

Attendance Policy

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John Lawrence

Chair of Governors

Contents:

1. Introduction

2. Legal Framework

3. Roles and Responsibilities
   (i) Governing Body
   (ii) Headteacher
   (iii) School Secretary
   (iv) All staff
   (v) Parents
   (vi) Pupils

4. Categorising Absence and Attendance
   (i) Registration & Lateness
   (ii)Procedure for Reporting Absence
   (iii) Leave of Absence- DfE statutory rules
   (iv) Procedure for Applying for Leave of Absence
   (v) Medical Appointments and Absence due to Illness
   (vi) Pupil Absence for the Purposes of Religious Observance
   (vii)Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils
   (viii) Unauthorised Absence

5. Support Systems

6. Persistent Absence and the Use of Legal Interventions

7. Reduced Timetables

8. Flexi-Schooling

9. Absence Notes

10. A Welcome Back

11. Promoting Attendance

12. Attendance Data & Targets

Appendix

Information Letter & Leaflet for Parents, September 2026
Leave of Absence Request Form

1. Introduction

At Little Melton Primary School we believe that regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. We value the attendance of all pupils. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education.

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:
• Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
• Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance;
• Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences;
• Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Revised statutory guidance- **'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (DfE, February 2024)** comes into effect from **August 19th 2024**. It sets out clear expectations for schools and parents

It can be found here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:
• Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
• Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;and act early to address patterns of absence. Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age.

Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures. A "Parent" is defined as: • Any natural parent, whether married or not • Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person • Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

At Little Melton Primary School, we believe that improving school attendance is everyone's business. That it is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

Senior Attendance Lead	Alex Pritchard (Headteacher)	head@littlemelton.norfolk.sch.uk
School Secretary	Sam Springall (Finance Officer/Sec)	office@littlemelton.norfolk.sch.uk
Governor	John Lawrence (Chair of Governors)	johnstephenlawrence@gmail.com

The Governing Body of Little Melton Primary School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and work effectively with the local authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.

- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

<u>The Headteacher will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:</u>

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of a parenting contract.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents.
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.

- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

The School Secretary will support good attendance by:

- Monitoring registers on a daily basis.
- Maintaining accurate records
- Applying the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education
- Checking registers on a weekly basis for coding errors.
- Discussing concerning attendance trends or events with Headteacher
- Leading '1st day calling' in event of absence
- Informing Headteacher where '1st day calling' has not resulted in speaking to home
- Accompanying Headteacher on home visits in exceptional circumstances
- Recording concerns on CPOMS where appropriate

All staff at Little Melton Primary School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families. The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support.

Little Melton Primary School requests that parents:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.

- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or guardians to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

(i)Registration/Lateness

The school day **begins at 8:45a.m and finishes at 3:15p.m**.

Pupils are expected to be at school on time each day. Punctuality is encouraged as an act of courtesy and provides children with a clear start to their day with their peers and teachers. Punctuality also ensures that teaching time is not wasted.

Morning registration will be at **8:50 a.m.** hence the morning bell ringing at 8:43 a.m. The register will close at 9:20 a.m.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.
Time of arrival will be noted in the registers.

Afternoon registration will be at **1.05 p.m.** and the register will close at 1.15 p.m.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late [L] before registers close.

The Registration System

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

The School will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

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	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	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

(ii)Procedure for Noting Absence

Parents should always contact the school by phone, email or talking to a member of staff on the playground, in the event of their child's absence.

All messages from parents informing school of their child's absence are recorded on the register and updated dailly on the schools' management system.

If the school has not been informed of the child's whereabouts by close of registers the office will telephone home. This '1st day calling' will continue until the whereabouts of child is established.

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

(iii)Leave of Absence:

In 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, March 2024) the following guidelines are statutory from August 19th 2024:

37. All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so.

These circumstances are:
• Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (For full details please see code C1)
• Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
• Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
• A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives

with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable. (For full details please see part-time timetable)

38 • Exceptional circumstances:
All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Generally, ***the DfE 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.*** *Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.*

All schools are also able to allow pupils of non-compulsory school age to be absent for sessions they are not timetabled to attend (For full details see code X).

These guidelines will be followed by Little Melton Primary School when considering Leave of Absence requests from August 19th, 2024.

(iv)Procedure for applying for Leave of Absence during Term-Time:

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix). If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised.

Little Melton Primary School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -
• The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
• An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
• A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days. When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice

from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

(v)Medical Appointments and Absence due to Illness
Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, parents must notify the school office. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation. In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily.

In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer.

We will invite parents to attend school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.
Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and Norfolk County Council policies via the Medical Needs Service. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

(vi)Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance
Little Melton Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

(vii)Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. There are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils.

Schools and Local Authorities can make a big difference to their life chances through: • Clear high expectation of all pupils, regardless of their background • An inclusive culture that welcomes all communities • Strong engagement from parents

In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because: • the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place, • that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and • if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school. 1 This is in accordance with the NSCP Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Little Melton Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Little Melton Primary School in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Little Melton Primary School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents: • Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and • Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

(viii) Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

• A pupil's/family member's birthday
• Shopping for uniforms • Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
• Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
• An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
• A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend
• Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school (see 'Leave of Absence')

These guidelines will be followed by Little Melton Primary School when considering Leave of Absence requests from August 19th, 2024.

Further information about penalty fines can be found here: https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/29/fines-for-parents-for-taking-children-out-of-school-what-you-need-to-know/

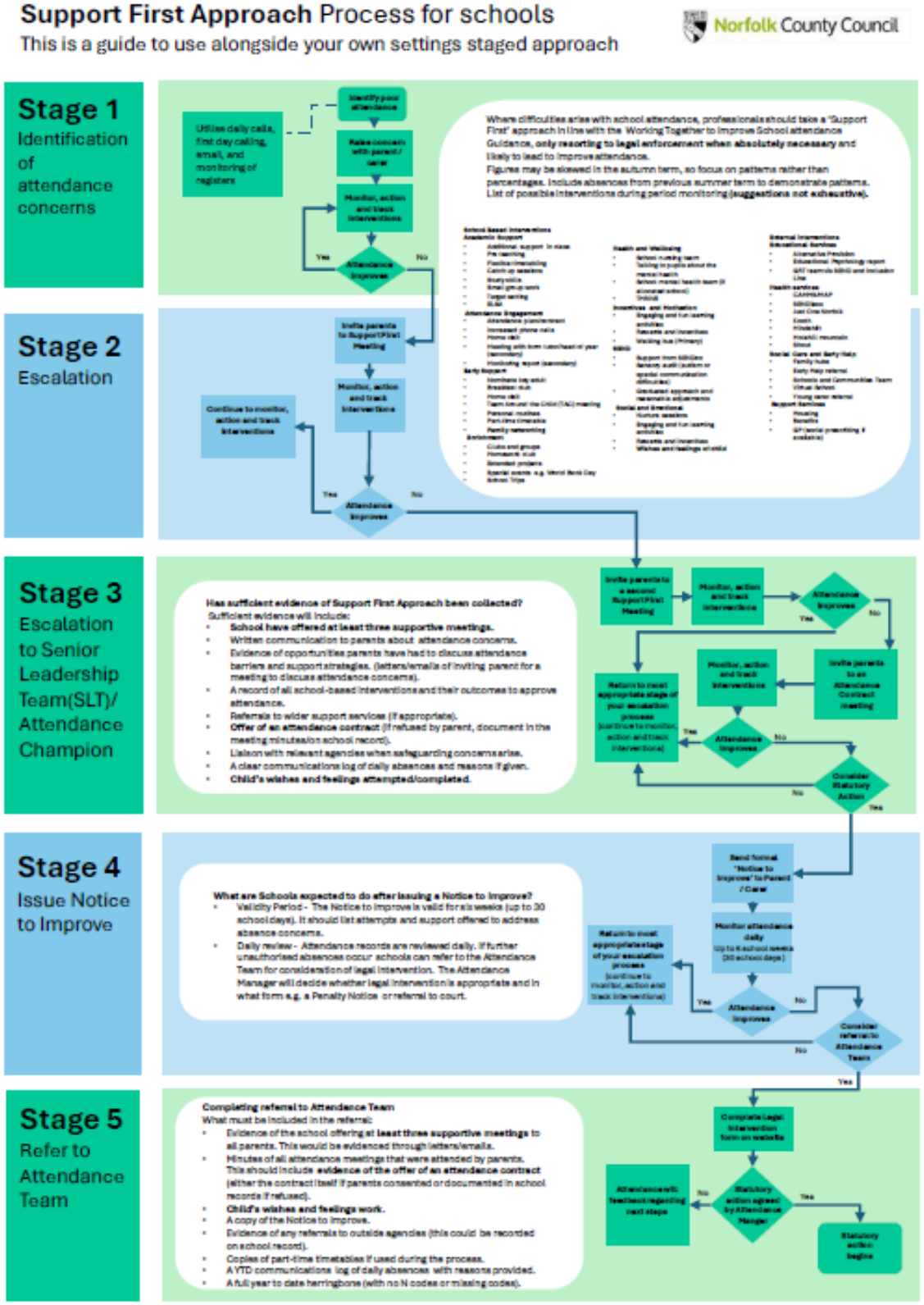
See also appendix for leaflet for parents from Norfolk County Council re: changes to the system from August 19th 2024. This leaflet will be sent to parents with a covering letter in July 2024.

5. Support Systems

At Little Melton Primary School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

We will follow the Norfolk County Council 'Support First Approach'. https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/61574/Introduction

The process is shown in the diagram below, alongside a link to the document online.



https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/60784/Attendance-forms-and-templates

6. Persistent Absence and the use of Legal Interventions
A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. 95 + DAYS OFF

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

7. Reduced Timetables
All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so. We will not use a reduced timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family In line with Norfolk County Council guidance, we will notify the Attendance Team of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

8. Flexi-Schooling

In light of DfE guidance (February 2013), we accept flexi-schooled children at the discretion of the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will accept the child if the parent can demonstrate a genuine commitment to the process, both in terms of providing good quality education to the child outside of school, and regular ongoing communication with the class teacher.

In addition a written and signed agreement must be formulated between the school
and parent in order to make expectations clear for all concerned.

This will include:
- The normal expected pattern of attendance at school.
- The length of time the agreement is to run before review by the
- school. Typically this may be one term.

- What flexibility there will be regarding special events which fall
- outside the normal arrangement such as but not limited to assemblies, trips, productions or performances, sports events, visitors to the school.
- How the register will be marked.
- That the parents must contact the school if the child is absent from a session that they would normally be present at school or at approved educational activity.
- That the school will follow up any unexpected or unexplained
- absence as it would for other children.
- What the arrangement will be at times of children's assessment.
- That if a parent chooses to employ at his or her own expense another person to educate the child at home, he or she will be responsible for ensuring that person is suitable to have access to children.
- Any perceived special educational needs and associated provision.
- Recommended regular planning meetings between parent and
- school to ensure the child achieves his or her potential and to
- promote good home-school relationships.
- That the school will notify the Administrator for Elective Home
- Education at the LA of the flexi-schooling arrangement.
- Under what circumstances and with what notice either party can
- withdraw from the arrangement.
- How any disputes will be resolved.

9. When a Child is Flexi-Schooled

- He or she will already be registered at the school.
- On days when he or she attends school, the National Curriculum must be followed as if the child were attending full-time. An academy may vary its education provision from the National Curriculum; references to the National Curriculum should be read as the academy curriculum.
- The requirement to follow the National Curriculum will apply to all children except:
- Temporarily, due to exceptional circumstances such as prolonged
- absence from school on health grounds or family crisis.
- As a part of a Statement of Special Educational Needs.
- With the permission of the Secretary of State to allow curriculum
- development and experiment to take place, for an agreed period.
- On days when he or she does not attend school, the child need not follow the National Curriculum.

Absence Notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

A Welcome Back

On return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed

work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Promoting Attendance

A range of measures are used to promote good attendance including:
End of year 'Good Attendance' certificates
Targets in Bi-weekly Newsletter
Information for Parents re: impact of poor attendance
Reporting on School Reports

Attendance Data & Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year.

The Attendance target for 2026-27 is 96%

The PA target for 2026-27 is 4.5%

Appendix:

The following 'information and warning' letter, sent to all parents in September 2026.

School Lane
Little Melton
Norwich
NR9 3AD

Tel: 01603 811446
E-mail office@littlemelton.norfolk.sch.uk
Website www.littlemeltonprimaryschool.co.uk

Mr Alex Pritchard
Headteacher

03 September 2026

Dear Parents,

Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for Parents

Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities At Little Melton Primary, 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 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 Mr Pritchard in school.

Yours faithfully, Mr Pritchard.

ref: July 2024 letter re: changes to legislation

Changes to legislation re: attendance

From August 19th 2024, new legislation published by the Department for Education comes into force. The aim of the legislation is to address poor attendance across all school settings nationally to ensure every child regularly attends school. Parents will receive a Fixed Penalty Fine if your child receives ten unauthorised absences over a rolling ten-week period.

Currently, as a school, we do not routinely fine parents if you take your child out of school for a holiday. However, from 19th August, we will have to follow national legislation.

An unauthorised absence would be for example:

A holiday

Arriving 10 or more minutes late for school

Not attending school and not being able to give a legitimate reason for your child's absence.

Registers are taken twice a day. Therefore, there are two sessions in a day. Over a week, there are 10 sessions.

The monies accrued from fines go to the Local Authority to further support the attendance team to help raise attendance, not our school.

The accompanying leaflet explains what will happen.

School attendance penalty notice

flourish

Norfolk County Council



Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are changing!

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued **after 19th August 2024**.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 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 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

- The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:
- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

- The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.
- Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME
Important information for parents – please read before completing this form 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 we 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. Our aim is for every pupil's attendance to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact [Insert name and contact details].
I have read the above information and wish to apply for leave of absence from school for:

Child's Full Name:	**Date of Birth:**	**Class:**

Parent/Carer Details (please list all parents)			
First Name:		**Surname:**	
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**	
Address and postcode:			
Telephone number:			
First Name:		**Surname:**	
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**	

Address and postcode:	
Telephone number:	

Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings and the school that they attend

Child's Full Name:	**Date of Birth:**	**School:**

Details of the absence			
Date of First day of absence:		**Date of last day of absence:**	
Total Number of days absent:		**Expected date of return to school:**	
Please provide the reason for this request including supporting evidence:			

Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand the this:

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied, and my child is absent during this period. I understand that a fine will be payable per parent, per child.

I have read and understood Norfolk County Council's information regarding penalty notices for absence from school and the action they may take.

Signed :		**Full name:**		**Date:**	
Signed :		**Full name:**		**Date:**	

To be completed by the school:			
Date request received by the school:		**Total number of days requested:**	
Child's Name:		**Application Authorised or Declined?**	
Reason for school's decision:			

In the case of a term time holiday please confirm which parent took the holiday:					
Headteacher:					
Signed:				**Date:**	