The Key > Leaders

Mapperley Plains Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Statutory

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Inspiring learners. Shaping futures.

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1. Aims

Mapperley Plains Primary and Nursery School is committed to securing high levels of attendance and punctuality for all children. Regular attendance supports learning, relationships, wellbeing and wider development. Our approach is rooted in the school values: Be kind, be curious, be your best.

We recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider issues and that some children face greater barriers to attendance than others. We will combine high expectations with early identification, careful listening, appropriate support and proportionate challenge. Attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all children
- Promote regular attendance and explain clearly why it matters
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Identify emerging patterns of absence or lateness early and respond promptly
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to understand and remove barriers to attendance
- Make reasonable adjustments and provide targeted support where children face additional barriers
- Work effectively with Nottinghamshire County Council and other partners where wider support or legal intervention is required
- Use attendance data to identify priorities, vulnerable cohorts and the impact of interventions
- Ensure attendance practice is integrated with safeguarding, SEND, medical needs, disadvantage, behaviour and pastoral support

For children below compulsory school age, including some children in Nursery and Reception, the legal duty on parents to secure regular school attendance does not apply in the same way. However, the school maintains high expectations for attendance, follows up absence and applies its safeguarding procedures to all children on roll.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026) and Nottinghamshire County Council's Improving School Attendance Toolkit and Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices.

It has regard to:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the 2024 amendments
- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school statutory guidance
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Communicating with parents about school attendance: guidance for schools
- School census guidance
- The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework
- Nottinghamshire County Council's current Improving School Attendance Toolkit and Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices

Where legislation, statutory guidance or the Nottinghamshire local code changes, the current requirements take precedence. This policy will be updated as necessary.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of leaders, staff, children and parents in relation to attendance and punctuality
- Making sure school leaders fulfil statutory duties and comply with the law on attendance and registration
- Recognising and promoting the importance of attendance across the school's culture, policies and improvement work

- Ensuring attendance management processes are effective and that support is prioritised for children who need it most
- Making sure high aspirations are maintained for all children while support is adapted to individual needs, including SEND, disability and health needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data, including recent and historic trends and patterns
- Benchmarking whole-school, year group and cohort attendance against local, regional and national information
- Paying particular attention to vulnerable cohorts and groups facing entrenched barriers to attendance
- Working with leaders to set attendance priorities and evaluate improvement activity
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate attendance training and that staff with specialist attendance functions receive additional training
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation and effectiveness of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy and maintaining a whole-school culture of high attendance
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with the monitoring and support of individual children
- Monitoring the impact of attendance strategies and interventions
- Making decisions about leave of absence during term time
- Ensuring penalty notice referrals and other legal interventions are considered lawfully, fairly and proportionately
- Working with parents of children with SEND and with the SENCO to develop specific attendance support where needed
- Communicating with the local authority where a child with an EHC plan has falling attendance or barriers related to their needs
- Notifying the local authority when a child is added to or deleted from the admission register outside standard transition times, as required
- Providing the local authority with details of children who fail to attend regularly or who have a continuous period of 10 school days of unauthorised absence, as required
- Providing the local authority with details of children the school believes will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness
- Ensuring required attendance information is shared with the DfE and local authority
- Ensuring safeguarding concerns linked to absence are acted upon promptly

3.3 Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion is Paul Summers, Headteacher. He can be contacted through the school office on 0115 964 9360 or at office@mapperleyplains.notts.sch.uk.

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and ensuring they are followed consistently
- Maintaining a strong grasp of absence data and overseeing its analysis
- Regularly monitoring progress and evaluating the effectiveness of attendance processes
- Building productive relationships with children and families
- Creating and overseeing intervention and reintegration plans with children and parents
- Liaising with the SENCO, DSL team, family support, social care, health services, the local authority and other agencies where needed
- Deciding when attendance concerns require formal escalation

3.4 Attendance administration

Day-to-day attendance administration is coordinated by Adele Bastow, Office Manager, supported by Kate Harper and the office team. The office can be contacted on 0115 964 9360 or at office@mapperleyplains.notts.sch.uk.

Attendance administration includes:

- Monitoring daily registers, lateness and unexplained absence
- Receiving and recording absence information from parents and carers
- Making first-day contact where a child is absent without explanation
- Ensuring temporary absence codes are updated promptly when the reason becomes known
- Producing attendance reports and identifying children whose attendance requires review
- Supporting the Senior Attendance Champion with letters, meetings, records and local authority referrals
- Maintaining accurate records of actions, support and communication

3.5 Senior leaders, the DSL team and SENCO

- Senior leaders will know the children whose attendance presents the greatest concern and will review patterns, barriers and interventions regularly
- The DSL team will consider unexplained, persistent or severe absence as a potential safeguarding indicator and respond in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The SENCO will support attendance planning where SEND or disability creates barriers and will liaise with the local authority where an EHC plan is in place
- The SENCO is Carla Smith. The DSL team is Paul Summers (Lead DSL), Carla Smith, Laura North and Lydia Jennings. Leaders will ensure attendance, safeguarding, SEND, disadvantage, behaviour, medical and pastoral information inform one coherent plan for the child

3.6 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Completing morning and afternoon registers accurately and promptly at the published registration times
- Using the school's electronic registration system and alerting the office to any uncertainty
- Noticing emerging patterns of absence or lateness and reporting concerns promptly
- Sharing relevant concerns with the Senior Attendance Champion and, where appropriate, recording safeguarding or pastoral concerns on CPOMS
- Welcoming children back positively following absence and avoiding language that shames or blames them
- Supporting agreed attendance and reintegration plans

3.7 Parents and carers

In this policy, parent includes natural parents, people with parental responsibility and people who have day-to-day responsibility for the child.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school expects them to attend and arrives on time
- Notify the school of an unplanned absence by 9.00am on the first day and on each subsequent day unless a return date has already been agreed
- Give a clear reason for absence and keep the school updated if circumstances change
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number and, for children in the EYFS, more than two where possible
- Arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside the school day where possible
- Apply in advance for any requested leave of absence during term time
- Engage with meetings, support plans and attendance contracts where these are offered
- Seek support promptly where barriers are affecting attendance

3.8 Children

Children are expected, in a way appropriate to their age and understanding, to:

- Attend every school session they are expected to attend and arrive on time
- Talk to a trusted adult if something is making it difficult for them to attend
- Engage with support and reintegration plans designed to help them attend regularly

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The school will keep an electronic attendance register. All children on the admission register will have their attendance recorded. The register will be taken at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session using the national attendance and absence codes. The period for which the register remains open will be the same for each session and will not exceed 30 minutes.

On each occasion the register will record whether each child is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent because they are unable to attend due to an unavoidable cause

Any amendment to the register will preserve:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

• The name and position of the person making the amendment

Attendance register entries will be retained for six years from the date on which the entry was made. Appendix 1 summarises the national attendance codes.

4.2 School day, registration and punctuality

For Reception to Year 6, the school day runs from 8.50am to 3.30pm. Nursery sessions run from 8.50am to 11.50am or 12.30pm to 3.30pm. Children must arrive by the start of their session and be ready to learn.

The morning register is taken at 8.55am and closes at 9.20am. Children arriving after 8.50am must enter through the school office and their time of arrival will be recorded for punctuality monitoring. A child who arrives after the register has started but before 9.20am will be recorded as late using code L. A child who arrives after 9.20am, where no other attendance code applies, will be recorded as absent for the morning session using code U.

The afternoon register is taken at 1.10pm for all registered children who are expected to attend the afternoon session and closes at 1.35pm. This provides one whole-school afternoon registration point and a 25-minute registration window, matching the morning registration window. Children who are not required to attend that session will be recorded using the appropriate national code.

Lateness is monitored as part of the school's attendance work. Where lateness is persistent, school will contact parents, seek to understand the reason, offer appropriate support and agree clear expectations. U codes are unauthorised absence and count towards the national penalty notice threshold.

4.3 Unplanned absence

Parents must report an unplanned absence by 9.00am on the first day and each subsequent day unless a definite return date has been agreed. Absence should be reported to the school office on 0115 964 9360, by voicemail if necessary, or by email to office@mapperleyplains.notts.sch.uk.

Absence due to physical or mental ill health will normally be authorised where the school accepts that the child was not well enough to attend. The school will not routinely require medical evidence and will not operate blanket evidence rules.

Where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of illness, or where prolonged or repeated illness is affecting attendance and further information is needed to understand the child's needs, the school may seek reasonable evidence. The school will be flexible about the form of evidence and will discuss this with the parent before making a decision.

4.4 Planned absence and medical appointments

Parents should arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, children should attend school before or after the appointment and be absent for the minimum time necessary.

Parents should notify the school in advance of planned medical or dental appointments. The school may request appropriate evidence where necessary. Other requests for leave of absence must be made in advance using the school's Leave of Absence Request Form.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where a child expected to attend does not attend and no reason has been provided, the school will:

- Contact the parent or carer on the morning of the first day to establish the reason for absence
- Try additional emergency contacts where the first contact cannot be reached
- Establish whether the absence is authorised and apply the correct national attendance code as soon as the reason is known
- Use code N only temporarily and replace it with the appropriate code no later than five working days after the session
- Continue contact on each day of unexplained absence
- Consider the child's vulnerability and any known safeguarding, SEND, health or social care information
- Inform the child's social worker, youth justice worker or other relevant professional where appropriate
- Consider a home visit or welfare check where proportionate and in line with safeguarding procedures
- Contact the police where there is an immediate safeguarding concern or a police welfare check is necessary
- Make referrals to wider services where barriers to attendance require additional support

Unexplained absence will never be treated solely as an attendance issue where there may be a safeguarding concern. Children Missing Education procedures will be followed where relevant. A child will not be removed from the admission register simply because a specified number of days has elapsed; any deletion from roll will follow the statutory regulations and local authority procedures.

4.6 Reporting attendance to parents

The school will inform parents regularly about their child's attendance and absence. This will normally be at least termly and may be more frequent where attendance is causing concern. Communication will be clear, factual and supportive and, where possible, will explain education missed in days and sessions rather than relying on percentages alone.

5. Authorised absence

5.1 Leave of absence during term time

The Headteacher may grant leave of absence during term time only in the circumstances permitted by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. These include specified statutory circumstances and exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances are considered case by case. The school will not operate a blanket policy that automatically grants leave for a particular reason. Each application will be considered on its individual merits, taking account of the facts, supporting evidence and relevant family context.

Family holidays, leisure trips, celebrations and travel arranged for convenience or cost reasons will not normally amount to exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence will not be granted for protest activity during school hours. Applications should be made as soon as the need for leave is known and, where possible, at least three weeks in advance. The Headteacher may require evidence to support an application. If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of sessions authorised.

Where leave has not been granted and a child is absent for the purpose of a holiday, the absence will be recorded using code G. The school will not routinely provide remote education or work for unauthorised holiday absence.

5.2 Other authorised absence

Other reasons that may be recorded as authorised include:

- Illness, including physical or mental ill health
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious observance on a day exclusively set apart for that purpose by the relevant religious body
- A mobile child travelling with a parent for occupational purposes where the statutory conditions are met
- Suspension or permanent exclusion where no alternative provision has been made
- Leave for a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
- Leave to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable where this is in the child's best interests and all statutory expectations are met

5.3 Attendance at another place

Where a child is attending approved educational provision away from the school site, the appropriate national code will be used. This may include local authority provision, an educational visit, approved sporting activity, other approved educational activity or dual registration. These codes are not treated as absence where the statutory conditions are met.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school promotes attendance through a consistent whole-school approach. This includes:

- Clear expectations and regular communication with children and parents
- A calm, welcoming start to the day and positive relationships with staff
- Curriculum, behaviour, SEND, pastoral and safeguarding practice that helps children feel safe, included and able to attend
- Early conversations with families where patterns begin to emerge
- Using attendance data to identify children who need support before absence becomes entrenched
- Recognising improved attendance, punctuality and engagement where appropriate
- Avoiding rewards or messages that shame children or unfairly penalise them for illness, disability or circumstances beyond their control
- Sharing NHS and DfE guidance with parents to support informed decisions about illness and attendance

7. Supporting children with poor attendance

The school will use a graduated approach of prevention, early intervention, targeted support, formalised support and, where necessary, legal intervention. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

7.1 Early support and attendance plans

Where attendance is deteriorating, the school will meet or speak with the child and parent to understand the barriers. An attendance support plan may be agreed with clear actions for the family, school and any partner agencies. The plan will be reviewed within a defined timescale.

Where absence intensifies, support will intensify. The school will work with Nottinghamshire County Council and other relevant partners where necessary.

7.2 Attendance contracts

Where appropriate, the school may use an attendance contract as a formal written agreement with a parent to address irregular attendance. It is not legally binding and cannot be imposed in a parent's absence. Its purpose is to formalise support and clarify commitments where earlier support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Where a parent does not comply with an attendance contract, the school will review the reasons, consider whether the contract remains useful and decide whether a different support or legal intervention is required. Non-compliance will be recorded.

7.3 Education Supervision Orders

Where voluntary support and attendance contracts have not secured improvement, the school may work with Nottinghamshire County Council to consider an Education Supervision Order. This is a formal intervention led by the local authority and is distinct from criminal prosecution. It normally lasts for one year and may be extended in accordance with the legislation.

If a parent persistently fails to comply with directions made under an Education Supervision Order, they may be liable on conviction to a fine of up to £1,000.

7.4 Notice to Improve

Where the national penalty notice threshold has been met, support is appropriate and support has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve should usually be considered before a penalty notice. It provides a final opportunity for the parent to engage with support and improve attendance.

A Notice to Improve will be used in line with the Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct and will normally include:

- The child's attendance record and relevant unauthorised absence
- The benefits of regular attendance and the parent's legal duty
- Details of support already offered or provided
- Opportunities for further support
- A clear warning about possible penalty notice or prosecution
- An improvement period of between three and six weeks
- A clear explanation of what sufficient improvement will look like
- The circumstances in which a penalty notice may be requested before the improvement period ends

A Notice to Improve is not required in every case. For example, support may not be appropriate for a term-time holiday. The school will use Nottinghamshire County Council's current Notice to Improve template rather than a locally fixed version.

7.5 Penalty notices and other legal intervention

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions do not need to be consecutive, may include a combination of codes G, N, O and U and may span different terms or school years.

When the school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, it must consider whether a penalty notice can and should be issued. The decision will consider the individual circumstances, whether support is appropriate or has been offered, whether a Notice to Improve is appropriate, the school's Equality Act 2010 duties and the Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct.

Nottinghamshire County Council, or another authorised officer, retains discretion to issue a penalty notice before the national threshold is met where it considers this appropriate.

Mapperley Plains will normally request Nottinghamshire County Council to issue any penalty notice, using the County Council's current referral process. The local authority makes the final decision on whether to issue the notice. Under the national framework and Nottinghamshire local arrangements:

- A first penalty notice to a parent for the same child is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days
- A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within three years is £160 with no reduced rate
- Only two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period
- If the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time within that period, Nottinghamshire County Council will consider escalation to prosecution through the Magistrates' Court rather than issuing a third penalty notice

There is no legal requirement for a penalty notice to be issued before prosecution. In cases involving repeated offences, high levels of unauthorised absence or complex and long-standing attendance concerns, the local authority may consider prosecution instead of a penalty notice.

Separate penalty notice provisions apply where a parent allows a suspended or excluded child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of suspension or exclusion, after the required notice has been given. In Nottinghamshire, this penalty is £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

8. Supporting children who are absent or returning to school

8.1 Complex barriers to attendance

Where a child experiences complex barriers to attendance, the school will work with the child and family to identify the underlying causes. Support may include reasonable adjustments, pastoral support, family support, safeguarding intervention, SEND support, health advice or multi-agency planning.

Where barriers relate to a child's needs and external support is required, the school will involve the local authority or other appropriate partners. In-school barriers will be removed or reduced wherever reasonably possible.

8.2 Physical and mental ill health

The school recognises that physical and mental ill health can affect attendance. Parents should use NHS guidance, including Is my child too ill for school?, when deciding whether a child is well enough to attend.

Where health needs are affecting attendance, the school will work with the family and relevant professionals to agree appropriate support. This may include reasonable adjustments, a reintegration plan or, in very exceptional circumstances, a temporary part-time timetable. Any part-time timetable will be time limited, regularly reviewed, agreed with the parent and used only where it is in the child's best interests and compliant with statutory guidance.

Where the school believes a child will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness, it will provide the required information to the local authority so that the child's education needs can be considered.

8.3 SEND, disadvantage, social care and other barriers

Attendance support will be tailored where barriers are linked to SEND, disability, disadvantage, social care involvement, young caring responsibilities, bereavement, family circumstances, transport, housing or emotionally based school attendance difficulties.

Where a child has an EHC plan and attendance falls, or barriers relate to the child's special educational needs, the school will inform and work with the local authority as required.

8.4 Returning after a lengthy or unavoidable absence

Children returning after a lengthy or unavoidable absence will be welcomed back positively. Where needed, the school will agree a reintegration plan with the child and family. This may include a named adult, reasonable adjustments, curriculum catch-up, pastoral support and regular review. Any plan will aim to restore full attendance as soon as is appropriate.

Remote education will only be considered as a last resort and, where used, as part of a plan to support reintegration rather than as a long-term substitute for attendance.

8.5 Prolonged absence in the EYFS

For children in Nursery and Reception, the school will follow up unexplained or prolonged absence promptly in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. When deciding whether an absence is prolonged, staff will consider patterns and trends, the child's vulnerability, the vulnerability of parents or carers and relevant family or home circumstances.

Where a child in the EYFS is absent without notification, or is absent for a prolonged period, the school will:

- Attempt to contact the child's parents or carers and alternative emergency contacts
- Review patterns and trends in the child's absence and any relevant personal circumstances
- Implement the school's safeguarding procedures and consult the DSL
- Refer safeguarding concerns to children's social care and involve other agencies where appropriate
- Request a police welfare check where this is necessary to safeguard the child

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance, absence and punctuality weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly at whole-school, year group, cohort and individual child level.

Attendance information will be shared with the DfE and local authority as required. The school will use its management information system and available DfE attendance data tools to benchmark whole-school, year group and cohort attendance against local, regional and national information and will report this to the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

Analysis will include:

- Recent, historic and emerging attendance patterns
- Persistent absence, where a child misses 10% or more of possible sessions
- Severe absence, where a child misses 50% or more of possible sessions
- Unauthorised absence and repeated lateness
- Year groups and other cohorts
- Children with SEND or EHC plans
- Children eligible for free school meals or pupil premium
- Children who are or have been known to children's social care
- Young carers
- Children with long-term medical or mental health needs
- Any other groups facing particular barriers in the school's context

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will use attendance data to:

- Identify children and groups requiring additional support
- Prompt early conversations with families
- Set targeted actions and review their impact
- Provide relevant information to class teachers, leaders, the SENCO, DSL team and governors
- Evaluate whether interventions are improving attendance and adjust them where necessary
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools, the local authority and other partners where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

9.4 Persistent and severe absence

Reducing persistent and severe absence is a core priority. Where a child is at risk of, or has reached, either threshold, the school will review the case promptly. The review will consider safeguarding, SEND, health, family circumstances, disadvantage, young caring responsibilities and patterns in the absence.

The school will hold regular meetings with families where appropriate, listen to the child and parent, explain available support, agree clear actions, review progress and involve the local authority or other agencies where additional help or legal intervention is required.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Headteacher, as Senior Attendance Champion, and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or Nottinghamshire County Council procedures change. The next scheduled review is Autumn 2027. At each formal review it will be approved by the full governing board.

The policy will be published on the school website. Parents will be reminded of attendance expectations at the start of each academic year and whenever the policy is materially updated. The school will seek the views of children and parents where appropriate when reviewing attendance practice.

11. Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing arrangements
- EYFS Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Children Missing Education and admission register procedures

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following summary reflects the national attendance codes under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Where the DfE updates the code framework, the current statutory framework takes precedence.

Code	Definition	Use
/	Present (am)	Present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Arrived late before the register closed
K	Education provision arranged by the local authority	Attending educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip organised or approved by the school
P	Sporting activity	Participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Work experience	Attending an approved work experience placement
B	Other approved educational activity	Attending another approved educational activity
D	Dual registered	Attending another setting where the pupil is also registered
C1	Regulated performance or employment abroad	Leave granted for a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
M	Medical or dental appointment	At a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Leave granted to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
S	Study leave	Leave granted for study for a public examination
X	Not required to attend	A pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Not attending due to an agreed temporary part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Leave granted because of exceptional circumstances
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	A mobile child travelling with a parent for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Absent on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance
I	Illness	Unable to attend because of physical or mental illness
E	Suspended or excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision has been made
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Unable to attend because required local authority access arrangements are not available
Y1	Transport not available	Transport normally provided is unavailable and the statutory conditions apply
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Unable to attend because of widespread disruption caused by an emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Unable to attend because part of the premises is closed and the child cannot practicably be accommodated
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	The school is unexpectedly closed, for example due to severe weather
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Unable to attend because the pupil is detained in the criminal justice system
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Attendance would be contrary to public health guidance or law
Y7	Other unavoidable cause	Unable to attend because of another unavoidable cause not covered elsewhere
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Absent for a holiday that has not been approved
N	Reason not yet established	Reason for absence has not yet been established; temporary code only
O	Other or unknown unauthorised absence	No authorised reason applies or the school is not satisfied with the reason given

Code	Definition	Use
U	Arrived after registration closed	Arrived after the register closed but before the end of the session
Z	Prospective pupil	Pupil has not yet joined the school but has been set up on the system
#	Planned whole-school closure	A planned whole-school closure such as a holiday or INSET day

Appendix 2: Leave of absence letter selection guide

These letters respond to applications for leave of absence and subsequent unauthorised leave. They do not replace the wider attendance support pathway. Before any warning or referral, staff must check the child's full attendance record and the current Nottinghamshire County Council Code of Conduct.

Situation	Use	Key check
Leave granted because exceptional circumstances are accepted	Appendix 3	Headteacher decision and correct code
Leave granted for funeral or bereavement	Appendix 4	Dates and period of authorised leave
Leave refused and school has decided not to request a penalty notice on this occasion	Appendix 5	Full rolling 10-school-week record checked
Leave refused and the proposed absence would meet or contribute to the national threshold	Appendix 6	Current record, support position, Equality Act and local code checked
Unauthorised leave has occurred and the school has made a referral to Nottinghamshire County Council	Appendix 7	Referral actually submitted and evidence retained

Before any penalty notice warning or referral letter is issued, staff must follow the current Nottinghamshire County Council process. In particular:

- Check the child's full attendance record, including all unauthorised codes within the rolling 10-school-week period
- Check whether the parent has received a previous penalty notice for the same child within the preceding three years, including with a previous school or local authority where relevant
- Send a separate signed and dated letter to each parent or carer who may be liable, even where they live at the same address
- Use the parent's title and name, the full postal address and the child's legal name and date of birth on each letter
- Retain signed and dated copies of all letters and supporting evidence for any Nottinghamshire County Council referral
- Use the current Nottinghamshire County Council SAM referral route and check the current County Council sample wording before submitting an enforcement referral

Appendix 3: Leave of absence authorised - exceptional circumstances

[Date]

[Parent/carer name]
[Address]

Dear Parent/Carer,
Re: [Child's name], [date of birth]
Request for leave of absence: [dates] ([number] school days / [number] sessions)

Thank you for your application for leave of absence for [child's name] for [reason]. I have considered the individual circumstances of your request and any supporting information provided.

On this occasion, I am satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and I authorise the requested leave from [start date] to [end date]. The absence will be recorded using code C for exceptional circumstances.

This decision relates only to the circumstances of this application and does not set a precedent for any future request. Please ensure that [child's name] returns to school on [return date]. If the circumstances change, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Summers
Headteacher

Appendix 4: Leave of absence authorised - funeral or bereavement

[Date]
[Parent/carer name]
[Address]

Dear Parent/Carer,
Re: [Child's name], [date of birth]
Request for leave of absence: [dates]

Thank you for letting us know that [child's name] will need to be absent from school to attend a funeral / because of a family bereavement.

I understand that this is an important and difficult time for your family. I can confirm that leave from [start date] to [end date] is authorised as an exceptional circumstance and will be recorded using code C.

We extend our condolences to your family. If [child's name] would benefit from any additional support on return to school, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Summers
Headteacher

Appendix 5: Leave of absence not authorised - no penalty notice request on this occasion

[Date]

[Parent/carer name]
[Address]

Dear Parent/Carer,
Re: [Child's name], [date of birth]

Request for leave of absence: [dates] ([number] school days / [number] sessions)

Thank you for your application for leave of absence for [child's name] for [reason]. I have considered the individual circumstances of your request and do not consider that the circumstances meet the test for exceptional circumstances. I am therefore unable to authorise the leave.

If [child's name] is absent on these dates for the purpose described, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised using the appropriate national attendance code.

Based on [child's name]'s attendance record as at [date], the proposed absence alone would not cause the national threshold to be met. If the absence takes place, school will review the full attendance record at that point before deciding whether any referral or other action is appropriate. This does not authorise the absence and does not set a precedent for future requests.

Unauthorised absence is monitored on a rolling basis. The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Different types of unauthorised absence can be combined and the period can span terms or school years. Other unauthorised absence before or after the proposed leave may therefore change the position. If the threshold is met, the school must consider whether a penalty notice or another intervention is appropriate.

Please contact the school if there is further information about the circumstances of this request that you believe we should consider.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Summers
Headteacher

Appendix 6: Leave of absence not authorised - penalty notice warning

[Date]

[Parent/carer name]
[Address]

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: [Child's name], [date of birth]

Request for leave of absence: [dates] ([number] school days / [number] sessions)

Thank you for your application for leave of absence for [child's name] for [reason]. I have considered the individual circumstances of your request and do not consider that the circumstances meet the test for exceptional circumstances. I am therefore unable to authorise the leave.

If [child's name] is absent on these dates for the purpose described, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised using the appropriate national attendance code.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Based on [child's name]'s attendance record as at [date], if the proposed absence occurs [the national threshold will be met / the unauthorised sessions will contribute to the national threshold].

Where the threshold is met, the school must consider whether a penalty notice can and should be issued. We will take account of the individual circumstances, whether support is appropriate, our Equality Act 2010 duties and the Nottinghamshire County Council Code of Conduct. Nottinghamshire County Council, or another authorised officer, also retains discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold where it considers this appropriate.

If a first penalty notice is issued to a parent for the same child, the fine is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within three years is £160 with no reduced rate. A third penalty notice cannot be issued within that three-year period. Nottinghamshire County Council will consider alternative legal action in line with its current Code of Conduct, which may include prosecution.

If you have further information that you believe changes the circumstances of your application, please provide it to school before the proposed absence.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Summers
Headteacher

Appendix 7: Penalty notice referral made to Nottinghamshire County Council

[Date]

[Parent/carer name]
[Address]

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: [Child's name], [date of birth]

Unauthorised absence: [dates] ([number] sessions)

On [date], I wrote to explain that the requested leave of absence was not authorised and that unauthorised absence could lead to consideration of a penalty notice.

[Child's name] was subsequently absent from [start date] to [end date]. These sessions have been recorded as unauthorised. The national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks has been met.

Having considered the individual circumstances, the support position, proportionality, our Equality Act 2010 duties and the Nottinghamshire County Council Code of Conduct, the school has submitted a referral to Nottinghamshire County Council requesting that it consider issuing a penalty notice. The local authority makes the final decision on whether a notice is issued.

If a first penalty notice is issued to a parent for the same child, the fine is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within three years is £160 with no reduced rate. A third penalty notice cannot be issued within that three-year period. Nottinghamshire County Council will consider alternative legal action in line with its current Code of Conduct, which may include prosecution.

If you believe there is a factual error in the attendance information referred to above, please contact the school office promptly.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Summers
Headteacher