

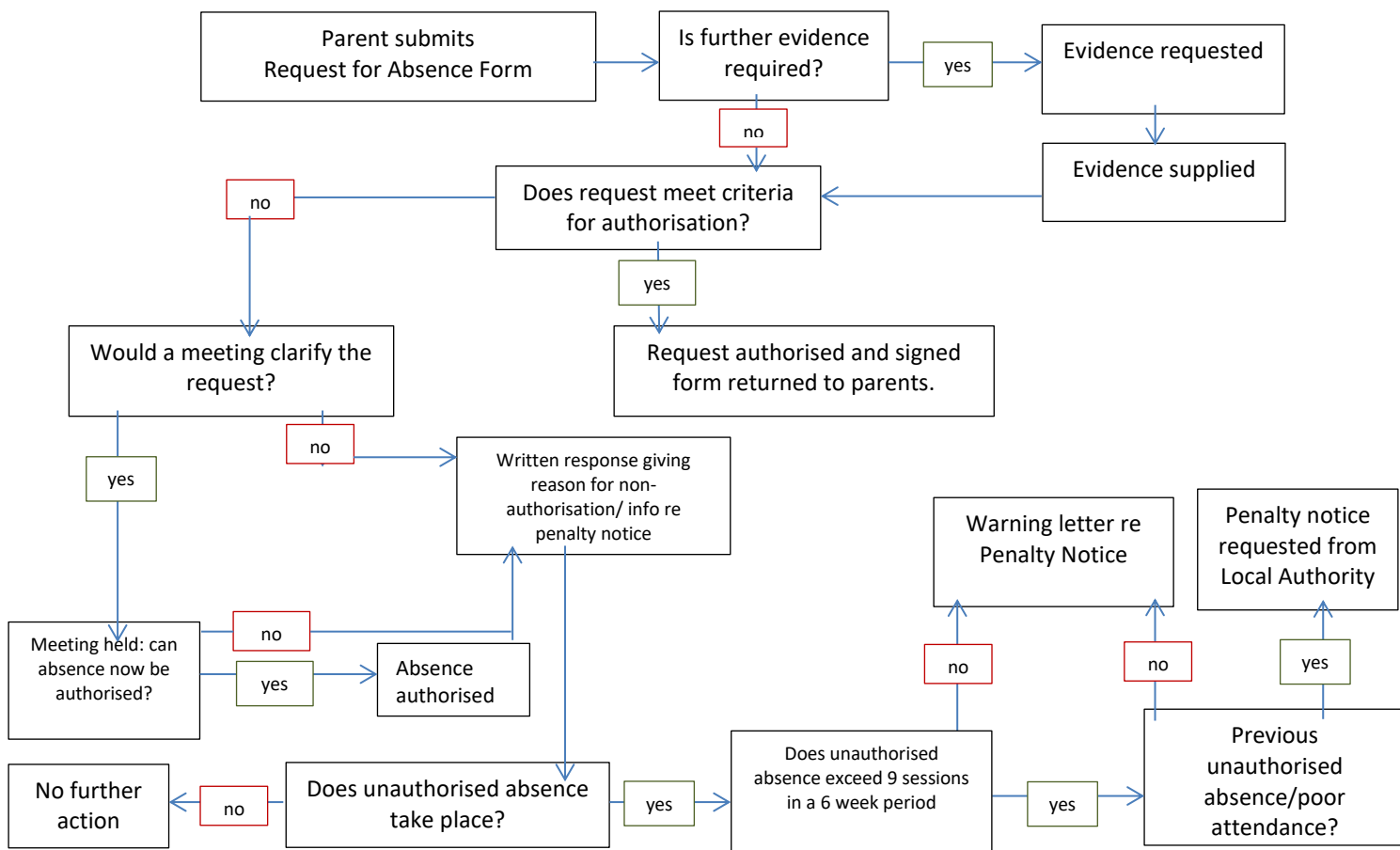


Barrowby Church of England Primary School

Pupil Absence from School Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Amendments to The *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006* which came into force on 1 September 2013 make it clear that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 1.2 All requests for absence must be made in advance via the 'Request for Absence' form, and should include an explanation of the exceptional nature of the request, and be accompanied by documentary evidence wherever possible.
- 1.3 Whilst the decision whether or not to authorise an absence remains with the Headteacher, this policy has been drawn up in line with guidance from Lincolnshire County Council.
- 1.4 All absences (authorised and unauthorised) are recorded on the Pupil Management System (Integris). Data from Integris is extracted and reported to the Local Authority/DFE as part of the census.
- 1.5 The procedure for dealing with absence requests is as follows:



2. Circumstances in which absence may be authorised.

- 2.1 **Illness/Medical reasons:** Absence will be authorised if a child is too ill to attend school. Parents must contact school on the first day of absence and each day of the absence thereafter. Parents should notify the school absence, by leaving a telephone message, via Arbor or by email.

If child has frequent absences due to illness, support will be offered to parents and, where appropriate, a referral made to health agencies.

Absence will be authorised for unavoidable medical or dental appointments. A copy of the appointment letter/card should be attached to the request form wherever possible.

Parents are encouraged to make routine appointments out of school time.

Emergency (same day) appointments will be authorised without the prior completion of a request form.

- 2.2 **Religious reasons:** Absence will be authorised for religious observance. Parents must complete a Request for Absence form stating the nature of the religious observance, and confirming that it will take place over the whole of the period of absence requested. School may ask for written corroboration from a religious leader before authorising the absence.
- 2.3 **Bereavement:** Absence will be authorised when a family bereavement has occurred, or to allow a child to attend the funeral of a close relative. However, it is recommended that children should return to school as soon as reasonably possible, and the length of any absence authorised will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- 2.4 **Exceptional family circumstances:** Absence may be authorised to attend a family wedding, or other exceptional family event, if this is taking place during school time. Absence cannot be authorised for preparations in advance of an event e.g. for dress fittings or hair appointments. Wherever possible family events which involve school age children should be organised outside of school time.
- 2.5 **Examinations:** Absence may be authorised for Music, Dance, or other examinations where these cannot be arranged out of school time. Authorisation must be sought in advance, and documentary evidence supplied where possible.
- 2.6 **Exceptional opportunities-education off-site and Gifted and Talented pupils:** In certain circumstances absence may be authorised where a child is offered an exceptional educational opportunity off site, or an opportunity which is related to an area in which the child is gifted or talented. Application must be made in advance, and supported by documentary evidence. Each application will be reviewed on its merits, and absence will only be granted where the benefit to the child clearly outweighs the impact of an absence from school, and where the opportunity cannot be accessed out of school time.

3. Circumstances under which absence cannot be authorised

3.1 Absence cannot be authorised for any circumstance which is not deemed to be exceptional. Examples of absences that cannot be authorised are:

- birthdays
- visiting relatives
- shopping
- a hair appointment

4. Holiday absence

4.1 Headteachers only have discretion to authorise term time holidays in exceptional circumstances. If parents wish to request absence for a holiday they must complete a Request for Absence form, and give full details of the exceptional nature of the request.

4.2 Authorisation must be sought before entering into any contractual arrangements - booking, and or/paying for a holiday; before seeking authorisation does not constitute exceptional circumstances, as all parents have been made aware that authorisation must be sought before booking.

4.3 The difference in the cost of a holiday taken in term time is unlikely to amount to an exceptional circumstance.

4.4 A parent being unable to take leave from work during a school holiday is unlikely to amount to exceptional circumstances (this is a matter between the parent and their employer).

5. Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Where children are absent from school without prior authorisation from the school, except for illness/emergency medical reason, this counts as unauthorised absence, and will be recorded on the Pupil Management system (Integris).

5.2 Late arrival at school, after the registers have closed (arrived after 9.05am or 1.20pm) also counts as an unauthorised absence.

6. Penalties for unauthorised absence

6.1 Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the parent of every child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that the child receives efficient full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and any special educational needs he or she may have. Where a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child at a school at which they are a registered pupil the parent may be guilty of an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

6.2 Under certain circumstances the Local Authority can issue a fixed penalty notice to parents, bring proceedings before the family courts for an Education Supervision Order or prosecute parents under Section 444 before the Magistrates Court. If a penalty notice is issued it may be used in evidence in subsequent criminal proceedings.

6.3 A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued where a child is absent from school due to unauthorised absence of 15% or above over a six week period (10 half day sessions) = 5 days.

- 6.4 If a parent pays the penalty notice within 21 days from the date it is served, the amount due to discharge the notice is £80. After 21 days, the payment increases, and this must be paid before 28 days have passed from the date of service. If the amount is paid within these timescales, no further action will be taken in relation to the offence stated in the penalty notice.
- 6.5 There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice: a parent can either accept and pay it, or decline payment, subject to them being aware that further action may be taken by the Local Authority if the penalty notice remains unpaid.
- 6.6 If the offer of dealing with the offence, as a fixed penalty matter, is not taken up by payment of the sum due within the 28 day period, the Local Authority will give consideration to issuing criminal proceedings against the parent in the magistrates' court.
- 6.7 If a prosecution is brought and the parent is found guilty or pleads guilty, a conviction for an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 or for an offence under Section 103 of the Education and inspection Act 2006 both carry a fine of up to a maximum of £1000 and in addition the Local Authority will seek to recover costs in respect of bringing the proceedings. A successful prosecution will result in a parent having a criminal record which could be disclosed should they apply for a position where a DBS check is required.
- 6.8 The decision whether to request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Factors which may be taken into account include:
- the duration of the unauthorised absence
 - the previous attendance rate of the child/ren involved
 - whether the child has had any previous unauthorised absence.
- 6.9 If a parent receives a second penalty notice within three years, the amount payable is £160 per pupil, per parent. If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, the parent may be taken to court for failing to ensure their child attends school.
- 6.10 If a child is absent from school on three or more occasions within a three-year period, a penalty notice will not be issued; however, the parent may be taken to court for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

7. Pupil Absence From School Policy

This policy is reviewed by the Head teacher, staff and Governors in accordance with Barrowby School's Policy and Review Cycle for approval by the Full Governing Body, every 3 years.

Last reviewed: February 2026

Next review: November 2029

