



Claremont Primary School

A hub of educational excellence and innovation,
supporting and valuing everyone

Attendance Policy

Responsible person	Steph Kirk, Attendance Officer Candi Roberts, Headteacher
Responsible governor	Chris Davidson, Chair of Governors
Responsible governor team	FGB
Date approved	Spring 2024
Date of next review	Spring 2025 (or as new guidance available)
Policy reference	Adapted Kelsi Model

At Claremont we believe and recognise that the diversity of our community is one of our greatest strengths and assets. We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are treated fairly, and we have carefully considered and analysed the impact within this policy to promote equality of opportunity for all and we will use our position of influence as a school to work with all stakeholders to eliminate discriminatory barriers and ensure that our pupils have a sense of shared, common belonging and understanding

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Aims and Objectives

Statement of Intent

Claremont Primary is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we monitor attendance on a weekly, termly and annual basis.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Claremont Primary.

This policy is written in line with the DFE guidelines, 'Working together to improve school attendance' September 2022.

The Importance of School Attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. At Claremont, we want to provide a school experience that is calm, orderly, safe and a supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn as a foundation of securing good attendance.

Some children find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school works with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, suitable, full-time education. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attends school every day it is open and arrives on time except when a statutory reason applies. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life choices. For the most vulnerable children, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parental Responsibility

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent by 9.30am and give a full reason for absence. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform on when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.55am ready for registration at 9am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

Pupils finish school at 3.25pm. Parents should notify the office if they are going to be late collecting their child or if there is a change to the normal pick-up arrangements.

Parents are expected to:

- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance (see page 9 for further information)
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible, especially routine dentist and optician appointments
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support

The Role of the School Staff

At Claremont Primary School, there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Assistant Headteacher, Hannah Oliver, has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

The Assistant Headteacher will:

- Regularly meet with the Attendance Officer and review attendance data
- Hold meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the Attendance Officer in the first instance of children whose attendance is causing concern.

The Attendance Officer, Steph Kirk, has responsibility to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by text message and/or phone call.
- Where there has been no communication from the parent, a code of unauthorised absence will be entered and an email will be sent to parents requesting reasons for absence
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see Appendix 1 for the National Attendance Codes)
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority

Should a parent have any concerns about their child's attendance or any worries they have which may be affecting their attendance they are able to contact the Assistant Headteacher, Attendance Officer or Pastoral Team through the office – admin@claremont.kent.sch.uk / 01892 531395.

The Role of the Governing Body

The governing body has a responsibility to:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Ensuring the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.

The Role of the local authority

The local authority is expected to:

- Organise termly Targeting Support Meetings with each school in their area so the school's attendance leads and their point of contact in the local authority's School Attendance Support Team can identify, discuss, and agree joint targeted actions for pupils who are persistently or severely absent and those at risk of becoming so. This should include agreeing what support the LA will provide and which (if any) other statutory or voluntary services should become involved.
- Use these meetings to build strong relationships and work collaboratively with the school's attendance leads, including providing advice on recording in the register, accessing services or the wider area-wide attendance approach.

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority's school Attendance Support Team should liaise with school and the early help lead practitioner or social worker (where applicable) to take forward attendance legal intervention.

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

Prevention:

95 - 100% attendance – the class teacher to investigate and notify Attendance Officer of concerns. The Attendance Officer to contact parents if appropriate or arrange for someone to do so on their behalf.

Early Intervention:

Typically, at 90 - 95% attendance, the school will:

- Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with all partners together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this will include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions will be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

Targeted support:

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), we will:

- Work together with the local authority to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils.

- We will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches such as Penalty Notices.
- If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include specific support with attendance or consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.

Particular focus will be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of agencies. These children will therefore be prioritised and all partners will work together to make this group the top priority for support. This may include:

- holding more formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This will be led by the Headteacher and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. These meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with, the school will work with the local authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order
- Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

See Appendices 2 and 3 for more information.

Children Missing Education

Children Missing Education (CME) are children of **compulsory school age** who are **not registered pupils** at a school and are **not receiving suitable education otherwise** than at a school (e.g elective home education).

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate them
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school

In accordance with regulation 12(6) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, the school will notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the reasons set out in regulation 8, as soon as the pupil's name is to be deleted. This does not apply where the pupil's name is deleted after they have completed the school's final year (for example, pupils who leave primary school at the end of Year 6).

Lateness

At Claremont Primary the morning register is taken at 9.00am across the whole school. The gates are closed at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after this time must enter school by the main entrance and report to the office where they record their name and the reason for lateness using the electronic signing in system. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The morning register will close at 9.10am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

An afternoon register is taken at 1.00pm for EYFS and KS1 (closing at 1.10pm) & 1.30pm for KS2 (closing at 1.40pm).

Lateness to school is monitored and discussions will take place with parents where applicable. Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice (please see page 10).

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that **will not** be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Exceptional Circumstances may include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the Headteacher is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be

scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the school can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

From September 2013, the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations removing the Headteacher ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

To request term time absence parents must complete an ‘Application for leave of absence during term time’ form at least 14 days before the start of the absence where possible. (See Appendix 4 for example of form)

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school (see below).

The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

In some instances, a short amount of time out of school is required (music exams, medical appointments, school visits) and a **Pupil Pass form must be completed at least 24 hours in advance and authorised by the school office.** (See appendix 5 for example of form).

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance and/or Persistent Lateness

Where the school is considering a Penalty Notice, the parent will be contacted and an attempt will be made to resolve the issue which is causing the lateness or persistent absence. If a Penalty Notice is being considered the parent shall be written to and warned that the school may take action. This letter will include:

- details of the pupil’s absence or persistent lateness
- an offer to meet with the parent to discuss the concerns and to provide advice and support in an attempt to resolve any difficulties
- a statement of the legal responsibilities of the parent regarding attendance
- the consequences for the parent in failing to ensure their child’s regular attendance; in particular, warning that further unauthorised and persistent absence could result in a Penalty Notice or prosecution
- an expectation that, after receipt of the warning letter, the level of attendance will significantly improve and that this improvement will be maintained.

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in June 2020

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence or where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.

Unauthorised absence (including frequent lateness in to school – U Code)

Penalty Notices can only be issued in cases where a pupil of compulsory school age has been absent or late for a period, or periods, of time and the absence or lateness has not been authorised by the school, or shown improvement as a result of actions taken by the school.

After the school has taken the steps above, the relevant case may be referred directly to Kent's Inclusion and Attendance Service to issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been

- absent for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or 50 school days – these do not need to be consecutive.
- persistently late (coded U) for 10 or more sessions after the register has been closed
- unauthorised absence for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- unauthorised absence for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice in these circumstances would conflict with other intervention strategies in place, such as Early Help support, or other sanctions already being processed.

Unauthorised Leave (including leave for family holiday)

Any parent who takes their child out of school for term-time leave of more than 10 or more morning and afternoon sessions during any 100 possible school sessions (or 50 school days) not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances), may receive a Penalty Notice.

The unauthorised term-time leave does not have to be consecutive for a parent to receive a Penalty Notice. In deciding whether to refer a case for the sanction of a Penalty Notice, the Headteacher should take into account whether there is known evidence of previous unauthorised term time leave taken in the last 3 years and evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice.

Exclusion

Where a child is found in a public place during school hours of day one to five of any fixed term or permanent exclusion a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each

parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Part Time Timetables

Children have the right to a full time education and part time timetables should only be used in very exceptional circumstances and should be time limited. Part time timetables will not be used in response to negative behaviour and will be agreed in consultation with parents and educational specialists; they will only be used when they are of benefit to the child.

Analysing Attendance and Reporting to Parents

Attendance for all pupils, as well as vulnerable groups of pupils, are regularly analysed and reported to the school's Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body. The school also has termly meetings with the local authority's School Attendance Liaison Officer. Hannah Oliver takes the lead on this, in discussion with the school's Attendance Officer. The aims of analysing attendance are as follows:

1. To celebrate good attendance
2. To support students where medical diagnosis hinders attendance
3. To monitor attendance of all pupils and proactively engage with parents and pupils with support and challenge
4. To use attendance tracking information to identify safeguarding concerns eg FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), possible young carers, CME (Children Missing Education), PA (Persistent Absentees – below 90% attendance, SA (Severe Absentees).

Parents will be notified of their child's attendance figure three times a year on their school report.

Awarding Good Attendance

Children with 100% attendance at the end of the school year will receive a 'good attendance' award. We recognise that there are occasions where children will have had an authorised absence or exceptional circumstances which has prevented them from achieving 100% but their attendance is still very high. These children will also receive a 'good attendance' award.

Appendix 1

National Attendance and Absence Codes

Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Present – late for session
D	Dual registered at another school	
B	Education off site (no dual reg)	Approved educational activity
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity

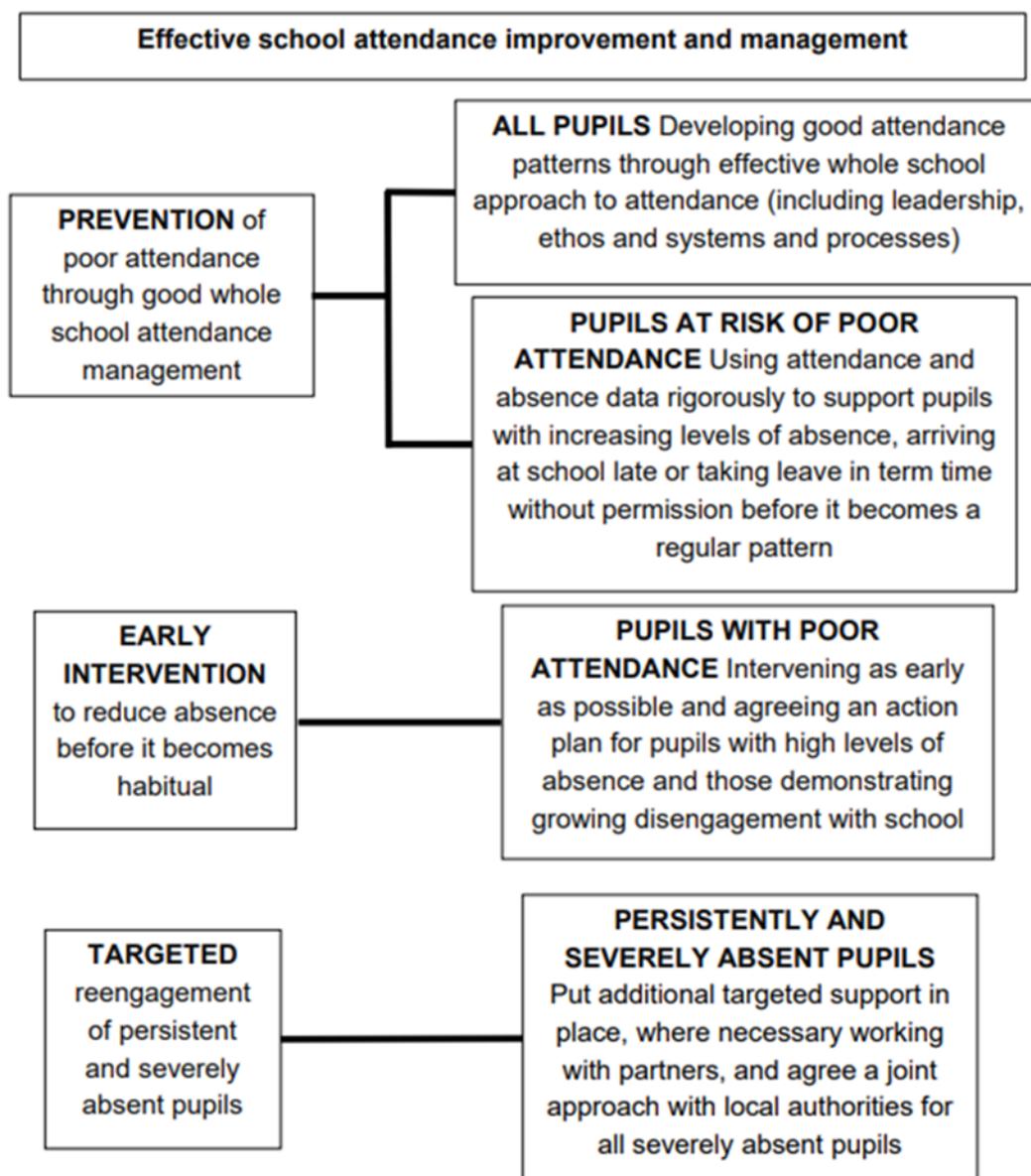
Absence Codes (authorised and unauthorised)

Code	Definition
<i>Authorised Absence</i>	
C	Leave of absence granted by the school
H	Leave of absence for the purposes of a family holiday granted by the school (exceptional circumstances)
E	Excluded but no alternative made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious observance
T	Traveller absence
<i>Unauthorised Absence</i>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

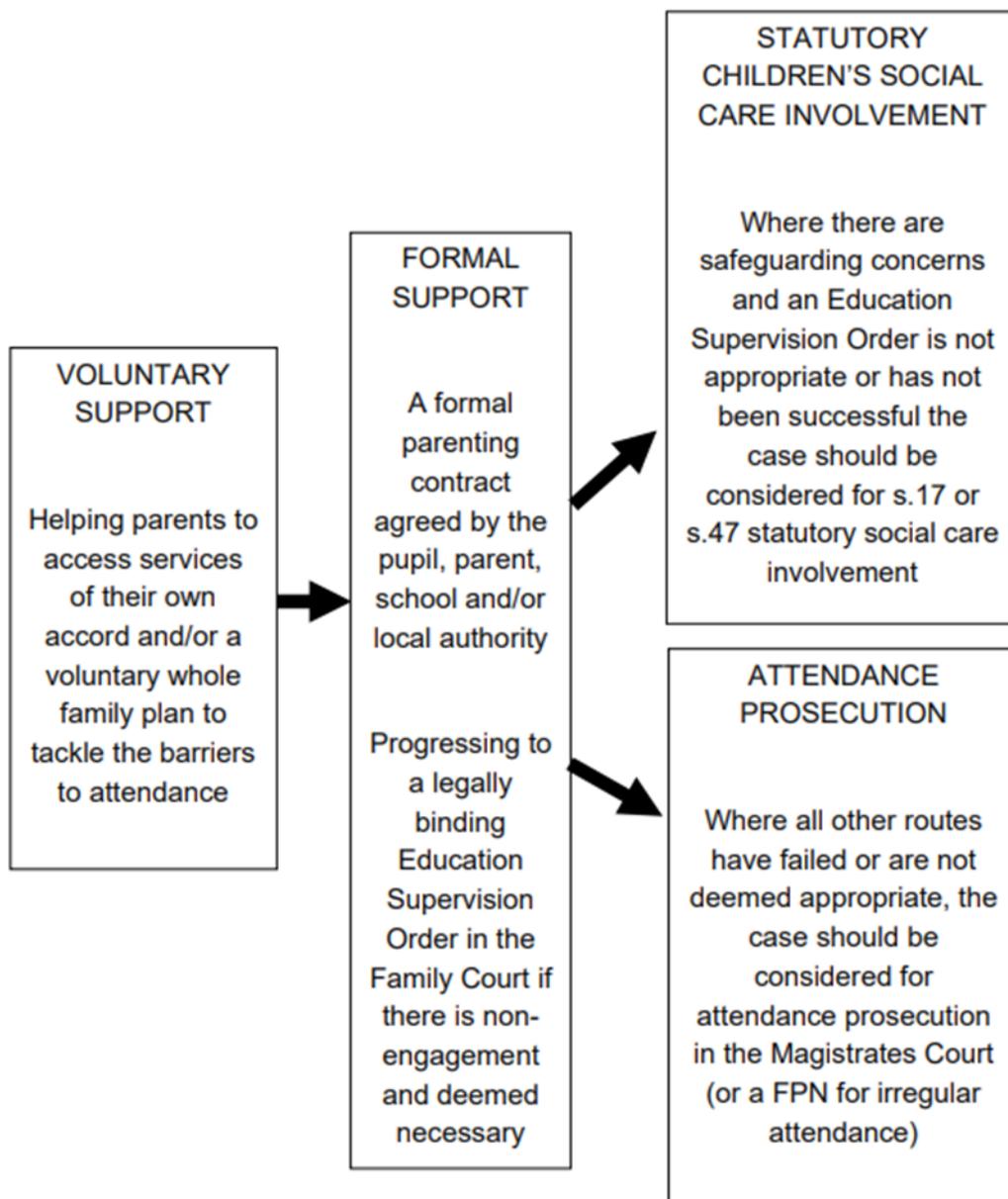
Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Enforced closure)
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure

Appendix 2



Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Claremont Primary School

Dear Parents/Carers

Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Department for Education has amended the regulations and guidance in relation to absences in term-time. There is now no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time. From September 2013, the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations removing the Headteacher ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Following this amendment, requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in 'exceptional circumstances'. An '*exceptional circumstance*' would have to be defined as an **unavoidable** cause e.g. a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school. Equally travel time requests to holiday destinations are also not considered exceptional circumstances. I urge families to support the school by ensuring that taking term-time holidays are not the culture of our community.

Requests for absence (leave) will be considered individually but only where there are exceptional circumstances. There is no right of appeal as the authorisation of the absence is the sole responsibility of the Headteacher. The Headteacher cannot give retrospective approval so any request should be **made in advance by at least 2 weeks**.

Exceptional Circumstances may include:

- Family trauma, a serious illness/death of close relative/person to the family
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Attending celebrations in line with culture and/or religion
- Where an employer stipulates that holiday has to be taken during a set period (letter from employer is required as evidence)

All requests for leave of absence must be made using the form on the reverse. Completed forms must be returned to the school office. **Please note that email requests for leave of absence will not be considered unless accompanied by this form.** A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If the absence requested is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nonetheless take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in line with County Council guidance.

In the case of an unauthorised absence the **Local Authority Attendance Service** monitor these. Should the incidence of unauthorised absences be judged of concern Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent for each child** taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this will result in further legal intervention.

Claremont has maintained an excellent attendance record for many years. Please be reassured that despite this legislation the school will continue to place the needs of the children first, seek to work with families to overcome barriers to learning and aim to provide the best environment for children and families to thrive and achieve. I have always believed that the vast majority of parents have the wisdom to judge when an absence is in their child's best interests. Claremont however, must be seen to act in line with regulations.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Candi Roberts
Headteacher

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

If, after reading the letter on the reverse, you consider you have exceptional circumstances to request a leave of absence during term time, please complete this form and return to the school at least 14 days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Pupil Name Class.....

First day of absence Date of return to school.....

Total number of school days missed

Reason for absence (including any exceptional circumstances). Please attach any supporting evidence e.g. wedding invite)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

I have read the letter overleaf and understand that if the request is unauthorised the Local Authority Attendance Service monitor absence taken and may decide to issue a Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. I understand that if I do not pay this will result in legal action.

Name of Parent/Carer making application

Signed Dated

(Please ensure you are giving at least 14 days' notice of the proposed absence)

For office use:

Attendance to date % Absence previously authorised days

AUTHORISED: Your request has been authorised for the following dates: ---/---/---to ---/---/---
and will be registered as authorised on your child's record

UNAUTHORISED: Your request has been unauthorised for the following dates: ---/---/--- to ---/---/---
and will be registered as unauthorised on your child's record

Signed by Headteacher..... Date ---/---/---

Appendix 5



Claremont Primary School

REQUEST FOR PUPIL PASS

If your child needs to be absent for any reason during the school day a Pupil Pass must be obtained at least 24 hours in advance. These are **required for short medical/dental appointments, music exams etc.**

Please complete the form below and return it to the School Office as soon as possible:

Pupil Name Class

Date of absence: Leave time:..... Return time:.....

If your child is arriving late will they need: **School Dinner/Packed Lunch** (please circle)

Please explain reason for absence:-

.....
.....
.....

Signed:..... Name:..... Date:.....

NB: Pupil Passes will be given directly to the pupil to pass on to parents.

.....

Claremont Primary School Authorised Pupil Pass

Pupil Name: **Date:**

Reason:.....

Leave time:.....**Return time:**.....

Pass actioned: Signed..... **Dated:**.....