



Learning at the heart, igniting possibility!

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Aims and values

Our core moral purpose is encapsulated in the vision statement for the school: *Learning at the heart, igniting possibility!* Our focus is on learning not just within and across subject areas but also the personal development of all learners who attend our school. We strive to inspire all learners to go beyond what they consider possible for themselves, to experience and try new things and to realise all aspects of their potential. There are no glass ceilings put on any of our learners; we wish to ignite a passion for learning and for life that will remain with them as they move on to their next phase of the learning journey elsewhere.

The Rights of the child

As a school we are committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The following aspects of the Convention relate most directly to this policy:

- Article 3: All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.
- Article 28: **All children and young people have a right to a primary education**, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. **Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of.**
- Article 29: **Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full.**

Principles:

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.

All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

School Responsibilities:

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

- The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. ([February 22nd 2015 Department of Education](#)). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.
- The results are very clear – **missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.**
- For example, at the end of the 2012/13 Academic year, 94% of pupils who were present all the time achieved 5+ GCSE A* - C or equivalent. Where attendance dropped to between 85 and 90%, only 75% of pupils achieved these results. This equates to an absence of around 1 week per year during Years 10 and 11 and clearly illustrates the impact of attendance on attainment.
- The same pattern is also seen at primary school level, where pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in Key Stage 2 (normally age 11) are a quarter less likely to achieve level 5 or above in reading, writing or mathematics tests than those with no absence.

Admissions Register:

- School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.
- All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.
- A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they:
 - Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
 - Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
 - Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
 - Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
 - Have been permanently excluded.

Elective Home Education:

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Attendance data and targets:

The Local Authority does not prescribe individual school targets for attendance or persistent absence. As a school we set realistic but ambitious targets for whole school attendance and persistent absence.

The attendance of learners with Special Educational Needs and/or are in receipt of Pupil Premium funding are two specific groups whose attendance is being particularly targeted at present.

Autumn Term 2014 – Spring Term 2015

	England	School	Target 2015-16
Overall attendance %	96%	96.9%	97.2%
Authorised absence (%)		2.5%	2.4%
Unauthorised absence (%)		0.6%	0.4%
Persistent Absence % (based on 15 % absence)	2.7%	1.5%	1.3%

Definition of persistent absence:

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing around 15% or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period. From September 2015 this definition will change to include pupils missing 10% or more of possible sessions. For the Academic Year 2015-16 only, data will be collected and published nationally for both measures to allow continued comparison.

Procedures:

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Parents are required to telephone and inform school on the morning of the first day of absence.
- The school operates a first day contact system which means that should we not have been informed of a child's absence before 9.30am, we will telephone parents to identify why their child is not in school. This is part of the school's commitment to safeguarding the safety and welfare of children. Parents may also be prompted to contact school via a text message from the ParentMail service the school utilises.
- Absences should always be followed up with a letter to school when learners return.
- Unexplained absences are followed up with a letter from the school office. No reply to this results in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- When learners arrive late, they are required to report to the main office and parents are asked to sign them in to record their arrival on the electronic system (screen).
- All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the beginning of the next term. There are also certificates for children whose attendance is 95% and above; also, for children whose attendance improves significantly from one term to the next.
- It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. They also receive an update each term through the Headteacher's Report to Governors. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The Headteacher is responsible for the operational management of the policy.
- Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way supported by the Bursar, Office Support Manager and Office Administrator where appropriate. If there is concern about a child's absence, class teachers (or Higher Level Teaching Assistants) will contact the school office immediately.

- Phase Team Leaders also have a role in supporting class teachers with attendance issues and raising concerns with the Headteacher, Deputy Head or Assistant Heads. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher by the class teacher and/or Phase Lead Learner, who will contact the parents or carers.
- The Headteacher, with the Office Support Manager, analyses attendance data to identify trends for individual learners' classes and year groups enabling the school to target efforts. Wherever possible action should be taken by the school to improve a learner's attendance, investigate and address any underlying cause of problems before considering whether to make a referral to the Local Authority.
- The school commissions the services of Walsall Local Authority which includes weekly visits from an Education Welfare Officer. Her role includes contacting and visiting parents and carers whose children's attendance is a cause for concern.
- Involving other agencies – the Local Authority must be informed of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission but school should involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern.
- The school takes an active part in initiatives such as local spotlight weeks working closely with the Local Support Team, Parent Support Workers, the local Police and others.
- It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc.
- Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments, which must be in school time.

Leave of absence during term time:

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 previously allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments made clear that **headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. Amendments to 2007 regulations reduced the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Request for leave during term time forms are available in the main office (see Appendices).

In appropriate circumstances, entering into Parenting Contracts and issuing Penalty Notices will be considered.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence;
- It is proposed that use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per learner per academic year;
- In cases where there is more than one poor-attending learner in a family, multiple notices may be issued. This decision will involve careful consideration and consultation with schools by the Local Support Team regarding the family's current circumstances;
- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent or carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

To ensure that Staffordshire County Council has a consistent approach to the issuing of Penalty Notices the Local Support Team will apply their current criteria to each case, i.e.:

- There must be at least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the learner during the current and previous term, effectively an 85% attendance trigger; attendance should be calculated cumulatively.
- As a school, we have adopted the Authorisation Procedure for leave during term time (see Appendices). Where parents fail to comply with the procedure a Penalty Notice may be considered.

When an individual learner's attendance level falls below 85% in any term without good reason, a referral to the Local Support Team will be made by the school. Prior to this, parents will be invited into the school to have the opportunity to discuss any issues preventing regular attendance. Following investigation, any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Bursar: Mrs S Marriott
Office Support Manager: Mrs J Tracey
Office Administrator: Mrs V Dobson
Headteacher: Mr T Hand
Learning Mentor: Mrs S Wileman

Legal Framework:

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The Equality Act 2010.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Monitoring and review:

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body annually during the Spring Term.

Policy reviewed and revised: January 2016

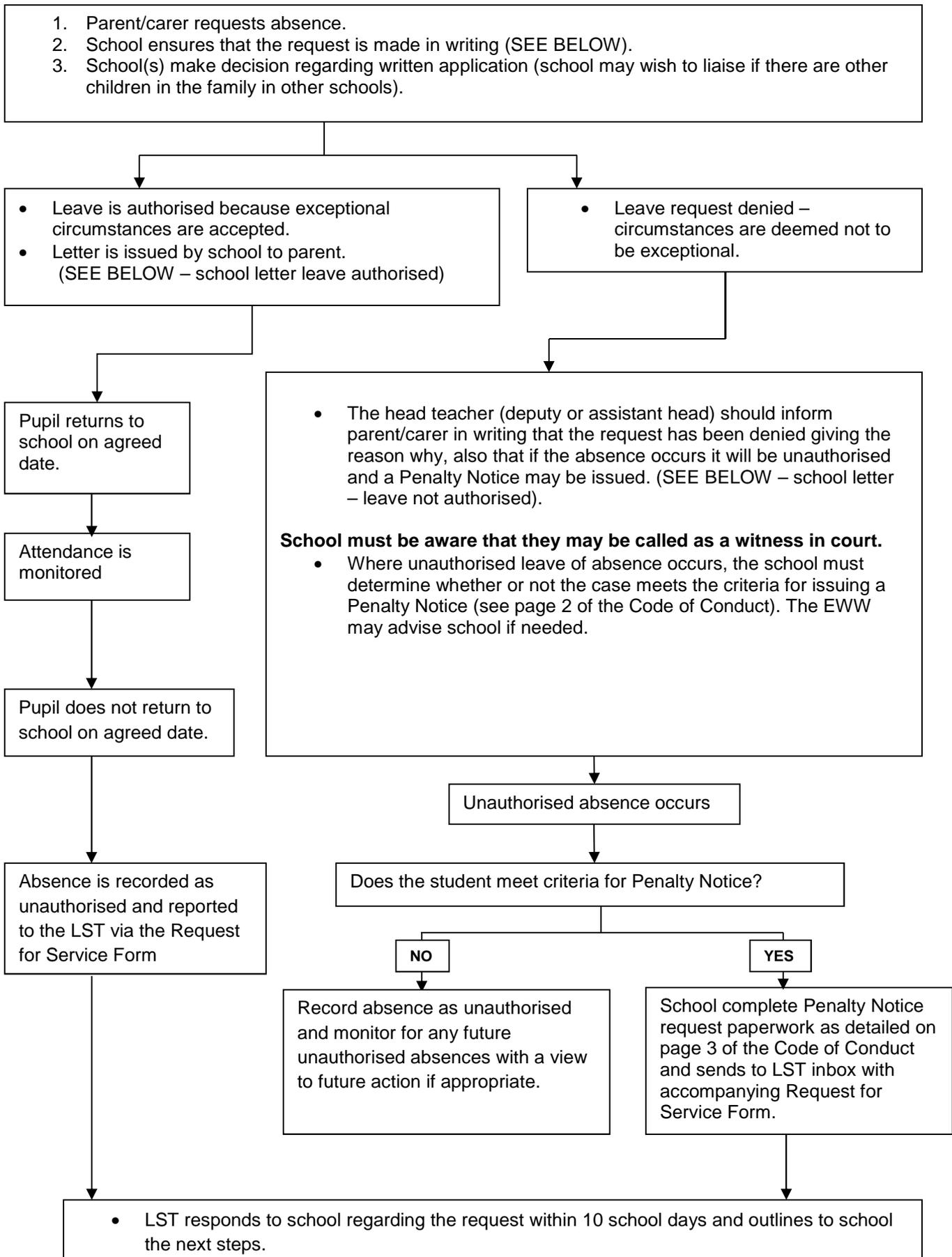
Appendices:

- [Staffordshire Code of Conduct](#) for Issuing Fixed penalty notices.
- Department for Education [Guidance –Pupil Attendance](#) including use of national codes to record attendance or reasons for absence in registers.
- Example proformas such as school 'Leave of Absence' request or referral form for support from an external agency.
- Example letters such as colour coded letters to parents related to levels of attendance.

Appendix I

Flowchart – Unauthorised Leave of Absence

Authorisation Procedure



Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the head teacher**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, that they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - the overall attendance pattern of the child
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. Should the school decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 **per parent* per child**. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.

* Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

Dosthill Primary School
High Street
Dosthill
Tamworth
Staffordshire
B77 1LQ
Telephone:
01827 475155



Headteacher: Mr T. Hand
Deputy Head: Mrs C Key
Bursar: Mr A Jones

E-mail:
office@dosthill.staffs.sch.uk
office2@dosthill.staffs.sch.

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Request for leave during term time

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name) Class

for the period from (date) returning to school on

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are: -

.....
.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s))	School(s) attended
.....
.....

Signed(Parent/Carer) Print Name

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance.....% Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time(this academic year)

Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Rationale to decline request :

Signed Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carers.....

Dosthill Primary School
High Street
Dosthill
Tamworth
Staffordshire
B77 1LQ
Telephone:
01827 475155



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Headteacher: Mr T. Hand
Deputy Head: Mrs C Keay
Bursar: Mr A Jones

E-mail:
office@dosthill.staffs.sch.uk
office2@dosthill.staffs.sch.

Date.....

Dear Parent/Carer

Child's name Class

Thank you for your letter requesting permission for your child to be absent from school

from to

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having looked at your application, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance. **Therefore, the absence to include the dates requested will be authorised.**

Our key priority is to ensure that your child(ren) are as successful as possible and are able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would therefore ask that you support your child in catching up on the time they will miss in school.

Yours sincerely

Mr T Hand
Head teacher

Dosthill Primary School
High Street
Dosthill
Tamworth
Staffordshire
B77 1LQ
Telephone:
01827 475155



Headteacher: Mr T. Hand
Deputy Head: Mrs C Keay
Bursar: Mr A Jones

E-mail:
office@dosthill.staffs.sch.uk
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Date.....

Dear Parent/Carer

Child's name Class

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from to

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I have considered your application very carefully. Although I understand the reason for your request, I am unable to approve leave of absence in this instance, as I believe the circumstances are not exceptional. **Therefore, if your child is away from school during this period it will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence.**

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct.

The Penalty Notice fine would be :-

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996.

I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £2,500 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Our key priority is to ensure your child(ren) are as successful as possible, are able to reach his/her full potential and gains maximum benefits from his/her educational experience.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely
Mr T Hand (Headteacher)

Attendance Colour Codes

Letters, automatically generated through the school's Management Information System, are sent to parents and carers half-termly indicating their child's cumulative level of attendance. These reflect the attendance colour codes detailed below. Meetings are arranged for those parents and carers whose children's attendance is less than 85%.

95% - 100%

WELL DONE! THIS IS EXCELLENT

If you are in the green group you have been absent for less than two weeks in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.

92% - 94%

BE CAREFUL

If you are in the yellow group you could be missing up to 2 weeks of learning in the whole year.

85% - 91%

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED!

If you are in the grey group you could be missing at least 4 weeks of learning in the school year.

Less than 85%

PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL

You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 6 weeks of learning in the school year.