**School Logo / Headed Paper / Sent from an official school email address with a clear email signature**

* **This communication should be pasted into the body of an email (rather than as an attachment), which should be sent with a read receipt requested;**
* **The ‘TO’ field of the email must be addressed to an individual parent (separate emails should be sent to each individual parent);**
* **The subject field should make clear the content of the communication. Please note parent/s email addresses must not be in the CC or BCC field;**
* **If being sent as a letter, please ensure the full address section is completed as per the below and send to each parent via first class Royal Mail post.**

Parent Name

Address line 1

Address line 2

Address line 3

Address line 4

Postcode

Date:

Dear Parent Name,

**Leave of Absence Request**

**Re: CHILD NAME DOB XX/XX/XXXX**

Thank you for your leave of absence request for [Pupil Name] to be absent from school from [Insert date – first day of expected absence] to [Insert date – last day of expected absence], a total of Enter Number school days.

You will already be aware from your leave of absence request, our school’s attendance policy and the Norfolk County Council Code of Conduct, Government guidelines prevent headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Following due consideration, I am unable to agree to your request as the reason provided, ADD REASON provided by parent, is not considered exceptional.

I must warn you that if you do take your child out of school for this time the absences will not be authorised, and I will be referring the matter to the Local Authority for consideration of further action. Please find attached a further copy of the guidance for parents from Norfolk County Council outlining key information for penalty notices regarding school absence.

We support the Government’s stance on trying to reduce the amount of school missed and we hope that you will continue to support us by not planning a leave of absence during term time. If you would like to meet with me to discuss this matter and/or you believe there are exceptional circumstances which mean the absence cannot be taken during a school holiday period, please contact me to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

**Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence - Guidance for parents**

Date: **[DD/MM/YYYY]**

**Regular school attendance and parent’s legal responsibilities**

At **[INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL]** our aim is to collaborate with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This guidance is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children’s attainment.

**The important legal information**

The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. The LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1st penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. In Norfolk, where a pupil’s attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child **or** who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child’s attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance**.

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

**Requests for leave of absence**

[Working together to improve school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government ‘does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.’

Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise schools will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

**Support with ensuring regular school attendance**

If you require any support with ensuring your child’s attendance, please contact **[Insert name and contact details]**.