parents should not expect, or be led to expect, that schools will agree to family holidays during term time. Schools may need to remind parents of this from time to time (see appendix 1). School staff should consider each request individually - "blanket approval" policies are not acceptable. The following factors should be considered when assessing requests - no one factor should be regarded as conclusive:

- the time of year of proposed trip
- the length and purpose of the holiday
- the duration of the holiday and its impact on continuity of learning
- the circumstances of the family and the wishes of parents
- the overall attendance pattern of the child

Leave of absence for more than two weeks **must** be seen as exceptional. Schools should carefully explore with parents why such leave of absence is necessary. Where such absences are sanctioned, they should be counted as an **authorised** absence.

Where parents fail to abide by the agreement reached with the school and keep a child away from school in excess of the period agreed or, where parents fail to apply for permission, the extra time taken should be treated as an **unauthorised** absence.

Where schools are experiencing difficulties with family holidays in term time, they may wish to:

- focus on the issue at parents' meetings
- issue a letter on the subject to parents
- contact the EWS for advice and support

All requests for holiday leave should be in writing and the application should be made by a parent/s with day-to-day care of the child even if they are not actually going on holiday themselves. If the parent with whom the child lives does not give consent to the holiday, leave cannot be given lawfully by the school **except** by a court order.

## **Extended Overseas Trips**

When making judgements about extended absence for pupils from ethnic minority families, schools should ensure that full account has been taken, not only of the regulations and DfEE guidelines, but also of the situation of minority ethnic families in general and the particular circumstances relating to each individual case. It is important that schools show an understanding of the parents' perspective even though the school may not be able to comply with a request for absence.

Schools should ensure that all parents are aware of the school's policy on absence. In the case of ethnic minority parents, special care should be taken to ensure that the regulations are fully explained and understood. Interpreters should be used if necessary or, where a number of parents are concerned, the school may wish to consider organising a special meeting for these parents.

### **Schools should take account of the following:-**

- a visit involving family overseas has an entirely different significance from the normal associations with 'holiday' which is the category recognised by the DfEE
- visits may be very important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- parents may feel that the planned visit outweighs the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school - maintaining family links may involve greater significance and greater pressure in some societies than it does in many western societies
- the reasons for parents making a visit may be similar to those for indigenous parents, e.g. family illness, bereavement, etc.

### **However, schools should explain to parents that:-**

- advanced permission must be agreed
- the absence should be planned carefully with the school
- where possible, extended visits should be made during school holidays
- if holidays must be taken during term time, absence should not exceed more than two weeks
- holidays during examination time should be avoided
- children who miss school for six weeks or more fall behind in their school work by a full term
- some children never catch up and will under-perform in their examinations

- their child's name may be removed from the register if he or she has not returned to school within two weeks of the expected date of return (refer to 3.4f)

**If absence is agreed, schools should consider:-**

- the potential educational value of the visit
- the amount of school work missed and how parents and school can help their child catch up on his/her return to school
- preparing a study pack
- asking pupils to make notes/observations in relation to a current or forthcoming class topic
- going through any work that has been completed by the pupil on return to school
- sharing experience with other pupils - class teacher could ask child to bring into school postage stamps and other memorabilia from country visited. These items could be used to make a class display

## **8.0 THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE**

The EWS forms part of Shropshire County Council and Telford & Wrekin Council's joint support services to schools and liaises where appropriate with other agencies to help secure pupils' good attendance. These agencies include the Tuition, Medical & Behaviour Support Service, the Educational Psychological Service and the Social Services Department.

Legal Action to enforce attendance can only be taken by the LEA.

The EWO has a dual role to play as a provider of a service to the school and as mediator between home and school. The EWO has a duty to visit the school regularly and will normally, in the first instance, see the head teacher, or, in a secondary school, the head of year. However, attendance is the responsibility of the whole school. **Schools should, therefore, consider the most effective ways of giving all staff access to the EWO and an understanding of the EWO's responsibilities.** In secondary schools it is inadvisable for work with the EWO to be regarded as the exclusive domain of pastoral staff.

The EWO's time is inevitably limited. Schools should, therefore, have a clear policy on how and when a referral to the EWS is made and to be sure all staff understand the procedures. Two matters must, in particular, be borne in mind:-

- ***The school's own procedures for dealing with absence should have been exhausted before a referral is made to the EWS***
- The EWO will respond to any action taken by using our referral/response forms to provide a written record of the visit and any action to be taken.

## **9.00 CHILDREN TRANSFERRING INTO AND FROM SCHOOLS IN SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL AND OTHER AUTHORITIES**

The Education Welfare Service should be notified of all pupils transferring to schools outside Shropshire, using movement of pupils forms (See Appendix 4)

These forms should **not** be completed for those pupils who are subject to normal transition between infant and junior schools.

## **10.0 GOOD IDEAS - MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE AND SUSTAIN GOOD ATTENDANCE**

### **10.1 GENERALLY**

Schools should give particular attention to the following matters in seeking to enhance the climate in which good attendance may flourish:-

- the school's commitment to achieving high levels of attendance should be explicit and clear to pupils, staff and parents
- the school should try to ensure that the pupil's experience in classrooms is of a positive and enriching quality which will encourage him/her to take responsibility for, and show commitment to, their own learning
- some pupils fail to attend because they are unable to keep up with their peers in class and become discouraged. That may be an indication of a learning difficulty. As part of its policy on special education needs, each school should ensure that children's needs are identified and that action is taken to meet these needs or, if appropriate, through a referral to the Learning Support Advisory Teacher or an Educational Psychologist
- some pupils stay away from school because they are afraid of bullying or of behaviour in the playground which may frighten or alarm them. Schools should be alert to this possibility in investigating individual cases of poor attendance and, in reviewing policy on discipline, they should keep in mind how the school's attitudes on this matter may influence attendance. Staff should be aware of areas and times in the school where bullying is more likely to occur.

## 10.2 REWARDS

Schools can play an important role in encouraging attendance by providing rewards for good and improved attendance and punctuality, both for individuals and classes or groups. Care should be taken to acknowledge individuals who are making an effort to attend but who nonetheless, and for acceptable reasons, may have poor attendance overall. Such rewards may include:-

- letters of congratulations, certificates for good attendance which may be taken home
- a mention in assembly
- the award of badges
- the giving of prizes such as mascots or a cup for the highest class or tutor group attendance

## 10.3 OTHER STRATEGIES WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED

- sending letters to parents of new pupils after the first possible 100 attendances with special praise both for those with 100% attendance and for those with no avoidable absences
- recording attendance on reports sent home, with positive comments for effort
- entering improvements on the school record of a poor attender
- sending children to senior members of staff for commendation for efforts made towards improvement as well as for full attendance
- setting up a committee of school governors to meet with poor attenders and encourage pupils to return at a later date to talk about any improvements in attendance
- identifying children 'at risk' before they transfer to another class, group or school and devising ways of supporting such children
- using older pupils as learning mentors to assist pupils plan and prepare their course work
- including attendance targets in the induction programme for all new staff and in particular for newly qualified teachers
- setting attainment targets in the induction programme for all new staff and in particular for newly qualified teachers
- setting attainment targets for individuals or class or year groups

Rewards for good attendance are likely to prove more effective than sanctions for non-attendance. Nevertheless, there will be occasions when a pupil needs to be confronted and challenged on his/her poor attendance. **Schools should consider how this is to be done and what action should be taken**

**to ensure consistent practice among staff. The support of parents should be sought where practicable.** Care should be taken that children who may be struggling to attend regularly and punctually in the face of adverse home circumstances are not unintentionally discouraged by the use of sanctions.

#### **10.4 REINTEGRATION OF LONG-TERM ABSENTEES**

A number of pupils miss long periods of school through sickness, exclusion, school refusal, etc. and may feel especially vulnerable when they do eventually return. It is vital to make the transition back to full-time school as smooth as possible. The Advisory Service have produced a helpful guide "Promoting Social Inclusion: Good Attendance Support Pack", to help schools cope with the reintegration of long term absentees.

Ideally, the return of the long-term absentee needs to be carefully planned but this may not always be possible.

**To ease the return of the long-term absentee, schools may need to consider an Individual Action Plan (IAP), i.e.**

- nominate a key person to co-ordinate, monitor and review the child's return - a favourite teacher may be the ideal person
- ensure that all staff are aware of, and alert to, the situation
- consider the possible need for a phased or gradual return
- consider the timetable and determine what is immediately possible and manageable for the child

#### **10.5 EFFECTIVE PRIMARY-SECONDARY SCHOOL LIAISON**

This will involve:-

- clearly identified staff responsible for maintaining links with associate primary schools
- a clearly defined and regularly reviewed strategy to facilitate secondary transfer
- systems to monitor and review the progress of all Year 7 pupils
- structured visits from primary schools in the summer terms and follow up meetings with primary staff
- measures to ensure curricular continuity (purposeful liaison between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers)
- effective liaison with the EWO's attached to associate primary schools
- special induction programmes for those Year 7 pupils who come from primary schools other than the school's usual primary schools (this may often be a

small number of pupils - precisely those who may find secondary transfer a lonely and difficult time)

- getting the whole school involved in taking responsibility for assisting new pupils
- involving the parents from the very beginning

#### **10.6 SOME SUGGESTIONS:-**

- ask last year's Year 7 pupils what, if anything, they found difficult
- 'pair' vulnerable pupils with a responsible pupil from Year 12 or Year 13
- initiate a mentor scheme. The EWS has designed and introduced in several schools a training scheme using Year 10 to befriend and "buddy" Year 7 pupils
- use homework diaries to assist organisation skills
- send associate primary schools details of the syllabus/curriculum which Year 7 pupils will have to follow
- try and meet all parents of Year 7 pupils

**Primary schools have a vital role to play in preparing children for life in secondary school. The earlier any attendance difficulties are identified, the sooner support can be offered.**

#### **10.7 LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN**

There has been growing concern nationally about the attendance and educational achievements of children and young people looked-after by Local Authorities. The Audit Commission's 1994 report "*Seen but not Heard*" confirmed the low educational achievements and irregular attendance of children in residential care.

Children and young people may be looked-after by the Social Services for a variety of reasons. Most children are looked-after under voluntary arrangements. A minority are subject to care orders.

Most of the children looked-after will have been affected by distressing and damaging experiences. They may be living away from home because of family breakdown, abuse or neglect, or social need. Nearly all will have to cope with some sense of loss of family, siblings, and friends, of identity or familiar surroundings. Some will carry guilt feelings and other hidden injuries and many will have very low self-esteem. All or any of these factors will affect the way these children act. Many children will also be behind in their education; it is important, therefore, that these disadvantages are not compounded and that early entry into local schools is facilitated.

Schools are of course responsible for a large number of pupils and some looked-after children may display a range of behavioural and discipline problems. However a good, consistent and caring education can help many children recover from the adversities that have beset them.

## **10.8 STARTING SCHOOL / CHANGING SCHOOL**

Starting school or a change of school can be difficult for a child - whether it involves the move from nursery to infants, from infants to junior or primary to secondary. Primary and secondary schools can assist by identifying pupils who may appear likely to experience attendance and other difficulties at their school and sharing such information when appropriate.

## **10.9 INFANT AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS - The Early Bird Sticker Scheme**

This scheme was developed by a Wolverhampton Primary School that wished to promote punctuality and attendance. How the scheme works:-

All pupils and parents are informed that the school will be running an Early Bird week

Early Bird certificates are issued to all children at the beginning of the first week of a new term. A sticker is awarded for every day the pupil arrives on time. An assembly is held at the end of each week and a certificate awarded to each child who achieves five stickers

Pupils told parents how important it was that they were on time for school and parents learned, sometimes for the first time, the need for their children to be punctual. All pupils wanted to be "Early Birds"

Information on the punctuality of each child involved in the scheme continued to be gathered for a further five weeks. The results showed a significant improvement in punctuality. When punctuality deteriorated the scheme was run again

The pilot school's success led to the scheme being made available to all schools in the borough

The scheme could be adapted to each school; each school could invent an "Early" animal and produce a logo. Stickers can be produced cheaply and quickly

**Contact your EWO for details of this and other strategies that may help improve attendance in your school.**

# **EWS Procedural Guidelines for Schools**

## **Introduction**

The EWS exists to help parents and the LEA meet the obligations and duties placed upon them by successive Education Acts and Child Care legislation.

It aims to enable all children gain maximum benefit from their education, regardless of race, gender, ability, status, culture and religion by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

In the changing world of Education these procedures explain the role and function of the EWS in relation to schools, families, children and other agencies. It also provides a framework whereby schools and the EWO can negotiate the degree of support appropriate to individual requirements.

Shropshire County Council and Telford & Wrekin Council are committed to maintaining consistently high levels of pupil attendance at school and recognise that improving attendance is a crucial factor in maintaining standards of pupil performance and achievement, and in ensuring equality of educational opportunity for all pupils.

## **The Education Welfare Officer and the School**

Irregular attendance raises complex issues. Pupils may be failing to attend school regularly for a variety of reasons. Some reasons may be outside the immediate control of the school, but good practice and appropriate responses within the school to identify needs can help to improve attendance.

It is therefore important that there are clearly defined criteria and procedures for referring non-attenders to the EWS. The importance of early identification, assessment and intervention cannot be over emphasised.

## **Referrals**

### **Who is responsible for making a referral to the EWO?**

Regular timetabled sessions with pastoral staff in secondary schools should be arranged and referrals made only after the school has tried and failed to engage the parent to address attendance problems. As much information as possible should be included by the referrer e.g. family circumstances, involvement with other agencies, known health problems.

Primary schools receive visits from EWOs on a regular, but less frequent basis, by agreement between the EWO and the Headteacher at the beginning of each school year. This will vary from weekly to termly. The service will also respond to requests where there are matters of immediate or urgent concern.

### **Some triggering factors could be:-**

- pupil is developing a lateness problem
- erratic attendance i.e. broken weeks over a period of time
- no absence note / telephone call explaining the reason or no response to school's enquiries
- family trauma - pupil distressed, mood swings, sudden changes in character
- suspected illegal child employment
- material needs
- concern over the care and control, health or general well being of a child at home or in the community

### **What action should the school have taken before a referral is made?**

It is important that all absence is monitored and follow up action taken by school staff before serious cases are referred to the EWS. Therefore, before a referral is made the school will have applied all school resources without success e.g.:-

- on first day of absence, contact should be made to alert parent/s that pupil is not in school
- a three day absence letter should have been sent to parent/s
- pupils will have been interviewed at school to obtain the child's perception of any difficulties, i.e. bullying, curriculum difficulties etc.
- a member of staff will have already tried to contact parent/s to discuss attendance difficulties

### **What kind of concerns can be referred?**

- unresolved attendance problems
- repeated, condoned absences
- irregular attendance, whatever the explanations
- ongoing lateness
- emotional/behavioural problems
- suspected illegal child employment
- material needs
- family problems
- concerns over the care and control, health or general well being of children at home or in the community

### **What happens next?**

The EWO will assess the situation and may seek further information from other sources if necessary (e.g. the Social Services Department, Child & Family Service, Educational Psychologist) before contacting the parents.

### **What is the time scale for this?**

Contact should be made within 10 working days of receiving a referral. The EWO will provide either a copy of written communications made with the parent or a written report on the EWO Referral/Response form. School will be kept informed of the progress of ongoing cases, but we do not undertake to provide written feedback after every visit made.

### **What if all attempts to contact the parents or guardians fail?**

An official warning notice will be issued by the Senior EWO.

### **When the EWO reports back to the school, what can the school expect him/her to have done?**

Where ill health is a factor, the EWO will seek to confirm the medical problems identified by the child/parent, (particularly if there have been several referrals and the explanation has been ill health). If it is felt that the parent/s have not sought appropriate medical help but are merely making excuses, parent/s will be advised to obtain a medical certificate for all future absences from their doctor. In extreme and complex medical conditions a medical opinion may be sought from the Senior Clinical Medical Officer.

Where learning needs or problems of school refusal/phobia have been raised, the EWO may consult with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) to consider a referral to the Learning Support Advisory Teacher, or Educational Psychologist.

The EWO may have discussed with the family and child a referral to the Child & Family Service or the Social Services Department, if appropriate.

**N.B.** EWOs are **not** social workers and complex family problems will be referred to the Social Services Department.

Where there is already social work involvement the EWO will have liaised with the designated social worker in order to determine separate areas of responsibility and to consider the possibility of a joint visit if appropriate.

If the child is within the appropriate age group, the EWO will have discussed with the family and the school other options, such as work experience.

### **What happens when the EWO reports back to the School?**

The EWO should liaise with school staff and draw up a plan of action to address any issues raised by the child or family regarding difficulties that might mitigate against regular attendance at school. These may include; bullying, curriculum problems, teacher/pupil relationships, domestic problems, financial hardship, drug/alcohol abuse etc

In complex cases, this may take a number of visits. When the initial assessment has been made, the EWO, together with those involved, will then plan the course of action. This may include requesting the school to call a Pupil Planning Meeting. In some cases this may involve working with parents to help them to see the school's

view and vice-versa. The resolution of conflict between school and home and trying to change parental attitudes towards education, are seen as being fundamental to the EWS.

### **What happens when all avenues have been explored, and the child still does not attend school regularly?**

A Final Warning Notice will be served on the parents. If no significant improvement in attendance is noted within 28 days of the serving of this warning, court proceedings will be considered under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

### **The LEAs Policy for Prosecution is as follows:-**

The parent/s of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to achieve regular attendance will be considered for court proceedings unless there are extenuating circumstances such as:-

- mental health of the parent/guardian
- involvement with Social Services, or the Child & Family Service
- ill health of child that has been certified by a medical practitioner
- exceptional problems that mitigate against regular attendance

All parents must be given sufficient notification of their children's attendance via the serving of official warning notices.

If it is decided to prosecute the following check list must be addressed:-

- details of contact with child and parents
- periods of involvement and issues focused upon
- initiatives undertaken in an attempt to improve school attendance e.g. previous prosecutions, addressing material needs
- assessment of the culpability of the parents in failing to ensure attendance
- details of unauthorised absences over a given period
- confirmation that the education provided is appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special needs he/she might have
- explanations offered by the child/parent for absences and if plausible, efforts made by the appropriate agency to address those issues
- school based issues raised by parent/pupil have been addressed
- alternative strategies that have been tried or explored, e.g. work experience programmes, curriculum modification, change of class or school

### **Who is responsible for instigating court procedures?**

The EWS is responsible for all aspects of the procedure. A summons will be issued and served in accordance with the requirements of the respective Magistrates Clerks and another EWO will attend court and present the case on behalf of the Local Education Authority. In certain circumstances a Council Solicitor can be made available to present cases on behalf of the Local Education Authority, e.g. not guilty pleas and contested cases.

A certificate signed by the Headteacher confirming the child's school attendance during the period of complaint referred to in the summons will be required as documentary evidence by the court.

### **N.B. Only unauthorised absences can be used in evidence**

### **If parents are acting responsibly, but cannot ensure regular attendance of their child/children because of the attitude of the child/children, what can be done?**

If it is inappropriate for parents in these situations to be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court, instead consideration will be given to applying for an Education Supervision Order (ESO).

### **What is an ESO?**

An ESO is an Order made by the Family Proceedings Court under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989. The initial Order is for one year but application can be made to extend the Order yearly up to a period of three years. The court must be satisfied that a child of compulsory school age is not being properly educated and that the making of the Order would be better for the child than making no Order at all. In addition the Court shall have regard in particular to:-

- the ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child concerned (considered in the light of the child's age and understanding)
- the child's physical, emotional and educational needs
- the likely effect on the child of any changes in circumstances
- the child's age, sex, background and any characteristics that the Court considers relevant
- any harm the child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering
- the capability of each parent in meeting the child's needs together with any other person whom the Court considers appropriate
- the range of powers available to the Court under this Act in the proceedings in question

### **This is referred to as the "Welfare Checklist" in the Children Act 1989**

Under the terms of the Order, the EWO must "**advise, assist and befriend**" the child and family, whilst the child and family must abide by the "**directions**" that the court lays down and any other reasonable directions of the EWO. Failure by the parent to follow these directions would mean returning to court when a fine of up to £1,000 could be imposed. Failure by the child to follow these directions would lead to the statutory involvement of Social Services Department.

There may be some situations in which an ESO is unlikely to be effective. Where, for example, parents would be hostile to such intervention, it may not be possible to undertake the structured programme of work that is necessary. At all times, the EWO will need to operate within a structure that defines clear aims and objectives. This will require a planned and realistic programme of intervention, including directions where necessary, which will specify how the aims and objectives are to be achieved. The active involvement of parents, children and schools will aid success.

***Education Supervision Orders, as the name implies, require a great deal of time spent with the pupil supervising them and encouraging them to change***

***patterns of behaviour. They have a limited effectiveness, as many of the strategies that could be applied will have already been tried to no avail.***

**What other legal sanctions are available?**

### **Parenting Orders**

The 1998 Crime & Disorder Act allows courts to make a Parenting Order for cases of non school attendance brought under sections 443 & 444 of the Education Act 1996. The aim of the order is to increase parenting support and to encourage parent/s to develop better parenting skills.

A Parenting Order can consist of two elements:

- a requirement on the parents or guardian to attend counselling or guidance sessions; these can last up to three months and
- a requirement encouraging the parent or guardian to exercise a measure of control over the child (e.g. that the parent ensures that the child attends school regularly) These Orders can last up to twelve months.

An application can be made for a **School Attendance Order** (Education Act 1996).

This is only for use where parents have failed to register their child at a school or where the LEA takes the view that the education being provided “otherwise” is not satisfactory. There is a set procedure for requiring parents to nominate a school to be named in the Order. Most situations are resolved without needing to issue the Order but, once served, it is an offence to ignore it. This power is not therefore, of significance where the child is registered but not attending.

**What other duties does the EWO have?**

There is a range of related areas of work in which EWOs are involved. The most important are set out below:-

#### **1. Child Employment/Children in Entertainment**

All children who may be involved in part-time employment should have a permit issued by the LEA. **It is illegal to employ a child under school leaving age in any “trade or occupation carried on for profit” without such a permit.** LEAs can prohibit the part-time employment of a particular child if it takes the view that the work is interfering with his/her education or considers the child is medically unfit. Any work-related injury, which is given as a reason for absence or any child believed to be working in school time or otherwise illegally, should always be reported to the LEA. for further investigation. Children **should not** be given leave of absence for shows, film work etc. without a licence.

**It would be helpful if schools would let EWOs know if they are aware of children who are working or appearing in entertainment so that the necessary checks can be made.**

With the introduction of new by-laws in January 1999, some forms of employment are now prohibited, namely:-

- a) in a cinema, theatre, discotheque, dance hall or night club - unless they are performing in which case they need a special permit
- b) to sell or deliver alcohol
- c) to deliver milk
- d) to deliver fuel oils
- e) work in a commercial kitchen
- f) to collect or sort refuse
- g) in any work which is more than three metres above the ground or in the case of internal work, more than three metres above floor level
- h) in employment involving harmful exposure to physical, biological or chemical agents
- i) to collect money or sell or canvass door to door, except under the supervision of an adult (In Shropshire school age children over the age of 13 are allowed to collect money for newspapers, but not in Telford & Wrekin)
- j) work involving exposure to adult materials or in situations which are for this reason otherwise unsuitable for children
- k) in telephone sales
- l) in any slaughterhouse or that part of any butchers shop or other premises connected with killing of livestock, butchery or the preparation of carcasses for meat or sale
- m) as an attendant or assistant in a fairground or amusement arcade or in any other premises used for the purpose of public amusement, by means of automatic machines, games of chance or skill or similar devices
- n) in the personal care of residents of any residential home or nursing home unless under the supervision of a responsible adult

**A child has to be 13 years old to have a part time job**

**No child / young person is permitted to work before 7.00 a.m. or after 7.00 p.m.**

## **2. Child Protection**

The EWS does not have a statutory responsibility for the investigation of child abuse. The service does, however, act as a source of advice and support to schools in relation to the Area Child Protection Committee's guidelines.

Schools should follow ACPC Procedures, which have the force of departmental directive and the Education Department's internal guidelines, and should particularly note the requirement that they notify the Social Services Department if they have any child protection concerns.

Headteachers should ensure that:-

- a) the school has a named designated teacher for child protection

- b) all school staff, including helpers etc., must be aware of the procedures which should be followed in cases of suspected child abuse

All members of staff must be made aware of the name of both the designated teacher and his/her deputy (in the case of possible absence of the designated teacher).

### **3. Youth Offending Team**

An Education Welfare Officer is seconded to the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and liaises closely with school based colleagues. Part of the seconded EWOs responsibilities are to ensure that non-school attendance and school based issues do not contribute to further anti-social behaviour. When a pupil has been reported for an offence information will be sought from the school as to the pupil's attendance, attitude and performance. This will enable the YOT to develop the right sort of intervention to prevent further offending. Information obtained from the YOT may be shared with the school on a need to know basis , particularly in the case of serious offences.

In addition the EWS provides representation on various sub-groups of the ACPC and is responsible for Child Protection Training - multi agency and in-house.

### **COMPLAINTS**

**If a school has a complaint about an EWO or the service being provided, the complainant should discuss this in the first instance with the EWO concerned. If this fails to resolve the problem, the Senior Education Welfare Officer or the Head of Service should be contacted, preferably in writing, who will then look into the issues and provide a written response.**

# 11.0 APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR ANNUAL HOLIDAY

Suggested letter to parents

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear .....,

#### Holidays in Term Time

Thank you for requesting a "Leave of Absence" form. Please return the completed form (below) and return to school **at least two weeks** before your intended holiday.

All applications for holidays in term time will be considered on an individual basis and the maximum number of days holiday which can be taken in term time is TEN DAYS between 1st January and 31st December in any year.

However, when considering future family holidays in term time, I would ask you to consider the following:-

- a) try not to take holidays during term time if your child is preparing for, or taking internal or external examinations
- b) the effect the absence from school may have on your child's development
- c) where possible, take family holidays during school holidays

I would also ask that, on your return from holiday, your child returns to school promptly.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

#### Application for Leave of absence for Annual Holiday

I request that .....(Name of Child)

be granted leave of absence from .....(Name of School)

From: ..... To: .....

in order to go on annual holiday.

.....  
(Signature of parent/carer

.....  
(Date)

Dear Parent,

Your child \_\_\_\_\_ was absent from school on the following dates:-

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

Absences without explanation must now be recorded by law as unauthorised absences.

Would you, therefore, please tick one of the explanations below to indicate why your child has been absent and return to school as soon as possible.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher

**Medical or dental treatment** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sickness** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other reasons** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**(Signed)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Dated)** \_\_\_\_\_

## Attendance Codes

## APPENDIX 3

Symbol	Explanation	Type of Absence
M	Medical / Dental	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet supplied for absence	Unauthorised for the present. N.B. This can be changed later when explanation received - but no gaps should be left in the register.
O	Unauthorised circumstances	Unauthorised
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Marked present.
R	Religious Observance	Authorised absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised absence N.B. Bona fide Travelling Children are only required by law to attend on 200 occasions per year.
V	Educational Visit	Marked present
W	Work Experience	Marked Present
X	Only Staff in Attendance	Inset Day.
Y	Enforced Closure	Inclement Weather etc.
#	Holiday for all	Attendance not required.
B	Educated off site	Marked present.
C	Other authorised circumstance	Exceptional circumstances only i.e. Bereavement, family crisis etc.
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence
H	Annual family holiday	Authorised Absence only with prior agreement.
I	Attending Interview	Authorised Absence
L	Late before the close of registration	Present.
@	Late after the close of registration.	Unauthorised absence.
Z	Computer registration - not part of school year	Attendance not required.
^	Present	Present.

**APPENDIX 4**

**SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE**

**MOVEMENT OF PUPILS: OUTGOING**

<b>Name of Pupil (in full)</b>		<b>Age: Date of Birth:</b>
<b>Full Name of Parent/Guardian</b>		
<b>Name &amp; Address of pupil's present school/provision e.g. P.R.U., Tuition Group, etc.</b>		
<b>Home Address</b>		
<b>Date of removal from present school/provision.</b>		
<b>Name &amp; address of school / provision to which pupil is transferring.</b>		
<b>New home address (if applicable)</b>		

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_  
(Headteacher)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_