# RESOURCES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication Schedule Number:</th>
<th>CSF4634</th>
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<tr>
<td>Publication Date:</td>
<td>NOVEMBER 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue No:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorising Officer:</td>
<td>Julia Findley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorising Officer’s Signature:</td>
<td>Head of Pupil Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author of Publication:</td>
<td>Lesley Hewitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post:</td>
<td>Head of Attendance and Pupil Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit:</td>
<td>Access to Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Date:</td>
<td>November 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience:</td>
<td>Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published By:</td>
<td>CHILDREN, SCHOOLS &amp; FAMILIES</td>
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RESOURCES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

This resource pack has been produced by the Attendance and Pupil Support Service. It offers primary schools ideas and resources and you can tailor it to meet the needs of your school.

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Items for your school newsletter and noticeboard are suggested throughout the document. You may like to create a noticeboard purely for attendance statistics which you can use in various situations and these are provided in a number of sections.
Assemblies

Short input

At the end of an assembly, on a regular basis, give pupils one of the following statistics or questions to think about.

- There are only 40 teaching weeks in the school year
- Missing six days every term of every year is the same as missing one whole school year
- 95% attendance sounds good, but means that you are taking one day off a month
- Would you think it was acceptable if your teacher did not come to school to teach you for a week because she had gone on holiday in term time?
- If your parents were prosecuted for your non-school attendance, how long might they have to spend in prison? 3 months
- In Hertfordshire, your parents can be issued with a fixed penalty notice of up to £100 if you have more than 10.5 days unauthorised absence in any one term.

School-Level Key Stage 2 results by Overall Absence Rate 2006-7

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<td>78</td>
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<td>74</td>
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<td>4 - 5%</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>72</td>
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<td>6 - 7%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
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% of pupils achieving the stated threshold level of progress

- Level 4+ in English & Maths (expected)
- 2 levels of progress in English
- 2 levels of progress in Maths

Newsletter and noticeboard – choose a different statistic for each half term

Whole Input

pri_attend_punctuality_issue2
The role-play in Appendix A has been developed with the needs of primary school pupils in mind. It highlights the importance of good punctuality in a fun and ‘realistic’ way. The role-play and questions will take 15 to 20 minutes. You will need:

- Four pupils to participate, and some basic props – see list in Appendix A.
- A little time to prepare - approx 20-30 minutes’ practice or, say, three complete run-throughs. The children can read their lines directly from the page.

Questions are provided which can be used following the role-play to facilitate discussion about the importance of good punctuality. This can be very useful as a tool to gauge pupil reaction to what they have just seen and heard, and to reinforce the message of good punctuality.

**Role Play – See Appendix A**

**Certificates**

Certificates can be given to pupils if:

- Their attendance improves
- They have attendance of 100% for a term (bronze), 2 terms (silver), whole school year (gold)
- Their punctuality improves

You may like to ask your pupils to create their own certificates.

**See Appendix B for examples.**

Children, Schools and Families also award certificates for excellent and improved attendance during the academic year. You will be contacted in April each year and asked if you wish to participate.

**First Day Response**

**When setting up First Day Response, consider the following:**

- Is this for all pupils or targeted groups? E.g. a particular year group with poor attendance, a list of named pupils?
- Does the target group change regularly and how? E.g. class teachers can give the Co-ordinator a different list each month
- Who carries out First Day Response?
- How do they receive the information to carry out the calls? E.g. do class teachers send a sheet of names to the Co-ordinator each morning?
- Does this person have a formal job title e.g. Attendance Co-ordinator
- After what time are First Day Response calls made? This should be after the time at which registers close.
- How is the telephone contact list updated?
- How is information from First Day Response used to update the registers? E.g. is the sheet given back to class teachers with responses or does the Co-ordinator mark the register electronically?
- Is person receiving information able to authorise absence?
How is information from First Day Response collated and disseminated as appropriate? E.g. Is it used at Parents' Evening?

Who is responsible for ensuring the quality and consistency of First Day Response calls? E.g. are they challenging? The questioning should be rigorous and not too sympathetic where appropriate.

Make sure that your First Day Response procedures are included in your School Attendance Policy

Holidays in Term Time

Schools are becoming increasingly concerned about the effect that term time holidays have on overall attendance figures.

The aim is:

- **To reduce absences due to term time holidays.**
  - The absence codes introduced by DCSF in September 2006 make it easier to calculate the amount of absence due to term time absence. (H = term time family holiday authorised by school; G = term time family holiday NOT authorised by school; F = extended family leave authorised by school.) Statistics can be calculated for your school and these should be communicated to parents.

- **To make parents aware of the impact of taking term time holidays.**
  - Ensure that your Attendance Policy makes clear when holidays will definitely not be authorised, e.g. at the start of the school year, during SAT periods. Use your newsletter to remind parents of this at intervals through the year.
  - See statistics above (Assemblies).
  - Remind parents that ALL members of the class suffer if children take term time holidays as the teacher has to spend time helping some children catch up.
  - Remind parents also that children miss out on the social side of school life if they take term time holidays, particularly at the start of the new school year.

- **To ensure that parents request term time holidays, rather than claiming that their child is ill.**
  - Teachers often find out, by overhearing conversations etc., that pupils are going on, or have been on holiday. Challenge parents about this.
  - Do not authorise holidays retrospectively.

- **To make parents aware that term time holidays are not an automatic right.**
  - You can remove a child from roll if they have been granted leave of absence in excess of ten school days and fail to attend within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which leave was granted, and you (the head teacher) are not satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend the school because of sickness or any unavoidable cause.
  - Make parents aware that Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued if a pupil has more than 21 sessions of unauthorised absence in a term (if this is included in your School Attendance Policy). The guidance on Fixed Penalty Notices can be obtained by contacting the Head of Attendance and Pupil Support, based in County Hall.
Regularly advise parents in your newsletter that holidays in term time are not an automatic right and must be requested in advance.

Interview parents when they request a holiday during term time. At this interview, consider the pupil’s individual attendance record and their academic attainment. You can also consider how many days’ leave have already been taken in the academic year.

You may like to consider using the Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart at Appendix C

See Appendix D for CSF Guidance on Holidays in Term Time and Extended Holidays.

Newsletter and noticeboard
- Remind parents what your School Attendance Policy says about taking holidays in term time.
- Give them your statistics on term time holidays and show how this can be improved/has improved over time.

Letters to Parents

Letters to parents of individual pupils with poor school attendance can be very effective. If you have a computerised registration system, you can easily run off a list of those with, for example, attendance of less than 90% and identify those pupils for whom a letter may be appropriate. Otherwise, class teachers can provide names of pupils about whom they have attendance concerns.

New Parents’ Evenings or Sessions

These present the chance to talk to parents about school attendance when they may be new to the school environment and open to hearing about the school ethos on attendance.

Topics for a presentation could include:

- **To authorise or not to authorise**
  The responsibility for deciding whether an absence is authorised or not authorised is the Head Teacher’s. You should make parents aware that merely providing an explanation for their child’s absence does not automatically constitute an ‘authorisation’ for this absence. This is the school’s decision alone.

- **Pupil Sickness**
  No school can predict or prevent children from becoming unwell. New Parent Talks can be used to discuss childhood illness and promote parental co-operation with the school. You can request that parents contact school on the morning that their child is unwell. Parents should be encouraged to bring children into school ‘if in doubt’ as the school can contact them if their child worsens during the day. Parents must provide the school with current contact addresses and telephone numbers to facilitate this.
Term Time Holidays
You can discuss the impact term time holidays have on pupils’ academic attainment. Tell parents about the arrangements in place for requesting a term time holiday and make it clear that these will not necessarily be granted.

The ‘Odd Day Off’ Attitude
Some parents feel that the ‘odd day off’ as a treat for a birthday or day out really doesn’t matter. After all they are ‘only in primary school - it’s not that important’. Parental attitudes like this can be extremely difficult to change. New parent talks are inclusive and non-judgmental and can be a means of promoting a positive discussion about the subject.

Lateness
Tell parents about the impact of lateness on a child’s opportunities to learn. If you have your literacy and numeracy sessions at the start of the day, pupils arriving late and missing part or all of these sessions will be severely disadvantaged. Ask parents to imagine their own embarrassment when they arrive late to an event, have to slip in at the back without bringing attention to themselves, try to get up to speed with what’s being said, try to piece together what has been said already, and then imagine their child having to do that when they arrive late at school.

Medical and Dental Appointments
Ask parents to make these appointments outside school hours or in the school holidays wherever possible.

Role of the Attendance Improvement Officer
The Attendance Improvement Officer’s role is to support schools in improving attendance. This may be done by visiting schools to:

- Check registers
- Discuss pupils whose attendance is causing concern
- Make a plan for action to support pupils and their families (may include speaking to parents in school, writing letters, attending meetings etc)
- Do face to face work with pupils and their parents where appropriate

or they can provide advice over the telephone about attendance concerns.

Parents have a legal responsibility to send their children to school if they are registered pupils at the school. If they do not, there can be legal consequences

Your Attendance Improvement Officer may be willing to come to talk to new parents, given enough notice.

Parents’ Evenings
Parents’ Evenings are an ideal opportunity to talk about attendance with every parent who attends so that individuals do not feel as if they are being singled out.

Strategies to use:
pri_attend_punctuality_issue2
 Attendance records – an individual registration certificate can be given to parents by
the class teacher so that accurate information can be discussed in confidence (rather
than using the class register). The class average, school average or school target can be
compared with that for the child.

Questionnaires – See Appendix E. You can use this to increase parents’ awareness of
the ethos of the school on attendance and punctuality. If class teachers do not have
enough time to do this, can you enlist another member of staff to carry out this task?
The school noticeboard should be prominent with the latest information on attendance
and punctuality figures.

Newsletter and noticeboard – parents should be advised that attendance will be discussed during
Parents’ Evening. You may like to say,
‘At …………………. School we are committed to improve attendance as this will have an impact on your
child’s attainment. Your child’s class teacher will discuss your child’s attendance with you during
Parents’ Evening.

PSHE

A PSHE lesson can deal with school attendance and punctuality. An outline guide to what
could be included in such a lesson is at Appendix F. This can be tailored to the age of the
pupils.

Punctuality

Ensure parents and pupils know that punctuality matters, both for individuals and for the smooth
running of the school community.

Suggested strategies could include:

 Parents’ Evenings: Teachers can discuss the importance of good punctuality. Schools
can calculate the total number of pupil late arrivals for the previous academic year to
display on noticeboard.

 Whole School Assemblies: using role-play and involving pupils is a positive and useful
way to promote the importance of good punctuality. See Assemblies.

 Interviewing Parents: parents of pupils who arrive late and who do not respond to usual
school strategies, could be invited into school to discuss the situation. The discussion
could involve you as Head and the AIO. Explain to parents the difference between codes
L and U (late before/after registers close) and the implication of a U code (unauthorised
absence for the whole morning session). The interview is a means to discuss the impact
of persistent late arrival on the child’s education and on his peers and teachers. You can
ask parents to implement the following strategies:

- bedtime routines – packing school bag ready for the next day, getting to bed earlier,
setting a time for a television in the bedroom to be turned off
- morning routines – setting the alarm earlier, set time for a little lie-in, no television
until ready for school (and maybe not even then), having breakfast before leaving
home, so no need to call in at the shop, meeting a reliable friend to walk to school with
✓ coming to school for breakfast club if available
Finding out if parents would lose their job if they were late once a week. Pupils should establish good punctuality habits while they are young.

😊 Following Improvement:

- Send a letter to parents acknowledging any improvements in punctuality.
- Reward pupils in assemblies with ‘Most Improved’ certificates and small prizes.

😊 Late Patrols - See Appendix G

**Newsletter and noticeboard:**

- Warn parents that a Gate Patrol is imminent.
- Display a graph showing the reduction in late arrivals
- Quote improved figures for lateness in your newsletter each term

**Rewards**

These can be given to individuals or classes.

😊 **Individuals:**
- pupils can receive certificates for 100% or improved attendance or punctuality
- pupils can receive a raffle ticket (could be virtual) for each week when they have full attendance. At the end of each term, the winning ticket is chosen. Obviously, the more tickets a pupil has, the greater chance they have of winning.

😊 **Classes** - The class with the best attendance or the fewest late arrivals (depending on your priority) each week, month or half term should receive a reward:
- The reward can be something which is free such as being first in for lunch for a week.
- The best attending class could have extra free time or be first out for break by 5 minutes. You may be able to identify a reward which would be particularly valued by your pupils or you may choose to ask your pupils what they would like to receive as a reward.
- The school could purchase a mascot such as a large cuddly toy which is named by pupils, and the class with the best attendance is able to keep this in their classroom until another class has better attendance.

The task of calculating which pupils or classes should receive rewards needs to be done **regularly** for it to be effective. It is easy to let this slip and be forgotten.

**Newsletter and noticeboard** – update your noticeboard whenever rewards are given, either for individuals or classes.

**Sponsorship**

Local businesses, governors or PTA may be prepared to provide goods, cash or services to your school. These can be given as prizes for good attendance. Businesses such as the following may be receptive:

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Issue 2
Stationers (pens, rubbers, stickers etc.)
Book shops
Cinemas
Bowling alleys
Fast Food outlets (particularly the healthy options which are now available)
Cycle shops

Sample letters – see Appendix H

Newsletter and noticeboard – your noticeboard could publicise those businesses or individuals (if they wish) who are supporting the school to improve attendance.

Targets

Every school has a duty to set attendance targets under:

**Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 2261 The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007**

This can be found at Appendix I.

In addition to the overall school target, you may wish to set targets for each year group, class and for individual pupils whose attendance is causing concern. These should be reviewed at regular intervals with those concerned. The SIMS package will be able to provide the data required. For individual pupils, you may like to provide them with their own attendance record so that they can record their own attendance and monitor their own progress. A sample attendance record is at Appendix J.
# Websites

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APPENDIX A

ASSEMBLY ROLE PLAY
Characters: Parents
Scott – older child
Becky – younger child
Pets – Perhaps one of the children could play the dog

Other children could read out the questions at the end of the role play.

PROPS:
- Handbag
- Envelope
- Money
- Table and chairs
- School form/piece of paper

Scene 1

Mum looking harassed: Getting packed lunch ready
Dad sitting at kitchen table- eating breakfast
Older child comes into kitchen – Needs note signing for school trip. Needs it TODAY!

Scott - Mum! Mum! I need my note signing. Miss says if I don’t give it in today I can’t go to the zoo with the rest of my friends!

Mum- How much does it cost to go?

Scott - Don’t know, a fiver I think.

Mum - Let me look….reads note quickly  Ahhh £5.50p. Jim have you got any money?
Mum looking at Dad sitting at the table.

Dad – What? ERRR don’t know. Let me look. Dad rummages through his pockets, brings out a handful of change.

Dad – Is that enough?

Mum – Not quite. Let me see if I have any change in my purse.

Meanwhile dog’s barking and younger child still whinging.

Mum finds her handbag. Looks for her purse and produces another handful of change.

Mum – Here Jim you can count this out for me. Scott needs £5.50p

Scott – Mum! Mum! Don’t forget to sign the note! Here I’ve got a pen ready.

Mum – Alright Scott give me a minute. The dog needs letting out first. Otherwise I’ll have a puddle to clear up. Hang on Becky, your Co-Co pops are coming.
Mum gets distracted and doesn’t sign the form.
Dad – There you go Scott £5.50p for your trip. Have you got something to put it in? Otherwise you’re going to lose it. It’s all loose change. Maybe an envelope would help? Would you go and look for one please.

Scott – Aww Dad! I don’t know where Mum keeps them.

Dad – Have a look in that bottom drawer over there. **Pointing to a cupboard.**

Scott – OK. **Scott busy looking through the drawer.** Here you go Dad. Scott waves an envelope at his Dad.

Dad – Cheers Scott. **Dad puts the money in the envelope.**

Mum meanwhile is busy letting the dog out into the garden, getting washing out of the machine and making sure younger sister is eating her Co- Co pops.

Scott – Mum .. have you signed my form yet?

Mum – Errr.. Don’t know. Where is it? Where’s the pen? **Mum distracted and flustered.**

Scott – Mum I gave you the pen a minute ago.

Mum – Sorry *(mumbling to herself)* - can’t find it…it was here a minute ago.

*Both Mum and Scott look for the pen. Dad continues eating his breakfast at the table.*

Mum – Here it is! Mum holds up the pen.

Scott – Great! Pleeeease sign my form. I can’t go to the Zoo without it.

Mum – Here you go. Where’s the envelope? You can put the slip in with the money. Then they won’t get lost.

Scott – Dad where’s the envelope?

Dad – It was on the table a minute ago. **Dad looks puzzled**

*Younger sister, Becky, has taken the envelope and is busy emptying the change onto the table!*

**All - look around and all shout together..** Becky! What are you doing? Stop!

*Becky looks up puzzled.*

Mum snatches envelope and money from Becky and proceeds to put money and the Consent slip, back into the envelope.

Scott – Thanks Mum
Mum - *Looks up at the kitchen clock.* Oh dear! Quick Scott, Becky get your coats on. Hurry up we should have left 10 minutes ago. Now we’ll be late for school.

Questions following the Role Play:

1. Do you think Scott is going to be late for school?  
   **Answer:** Yes

2. What will his teacher say if he arrives late for school? Do you think he will be told off?  
   **Answer:** Why are you late? That’s not a good reason.

3. What mark is put in the register for children who arrive late?  
   **Answer:** A late mark. This will be entered on your school report.

4. If Scott hadn’t got his note signed and the money that morning would he have missed his trip?  
   **Answer:** Yes, if that had been the last day for the money and consent form to be returned.

5. What could Scott and his Mum and Dad, have done to prevent him from being late?  
   **Answer:** Lots of things, including on the previous night:  
   - Getting the note signed by Mum or Dad and finding an envelope  
   - Getting the money ready  
   - Preparing the packed lunches
APPENDIX B

ATTENDANCE CERTIFICATES
Congratulations!

has arrived at school on time every day since

Signed ___________________  Date ___________________
This is to certify that ______________________________________

Has achieved % attendance between ____________________________

Well Done!!

Signed __________________ Date ______________________________
Congratulations!

This is to certify that

---------------------------------------------------------------

Has achieved % attendance between

___________________________________

Signed_____________________  Date _____________________
Congratulations !

This is to certify that

Has achieved % attendance between

___________________________________

Well Done !

Signed _______________________ Date ___________________
Congratulations!

This is to certify that

---------------------------------------------------------------

has improved their attendance to 100% in the period from

............................................. to ..........................................  

Signed ........................................................   Date...................................
This is to certify that

_________________________________________________

Has achieved % attendance between

_______________ and _________________

Well Done!

Signed__________________________  Date ______________________
Congratulations!

This is to certify that

---------------------------------------------------------------

has improved their attendance to 90% in the period from

_______________________ to ________________________

Signed__________________________ Date _____________
APPENDIX C

HOLIDAY AUTHORISATION CALCULATION CHART
Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart

Name of pupil .................................................School Year.................................................

The merits of each individual request should be evaluated by providing answers to ALL the following questions and scoring accordingly.

("Where the holiday already taken in the current academic year exceeds the DCSF guideline i.e. "maximum of 10 days in any academic year", any further requests should NOT be authorised.")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points possible</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>When is the holiday planned for? September is the beginning of the academic year and full attendance is vital if pupils are to establish themselves academically and in terms of friendship groups.</strong></td>
<td>September = 2 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pupil’s attendance level is? (up until Autumn half term use the % figure from the previous year.)</strong></td>
<td>Less than 70% = 6 pts  70% to 80% = 5 pts  80% to 85% = 4 pts  85% to 93% = 3 pts  More than 93% = 2 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How close is the pupil to a SATs assessment or other examination?</strong></td>
<td>Non-SATs/Exam year = 1 pt  More than 16 wks = 1 pt  8 – 16 weeks = 2 pts  2 – 8 weeks = 3 pts  Less than 2 weeks = 4 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How much holiday leave has already been taken in current academic year?</strong></td>
<td>8 or more days = 4 pts  5 to 7 days = 3 pts  2 to 4 days = 2 pts  1 to 3 days = 1 pt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal

Any special mitigating or aggravating circumstance which indicates that a holiday should be authorised or not authorised contrary to score indicated above. Subtract or add 2 points

Details of mitigation/aggravation

Subtotal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Leave for family holiday where the total is 7 or more **should not be authorised**

The only exception to the above may be where there are, in the opinion of the Head Teacher, ‘exceptional circumstances’ (including religious and cultural considerations; add comment in mitigation/aggravation box). If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings holiday should NOT be authorised.

DELETE WHERE APPROPRIATE:- REQUEST APPROVED/ REQUEST DENIED
Family Holiday Requests during Term Time

The Head Teacher has the discretion to grant up to ten days authorised absence for family holidays in a school year. However, each application will be considered individually taking into account factors such as the timing of the holiday and the pupil’s attendance (see Holiday Authorisation Calculator). For example, a pupil with an otherwise perfect attendance record will achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance if s/he goes on a ten day holiday during term time. The legislation states that,

‘(3) Subject to paragraph (4) a pupil may be granted leave of absence from the school to enable him to go away on holiday where—

(a) An application has been made in advance to the proprietor by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and

(b) The proprietor, or a person authorised on authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application.

(4) Save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil shall not in pursuance of paragraph (3) be granted more than ten school days leave of absence in any school year.’

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.*

In brief, this means that:

- Parents **CANNOT** demand a leave of absence as an automatic right.
- Parental requests **MUST** be made in advance.
- Schools **CANNOT** apply blanket policies to approve/reject all applications
- All requests **MUST** be considered on their own merits.
- Extended periods of absence will be granted **ONLY** in exceptional circumstances.

The power to authorise/unauthorise a leave of absence belongs to the Head Teacher. In order to ensure equity within and between schools, decisions on whether or not to authorise a leave of absence for family holidays will be guided by the use of the Holiday Authorisation Calculator. This does not remove the Head Teacher’s prerogative to authorise holiday in exceptional circumstances.

**Procedure**

Parent/ carer should complete a holiday request form and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the intended period of absence; school will respond to the request within one week. If school is aware of any difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed, appropriate support should be offered to the parent/carer.

The Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart should be used to guide the Head Teacher’s decision on whether or not to authorise the requested leave of absence.

If the total score is 6 or less, holiday leave may be authorised.
If the total score is 7 or more holiday leave should not be authorised. However, the Head Teacher may be aware of exceptional circumstance which would warrant approving holiday leave and this should be recorded on the form.

If a pupil has already taken ten days’ holiday leave in the same academic year, further holiday leave should not be authorised.

If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings, holiday should not be authorised and this should be recorded on the form.

Parents should be made aware (perhaps in the School Handbook) that holidays which have not been agreed in advance will lead to the pupil being marked with unauthorised absences and that this may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

A letter confirming that the request has been authorised /denied should be sent to the parent/carer, with a copy of the Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart within one week of receipt of the holiday request.
APPENDIX D

CSF GUIDANCE ON HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME AND EXTENDED HOLIDAYS
FAMILY HOLIDAYS
(During Term Time)

AND EXTENDED TRIPS OVERSEAS

Notes and Guidance for Schools
Produced by the Attendance and Pupil Support

December 2007 (2nd update)
FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

The conditions under which leave of absence for a holiday during term time may be granted are laid down in regulation 7 of ‘The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and sections 62-68 of the DfES publication Keeping Pupil Registers.

Regulation 7 states that:

- (3) Subject to paragraph 4, a pupil may be granted leave of absence from school to enable him to go away on holiday.

- (4) Save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil shall not in pursuance of paragraph (3) be granted more than ten school days of absence in any school year.”

Permission is granted or not in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school.

No parent can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a family holiday as of right.

Only in ‘exceptional circumstances’ may the amount of leave granted exceed in total more than two weeks in any school year. Schools should explore with parents why such leave of absence is necessary.

Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually. It is the responsibility of the head teacher and governors to decide whether or not to grant leave of absence. When making the decision the following factors should be considered:

- the amount of time requested
- age of the pupil
- the pupil’s general absence/attendance record
- proximity to SATs and public examinations
- length of the proposed leave
- pupil’s ability to catch up the work
- pupil’s educational needs
- general welfare of the pupil
- circumstances of the request
- purpose of the leave
- frequency of the activity, and
- when the request was made.

The procedure for requesting leave of absence should be available to parents. Clear advice should be included within the school’s prospectus and school attendance policy. Parents should be made aware that:

- holidays in term time are not a right and will not automatically be granted.
- leave will be granted only where proper procedures have been followed and permission given.
- it remains the discretionary power of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence.

When leave of absence has been granted the absence should be recorded as authorised, using the appropriate register symbol.
If parents take the child away without permission, or fail to apply for permission in advance of the holiday the absence should be recorded as unauthorised, using the appropriate register symbol.

If the pupil is kept away for a period in excess of the time agreed with the school the extra time should be treated as ‘unauthorised’ absence.

The form ‘Application for Leave of Absence for Annual Holiday’ – which schools may wish to use is included in these notes.
EXTENDED TRIPS OVERSEAS DURING TERM-TIME

In deciding whether to grant extended leave of absence, schools should consider the particular circumstances of each individual case. It is important that schools show an understanding of the parents’ perspective whether or not they are able to agree to the request for absence.

Schools should ensure that all parents are aware of the school’s attendance policy.

When deciding whether to grant leave of absence schools may wish to consider the following:

- A visit involving family overseas has an entirely different significance than the normal associations with a holiday.
- Visits may be very important in terms of children’s identity and self-esteem as they grow up.
- Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweighs the importance of their child’s uninterrupted attendance at school – maintaining family links in extended family situations may involve greater significance and greater pressures in some societies than it does currently in many western societies.
- The reasons for parents making a visit may be, for example, family illness or bereavement. It is less easy for parents to undertake these normal and necessary activities where long distances and high costs are involved.
- If it is possible to include school holidays in the leave of absence so as to limit the amount of term time the pupil is absent.
- Governing bodies may wish to consult with local minority groups.

If leave of absence is agreed schools should consider:

- Explaining the work the pupil will miss, how it can be made up on return and how the parents could help the pupil.
- Whether work can be given to the pupil while he or she is away.
- Preparing a study pack.
- Asking the pupil to make notes and observations on a class topic.
- Going through any work done by the pupil on return.
- Sharing experiences in a positive way with the class and teacher on return.

Parents should be informed of the regulation on removal from the school roll if the child does not return on the agreed date. Parents should be asked to contact the school if the return is delayed. It is advisable to ask for a contact number in the UK so that the school may make enquiries if the pupil does not return at the agreed time.

**Failure to return on the agreed date**

When granting leave of absence for an extended trip overseas, schools should ensure they have a date when the pupil will return to school. Regulation 8 (f) details in what circumstances pupils may be removed from roll if they do not return by the agreed date.

**The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006**

- Regulation 8 (f) states that this applies -

  'In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7 (3), that the pupil has failed to attend the school within ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted, and the
proprietor is not satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause.

**Strategies for Reducing Holidays during Term Time**

- Schools and the Local Authority should actively discourage holidays during term time.

- The school's Attendance Policy should state that holidays during term time are not acceptable.

- Parents should be given a clear message at every opportunity, e.g. at parents' evening, in newsletters, school brochure and bulletins, about taking holiday in term time. This should be maintained as a child moves through infant, junior and secondary school.

- Parents should be informed of dates when leave of absence will not be granted, e.g, school examinations or SATs. It will be helpful to send the school calendar to parents at the start of the term so that they are aware of term times and important dates.

- Parents requesting holidays could be invited into school to discuss the proposed absence and implications for their child of missing school time.

- Schools may wish to agree policies within their local area to provide consistency. This will ensure parents are aware of practice and ensure that schools are operating on the same basis with attendance figures.

- Term time holiday absence may be recorded on the pupil’s report.

- To identify the extent of the issue keep a record of the amount of absence taken for holidays. This could be published by the Governors in their report to parents, giving the absence figure excluding holidays during term time.
APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR ANNUAL HOLIDAY

As a parent or carer, you should fill in this form if you want to take your child out of school during term time to go on an annual holiday.

After completing the form, please return it to the Headteacher of your child’s school no less than 2 weeks before the date when you want the period of absence to start.

The conditions under which leave of absence for term-time holidays may be granted are contained in Reg. 7 of The Education (Pupils Registration) Regulations 2006 and Sections 62-68 of the DfES publication Keeping Pupil Registers.

Schools may decide whether or not to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Parents or carers should not expect such leave to be granted as of right. Permission will not be given if it is applied for after the holiday has taken place.

Normally, a pupil shall not be granted more than 2 weeks leave of absence in any academic year.

I request that _______________________

(Name of child)

be granted leave of absence from

______________________________ (Name of school)

From _________________ To ________________ 20__
in order to take part in an annual holiday

______________________________

(Signature of Parent Carer) (Date)

Please read the notes on the back of this form concerning ‘Failure to return on the agreed date’.
**Failure to return on the agreed date**

When granting leave of absence for an extended trip overseas, schools should ensure they have a date when the pupil will return to school.

**DELETION FROM THE ADMISSION REGISTER**

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2007 -

Regulation 8 (f), states that a pupil may be removed from the school roll if the following applies -

‘In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7 (3), that the pupil has failed to attend the school within ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted, and the proprietor is not satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause.’
APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS’ EVENINGS
ATTENDANCE QUESTIONS

For what reasons could an absence from school be authorised?

- Holiday
- Birthday
- Buying school shoes

95% attendance over a school year is:

- One day off a week
- One day off a fortnight
- One day off a month
- One day off every two months

Who authorises absences from school?

- The Headteacher of the school
- The GP
- The Parent

Does a late arrival count as an absence?

- No, only if a child is absent for a whole morning or afternoon session
- Yes, even if they are only 5 minutes late
- Yes, if they arrive after registers close.
Answers for Questionnaire are:

1. holiday (but not always authorised). The other absences would be unauthorised.

3. one day off a month. 90% attendance means the child has a day off each fortnight. Would employers accept this level of absence?

1. the Headteacher of the school who usually delegates this authority to class teachers

3. Yes if they arrive after registers close – what time is that for your school?
APPENDIX F

PSHE LESSON
PSHE – ATTENDANCE

Aim – to gauge pupils’ attitudes to attendance.

Last term, ? pupils had 100% attendance and received a certificate.

Who got a certificate?

We want to double that this term.

Let’s think of some reasons why you might not come to school, reasons which stopped the rest of you getting a certificate.

- Not well (if Mum or Dad are not well, school can help you keep in touch with them through the day so you know they are OK)
- Family holiday
- Dentists/doctors appointment (should make out of school time)
- Bullying (if bullying is raised, remind pupils they should come back to school so it can be sorted out. It is not fair that the bully can carry on coming to school.)

Now let’s think of some reasons for being in school:

- To learn to read and write
- To see my friends
- I like my teacher
- To get a good job
- To get good SATS results
- School dinners are yummy
- I like play time
- I like school trips
- Mum gets a break
- I can get a reward for good attendance
- I like ….history, maths, stories, science, PE
- It stops me getting bored
- I get a break from my brothers and sisters
- I sleep better because I’ve been busy
- IT’S THE LAW!

So there are many more reasons to be in school than not to be in school, so lots of you should get a certificate at the end of this term. WHO WANTS A CERTIFICATE? I shall put up a notice to let you know if we’ve doubled last term’s figures. Let’s all try really hard.
APPENDIX G

LATE PATROLS – GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES
Late Patrols - Good Practice Guidelines

Introduction:

School Gate Patrols can be a useful way of targeting punctuality issues within the school setting, in conjunction with other methods to support and improve whole school attendance and punctuality.

Aims:

✓ To improve punctuality of pupils arriving for school each day.
✓ To make children, pupils and parents / carers aware of the importance of good punctuality and the impact this has on learning and achievement.
✓ To highlight issues of poor punctuality.
✓ To target specific areas of difficulty – e.g. lateness on mornings with shared reading.
✓ To work with children, pupils and parents / carers as appropriate to improve punctuality.
✓ To support school strategies to improve punctuality and attendance.

Issues to Consider:

School Gate Patrols can be useful and the following issues should be considered:

✓ Parents should be told that School Gate Patrols are about to happen.
✓ Who will undertake the Gate Patrol? – The Attendance Improvement Officer must be accompanied by either the Headteacher or a senior member of school staff, to demonstrate a joint approach and to ensure that those families where there are genuine issues are not approached. All staff must wear ID badges.
✓ When will the Gate Patrol take place? – it is important to ensure that Gate Patrols are well planned, and that the times chosen will highlight the importance of good punctuality (e.g. from 10 minutes prior to the start of school to 20 minutes after the start of school).
✓ Where will the Gate Patrol take place? – where will staff stand to ensure that children, pupils and parents / carers are seen and can be spoken to easily? At the school gate, on the path leading into school, at the school door (dependent on number of entrances used), outside a particular targeted classroom or Key Stage area?
✓ How frequently will the Gate Patrol take place? – maybe several occasions close together initially, and then further ad hoc occasions to remind people of the importance of punctuality.
✓ Who will speak to children / pupils and parents / carers? – will this be the role of the staff member or the Attendance Improvement Officer? Plan what will be said in advance, to ensure that messages are consistent and appropriate.
✓ What follow up will be required? – Agree who will deal with any issues that require follow up, e.g. letters to parents / carers, punctuality awards for improvement in schools. It is good practice to follow up with an article in the school newsletter, or letter to parents explaining the piece of work.
APPENDIX H

SAMPLE SPONSORSHIP LETTERS
Dear Sir,

Helping Primary School achieve excellent attendance

Over this academic year School is giving a high priority to improving school attendance and good punctuality. A number of initiatives have been implemented in the school, to raise both pupil and parent awareness of this issue and the benefits of good attendance for the school and the wider community.

One initiative involving pupils across the school is a competition between the classes for the best attendance/most punctual class. We hope to be able to give prizes to every class for any improvement made in this area. We would like to give every class a voucher, during a school assembly, which pupils will then decide how they 'spend'.

As you are aware funding within schools for this type of activity is limited. That is why we are approaching local businesses to request donations of monies or vouchers which can be used as prizes for the children.

If you wish to make a donation, or if you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in anticipation,
Dear Sir,

Helping …………………………… Primary School achieve excellent attendance

Over this academic year .......... School is giving a high priority to improving school attendance and good punctuality. A number of initiatives have been implemented in the school, to raise both pupil and parent awareness of this issue and the benefits of good attendance for the school and the wider community.

One initiative which we are using is to award small prizes to those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance, or have very much improved attendance or punctuality. These are calculated on a monthly/half termly/termly basis and the prizes are presented in assembly, along with a certificate.

As you are aware funding within schools for this type of activity is limited. That is why we are approaching local businesses to request donations of monies or vouchers which can be used as prizes for the children.

If you wish to make a donation, or if you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in anticipation,
APPENDIX I

Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 2261
EDUCATION, ENGLAND

The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007

Made

25th July 2007

Laid before Parliament

7th August 2007

Coming into force

1st September 2007

The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 63 and 138 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998(1), makes the following Regulations:

Citation, commencement and application

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007 and come into force on 1st September 2007.

(2) These Regulations apply only in relation to England.

Interpretation

2. In these Regulations—

“persistent absence” means absence for any reason or combination of reasons for a number of sessions which totals at least twenty percent of the national average of sessions available in the statistical reporting period, and “persistently absent” is construed accordingly;

“pupils” means relevant day pupils;

“school year” means the period beginning with the first school term to begin after July and ending with the beginning of the first such term to begin after the following July;

“statistical reporting period” means that part of the school year for which schools are required by the local education authority to return absence data to the Secretary of State in the school census and in this paragraph “school census” means the arrangement (known by that name) under which the Secretary of State collects information about schools each year; and

“total possible attendances” means the number produced by multiplying the number of pupils at the school by the number of school sessions in the applicable period in that year.”

Duty on schools to set targets to reduce absence

3. The governing body of every school maintained by a local education authority other than a special school established in a hospital must set annual targets for reducing the number of absences from school in accordance with regulation 4.

4.—(1) The governing body must set a target and must submit it to the local education authority—
(a) by 31st December 2007 for the school year commencing in 2008; and
(b) for each subsequent school year, by 31st December of the preceding year.

(2) The annual target is the total number of absences which the governing body intends that pupils at the school will not exceed in the school year, expressed as a percentage of the total possible attendances by pupils at the school.

Duty on schools to set focused absence targets

5.—(1) Where the Secretary of State gives notice to the governing body of a school under regulation 6, 7, or 8, that body must secure that a target as specified in regulation 6, 7 or 8 (as the case may be) is also set for the school in respect of each school year specified in the notice.

(2) A target set in accordance with paragraph (1) must be submitted to the relevant local education authority by the date stated in the notice.

6.—(1) Where—

(a) the Secretary of State is satisfied that it is appropriate; and
(b) it appears to the Secretary of State that a school has, for one or more groups of pupils at the school, a level of absence higher than the national average for that group,

the Secretary of State may give notice to the governing body of that school in accordance with regulation 9 that it is to set a target to reduce the level of absence in each of those groups.

(2) The target to be set is the number of absences of pupils in that group which the governing body intends that pupils in that group will not exceed in the school year, expressed as a percentage of the total number of possible attendances for that group.

(3) For the purposes of this regulation a group of pupils is any category of pupils specified in the notice.

7.—(1) Where—

(a) the Secretary of State is satisfied that it is appropriate; and
(b) it appears to the Secretary of State that the level of absence in a school for any reason specified in the notice is higher than the national average for that reason,

the Secretary of State may give notice to the governing body of that school in accordance with regulation 9 that it is to set a target to reduce the level of absence for that reason.

(2) The target to be set is the total number of absences of pupils for that reason which the governing body intends that pupils at the school will not exceed in the school year, expressed as a percentage of the total number of possible attendances for the pupils absent for that reason.

8.—(1) Where—

(a) the Secretary of State is satisfied that it is appropriate; and
(b) it appears to the Secretary of State that the level of persistent absence in a school is higher than the national average level of persistent absence,

the Secretary of State may give notice to the governing body of that school in accordance with regulation 9 that it is to set a target to reduce the level of persistent absence in that school.

(2) The target to be set is the total number of pupils in that school who are persistently absent expressed as a percentage of the total number of relevant day pupils for that school.

9.—(1) The notice referred to in regulations 6, 7 and 8 —

(a) must be given in writing;
(b) must be dated; and
(c) must contain a date by which the target should be submitted to the local education authority.

Agreement and notification of targets

10.—(1) Where the local education authority is not satisfied with a target submitted by a governing body pursuant to regulation 4 or 5, it must forthwith give notice to the governing body; and the governing body must submit a revised target within 21 days of receipt of such a notice.

(2) Where the local education authority is not satisfied with a revised target submitted under paragraph (1) it must set the target.

(3) The local education authority must within one month of each of the dates in regulations 4(1) and 9(1)(c) above or as soon as possible after that date notify the Secretary of State that—
(a) all the targets required to be set by regulation 5 maintained by that authority, and
(b) any targets it has decided to set pursuant to paragraph(2),
have been set.

11. On receipt of a request by the Secretary of State, the local education authority must supply, within 14 days of the date of such a request, any target set under regulations 4, 5 or 10(2).

Modification of targets

12. A governing body must not modify any target set pursuant to these regulations which has been notified to the Secretary of State pursuant to regulation 10(3) without the agreement of the local education authority.

Revocation

13. The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005(2) are revoked.

Signatory text

Kevin Brennan
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Children, Schools and Families

25 July 2007

(1) 1998 c.31. Section 63 was amended by section 53 of the Education Act 2002 (c.32). Functions of the Secretary of State, so far as exercisable in relation to Wales, transferred to the National Assembly for Wales, by the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999, S.I. 1999/672, art 2, Sch 1. See section 142(1) for the meaning of “Regulations”. Back [1]

(2) S.I. 2005/58 Back [2]

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations revoke the previous regulations on schools setting absence targets and replace them. The governing body of every maintained school as defined will be required to set by 31 December of each year, a target for the expected number of absences for the next academic year.

In addition, the Secretary of State may, by giving the requisite notice, require a governing body to set absence targets to reduce levels of absence for pupils in a particular group (as specified in the
schedule), levels of absence for a particular reason or levels of persistent absence (as defined). In order to require these targets to be set, the Secretary of State has to be satisfied that the particular level is higher than the national average and that it is appropriate for a target to be set.

The national average level for absence is published annually in “Pupil Absence in Schools in England”. The level is the total number of sessions missed expressed as a percentage of the total number of sessions available. For the purposes of persistent absence (regulation 8) the calculation is based on the number of pupils registered at the school as opposed to the number of pupils actually attending the school.

All targets have to be submitted to the local education authority which then has to notify the Secretary of State that the targets have been set and supply the targets if requested to do so. Targets agreed pursuant to regulation 4 will continue to be notified to the Secretary of State under the School and Local Targets (SALT) process.
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<th>W/Beg</th>
<th>Mon</th>
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<th>Fri</th>
<th>Reasons for Absence(s)/Time of arrival (if late)</th>
<th>Attendance for week e.g. 7 sessions attended out of 10 possible = 70%</th>
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MARKINGS: 
- A = PRESENT, O = UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE,
- ⊗ = AUTHORISED ABSENCE (SYMBOL IN CIRCLE INDICATES REASON FOR ABSENCE),
- X (NOT IN CIRCLE) = SCHOOL CLOSED, L/U = LATE BEFORE/LATE AFTER REGISTERS CLOSED