

Attendance

Policy (including Special Leave of Absence in Term Time)



Aims & Objectives

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. In extreme circumstances, permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority.

We understand that many children are sometimes ill or unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially concerns related to social issues or learning difficulties are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the children at an early stage. It is never better to cover up children's absences or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending: this gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and can indeed make things worse.

We aim to:

- Ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- Raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- Identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them as necessary.
- Use a 'support-first' methodology, working alongside families to improve attendance before punitive measures are considered.
- Support the inclusion and attendance of all our pupils through embedded trauma-informed practice and approaches.
- Work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and help to overcome them.

This policy is written in line with the requirements of:-

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022)
- Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance (2022)
- School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (2015)
- Children Missing Education (2016)
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions (2015)
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusions from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units (2022)
- Summary of Responsibilities Where a Mental Health Issue is Affecting Attendance (2023)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Kent PRU, Inclusion & Attendance Service (PIAS) Attendance Policy Checklist (2023)

Who is Responsible for Attendance at Allington?

- Parents – Parents must ensure that their child/children of compulsory school age receives appropriate full-time education according to their age, ability and aptitude. A parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly (The Education Act, 1996). Parents therefore have ultimate responsibility for ensuring their children are in school when they should be. At Allington, parents also have responsibility for informing the school of any absences.

- Pupils – Pupils should recognise the importance of school attendance and understand that once they are enrolled with a school, attendance is not optional. Pupils should work alongside their parents and the school to ensure that they have good attendance, including engaging with the school team to help them overcome any worries or concerns and implementing any strategies recommended to them to support their attendance at school.
- The Admissions Officer- monitors daily attendance and records this on our Management Information System (MIS). They will make contact with parents where the reasons for an absence are unreported by parents. The Admissions Officer ensures that daily attendance data is shared with the Department for Education (DfE).
- The Class Teachers - notice and share with SLT and the Inclusion team any factors that may be influencing a child's attendance, or may impact it on the future. They will also work in collaboration with the Inclusion Team and parents to implement any recommended strategies.
- The Family Liaison Officer (FLO)- monitors attendance alongside the admissions officer and will work with parents to notify them of any issues with their child's attendance. They will send letters, offer meetings to discuss how the school and family can work together to improve attendance and where appropriate, liaise with external agencies including the Local Authority. Mrs Hughes can be contacted via the School Office on 01622 757350 or office@allington.kent.sch.uk.
- The Inclusion Manager – the designated member of the Senior Leadership Team with overall responsibility for improving attendance. They also proactively use data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of low attendance and identifies strategies to support them, recognising the need to maintain the same ambitions as for any other pupil or cohort. Mrs Burton-Grange can be contacted via the School Office on 01622 757350 or office@allington.kent.sch.uk.
- The Headteacher- monitors attendance with the Inclusion Manager, the FLO and the class teachers and reports absence figures to governors, as well as the steps that have been taken to address attendance issues. Mrs Howson can be contacted via the School Office on 01622 757350 or office@allington.kent.sch.uk.
- Governor with Responsibility for Attendance – will meet with the staff managing day-to-day attendance to monitor the procedures in place and will feedback to other members of the governing body.
- Local Authority – where day-to-day procedures and support strategies are not resulting in improved attendance, the school will engage with Inclusion and Attendance Advisors or School Liaison Officers at the Local Authority who will provide further advice and support and may pursue legal interventions.

Absence Explained

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoons away from school for a valid reason like illness, observing religious celebrations, secondary transition visits or, in exceptional circumstances, some other unavoidable causes. Only the school can authorise an absence and this is based on the information you provide to us.

Unauthorised absences are those which the staff at the school do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. These are an offence by the parent/carer and include:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason
- Truancy before the register is marked

- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Taking holidays that have not been approved by the school in advance

Statutory guidance uses the term '**persistent absence**' to describe any pupil with an attendance figure of 90% or below. This term is used regardless of the reasons for absence and is the equivalent of missing half a day a week which is almost four weeks of school during the academic year. When a child's attendance falls below this point, the School will follow procedures outlined in this policy and work alongside the family to ensure attendance improves.

Statutory guidance also refers to '**severe absence**' to describe any pupils with an attendance figure of 50% or below. When a child's attendance falls below this point, the School will work alongside families, the Local Authority and other external agencies where applicable to ensure rapid improvement of attendance.

Medical Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments and procedures outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the school should be informed in advance and the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment, unless advised otherwise by medical professionals.

There may be occasions where medical evidence is needed to support the reasons for your child's absence from school: it is your responsibility as a parent/carer to provide a medical certificate or doctor's letter, as appropriate.

Religious Observance

Allington Primary School recognises all religious beliefs and actively seeks to support families on occasions where days are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which they belong. Where a family wishes to exercise this entitlement, the school asks that the family contact them in writing at the earliest opportunity, requesting a religious observance day, so that the length of absence from the school can be agreed and that the pupil can be correctly registered.

Family Bereavement and Exceptional Circumstances

There may be rare occasions when sudden or serious circumstances mean it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register and so the FLO can offer appropriate support to the family during this difficult time.

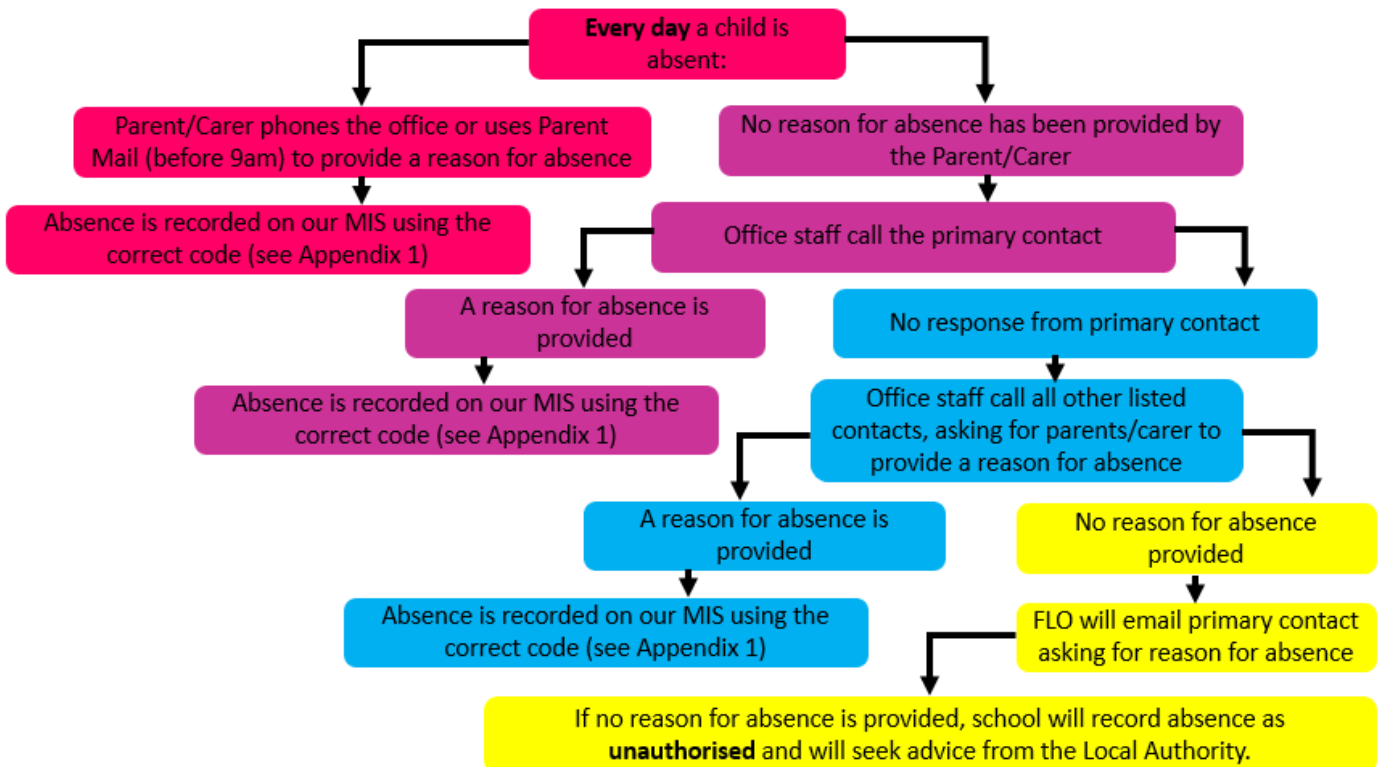
Extra-Curricular Events

Extra-curricular events, such as dance exams and performances, will be considered for authorised absence, but will be looked at alongside the child's attendance. Where a child's attendance is already a concern, in particular where it is 95% or lower, absence for extra-curricular events may not be authorised.

Procedures

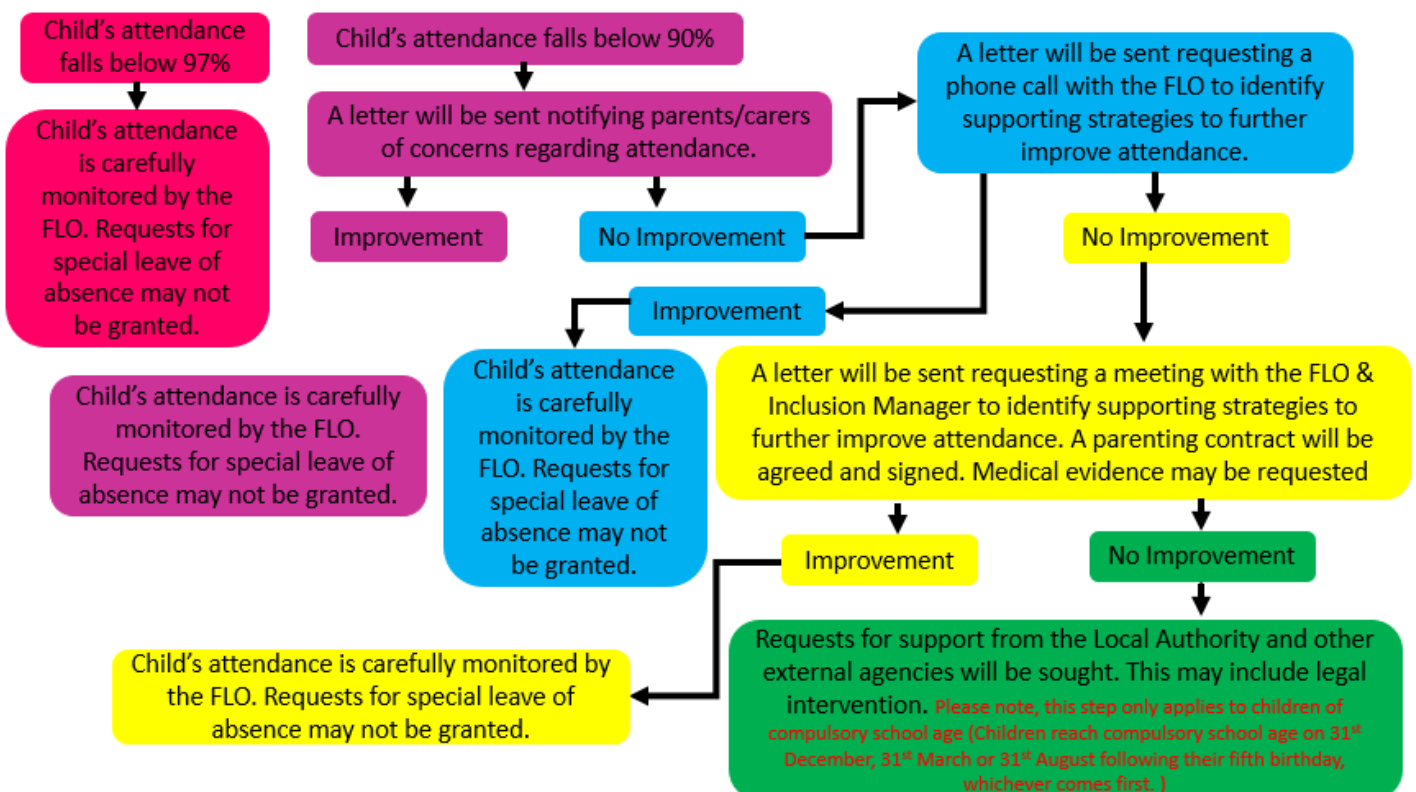
Day-to-Day Attendance Monitoring

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. The diagram below outlines the procedures that are taken by the School when a child is recorded as absent in the register:



Long-Term Attendance Monitoring

Formal attendance monitoring happens throughout the year, and all parents will be provided with a full attendance report at the end of the academic year. We feel strongly that good attendance correlates with strong academic, social and emotional outcomes and as a result, we have an ambitious target of 97% for attendance. The diagram below outlines the procedures taken by the school when a child's attendance falls below this target:



Support-First Approach:

We work on a 'support-first' approach, with punitive measures only being taken if there has been no improvement to attendance following regular and consistent dialogue between the School and the parents and the trial of strategies, which may be implemented at home or at school, or both. The following are examples of the types of support available to Allington and families when there are concerns about attendance:

- School staff attendance at Attendance Network Meetings and collaborative meetings with other schools to share best practice
- School staff engagement with Targeted Support Meetings offered by the Local Authority to discuss whole school attendance and anonymous, individual cases
- Support to implement consistent routines at home, including bedtime and morning routines.
- Use of visual timetables, both at school and at home
- Access to emotional wellbeing intervention at school
- Promotion of resilience strategies at home
- Positive talk about school and school attendance, both at school and at home
- Referrals to external agencies for exploration of additional needs including but not limited to the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, School Health and Community Paediatrics.
- Referral to Early Help for support at home regarding attendance and/or parenting.
- Requests for support from the Local Authority, in the form of individual case advice, requests for attendance at meetings or initiation of legal intervention.
- Parenting advocates provided through services such as the Independent Advice and Support Service (IASK)

Support will be agreed upon and written into a Parenting Contract (see Appendix 2) as recommended by the Local Authority. Where families fail to engage with support agreed upon in the contract, referrals will be made to the Local Authority for further support and guidance.

Punctuality

Punctuality is very important. Arriving late for school is a poor start to the day, potentially causing anxiety and embarrassment to your child, unnecessary disruption for teachers who are teaching, and most importantly, affecting not only your child's learning, but others in the class too. Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time.

- Pupils are asked to arrive at school between 8:35am and 8.45am each morning. The gates will be locked promptly at 8:45am. Pupils arriving after 8.45am should report to the office, in order to check they have been signed in and that they have been booked for a school dinner if necessary.
- Arrival after 8.45 am and before 9.15 am will be recorded as late (code= L).
- Arrival after 9.15 am will be recorded as 'Arrived in school after registration' (code= U).
- If local circumstances (e.g. weather or a traffic accident) mean that it is difficult for many parents to ensure that children are on time on a particular day, we will extend the register closing time for that day.

In accordance with KCC's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, persistent lateness to School may be penalised. If 10 incidents of late arrival (after the register has closed) occur during a possible 100 sessions, a Penalty Notice Warning Letter may be issued to parents. Please see

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-attendance> for more information on Kent's attendance policies, procedures and on support they offer.

Special Leave of Absence in Term Time

It is not typical for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, birthdays, attending sporting events or day trips. Leave may be granted on compassionate grounds in an emergency (e.g. after the death of a close relative).

Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government, Local Authority and school. Leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances but arrangements should not be made without the school's agreement in advance. The Headteacher can now only authorise absences for exceptional circumstances and no absence will be authorised for a child with less than 90% attendance, regardless of the reason. Holidays will never normally be authorised at the beginning of school terms or during examination periods.

Where permission for leave is granted, the school will not provide work for the children to complete while they are absent. If parents wish for their children to complete learning based activities outside of school, they will need to source these and provide these themselves.

Process for Requesting Holiday Absence

By law, applications must be made by a parent normally residing with the child. Parents should seek permission for authorised holiday absence **before** making firm bookings/arrangements/payments for your holiday. Applications should be made in writing, using the school's Request for Special Leave of Absence form (Appendix 3, also obtainable from the school office) at the earliest opportunity before the absence is due to begin: absence will not be granted retrospectively.

The Headteacher will consider each request and inform the parent/carer as soon as possible, in writing, whether the request has been granted or not. The governing body may consider an appeal against the decision of the Headteacher.

Parents who decide to take a holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child.

Reduced Timetables

Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that in **very exceptional circumstances** there may be a need for a temporary reduction in educational provision to meet a child's individual need. This must only be done as a last resort, if all other supportive strategies have been tried or whilst awaiting specialist service support. The Local Authority outlines its guidance for reduced timetables on their website

(https://www.kelsi.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/74521/Guidance-for-Schools-on-the-Use-of-Reduced-Timetables.pdf).

Reduced timetables must be agreed between the parent and the School and the Local Authority must be notified if a child is on a reduced timetable. Reduced timetables must be time-limited and regularly reviewed. Where a child is on a reduced timetable, the School must carry out risk assessments to ensure the child's welfare is safeguarded.

Deletion from the Admissions Register

In order to prevent children from becoming Missing in Education, the school is legally required to notify the Local Authority of all children removed from our registers outside normal transfer times whatever the reason. Parents are requested to provide the school with all the necessary information about future addresses or new schools in the event of planned changes of address etc. Any information the school holds will be passed on to the relevant school or local authority as required.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

The school will notify the Local Authority's School Liaison Officer that a child is to be considered CME if:

- A child leaves the school to attend another school and notification of the new school place is not received after ten school days.
- An absence is agreed and the pupil does not return after the agreed time, any additional absence will be classed as unauthorised and if they have not returned within 10 school days of the expected return date, the Education Service will be notified.

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents in order to ensure the highest levels of attendance possible are achieved.

Contact Information


Issued: September 2023

Review date: September 2024

Appendix 1

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

Appendix 2

	<h1 style="color: green; margin: 0;">ALLINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Parenting Contract</h2>
Child's Name:	DOB:
Year & Class:	Date of Meeting
Address:	
<i>Parent/Carer details</i> Full Name: Address: Tel: Attended Yes / No	<i>Parent/Carer Details</i> Full Name: Address: Tel: Attended Yes / No
Other Family/Household Members:	
Attendees:	
Actions to date by school and other agencies:	
Summary of concerns: Attendance %	

Additional Information: School Nursing referral required? Yes/ No Early Help involvement appropriate? Yes/ No Parenting Programme requested by parent? Yes/ No
Targets agreed:
Attendance review date:

Failing to reach agreed targets may result in referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer. In some cases, schools may be advised to put in a request for a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

I/We will do what has been agreed in this meeting.	
Signed:	
Pupil (if appropriate)	
Parent/carer	
Parent/carer	
School staff	
Agency	

Appendix 3



ALLINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Special Leave of Absence Request

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Following this amendment requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow the Headteacher to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances". An "exceptional circumstance" would have to be defined as an unavoidable cause e.g., a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

The Headteacher will consider each request for absence individually but can only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances. There is no right of appeal as the authorisation of the absence is the sole responsibility of the Headteacher. The Headteacher cannot give retrospective approval so any request should be made in advance by least 1 week. Please be aware that additional evidence may be requested when considering a request.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Family trauma, serious illness/death of a close relative to the family
 - To attend a wedding of a family member
 - Attending functions in line with culture and or religion
 - Specialist examination- e.g. dance or music exams (letter from the provider is required as evidence)
- All requests for leave of absence must be made using this form. Completed forms must be returned to the school office. If you require help completing this form, please contact the school office and staff will be happy to assist you.

Although each request will be considered individually, we will never normally authorise leave of absence in term time under the following circumstances:

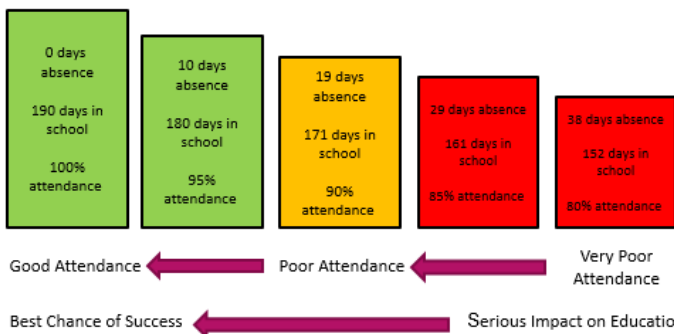
- During assessment periods
- Where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health (unless certified by medical evidence), existing attendance record will be considered in making the decision whether to grant the leave e.g. absence will not usually be authorised if it takes a pupil's absence record below 90%.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (ie home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996). If a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996). Parents whose children have sustained or repeated unauthorised absence may be subject to a referral to the Local Authority for further action.

We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and it is important that your child attends school regularly in order to achieve their full potential. The following table outlines the impact of lost learning time:

There are **365 days** in a year and **190 days** in a school year.
This leaves **175 days** for holidays, family gatherings, birthday treats and non-medical appointments.

Attendance	Absence	Lost Education in an Academic Year	Lost Education During the 7 Years of Primary School
90%	19 days	4 weeks	Over ½ a year missed
85%	29 days	6 weeks	Nearly 1 year missed
80%	38 days	8 weeks	Nearly 1 ½ years missed
75%	47 days	10 weeks	Nearly 1 ¾ years missed



For further information on attendance at Allington Primary School, please refer to our Attendance Policy which can be found on the school website - www.allington.kent.sch.uk

ALLINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Request for Special Leave of Absence (Including accompanying parents on annual holiday)

I request that consideration be given for my child to be granted leave from school.

Name of Child: _____

Class: _____ No. of days: _____

From: _____ to: _____ (inclusive)

Please indicate your reason and state any **exceptional circumstances:**

- Leave during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Although each request will be considered individually, schools will never normally authorise leave in term time under the following circumstances:

- At the beginning of school terms
- During examination periods
- Where the child is persistently absent, including through ill health

It is necessary for the approval of the Governing Body to be obtained before leave can be taken.

Signed _____ (Parent/Carer) Date _____

✂ _____

For Office use

Authorised _____

Unauthorised _____

Reply slip _____

Scholarpack _____