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## ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023-24

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Recommended by the	Teaching and Learning Committee
Approved by	Full Governing Body on 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Responsible Officer:	Z Beamish
Date of next review:	November 2024

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### Key updates for 2023-24:

- Attendance and Family Support Worker role change (from inclusion co-ordinator)
- Clarification of attendance policy around mental health
- Inclusion of changes to Child Missing in Education in Keeping Children Safe In Education.

### 1. Introduction

As a school within The Cam Academy Trust, Comberton Village College aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

At CVC we will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. As a school we are aiming for attendance of 96% + across the academic year through ensuring that all pupils regularly attend school.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The Principal will also support staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### 2. Legal and National Context

It is important that all schools to adhere to the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refer to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures, each of these documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

The Education Act 1996

The Education Act 2002

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2019

School attendance parental responsibility measures 2015

Working together to improve attendance 2022

DfE: Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools 2023

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

There is a need to use DfE's guidance on the school census to explain the persistent absence threshold and the high expectation that is set in monitoring this form of absence.

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Principals/Heads of School may not grant leave of absence during term time *unless there are very exceptional circumstances*. Comberton Village College upholds these regulations, and applications for holiday or leave during term time will not be authorised. To avoid difficulty or

disappointment, parents are asked to refrain from such requests.

Amendments have also been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. The amendments described below came into force on 1st September 2017.

Penalty notices (fines) may be issued to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Each responsible Parent must pay £60 within 21 days; or £120 within 28 days. Further details on penalty notices and parents legal responsibilities can be found on the Local Authority website ( <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/school-attendance> ) .

### 3. School Procedures

#### Attendance register

All schools by law are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment
- Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made

Where reasonably possible we will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil, this is routinely checked as part of admissions and data checking. This is to support with contacting a responsible adult in cases if concerns arise.

#### Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence and each subsequent day of absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

If a pupil is absent due to mental health issues the school can authorise in the short-term. This is in-line with guidance given to schools by the DfE (see Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools). Where mental health difficulties are given as the reason for absence the attendance officer will log a safeguarding concern, signpost services and resources and refer the case to the relevant pastoral teams in school.

For longer term absences related to mental health advice from professionals is needed to clarify expectations around attendance and whether a modified curriculum is appropriate for pupils.

#### Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

#### Lateness and punctuality

Morning registration opens at 8:30am any pupils arriving to school or their tutor group later than this time but before 8:45am will be given a late mark (unless the lateness is due to bus transport issues. The morning registration period ends at 9:00am any pupils arriving after this time without a reason for absence will be given an unauthorized absence mark for their morning session.

We support pupils in maintaining good punctuality to school and to lessons details of which can be found in our Positive Behaviour Policy. Where there are concerns about persistent issues with punctuality the school will contact parents/carers and/or social workers to discuss concerns and develop strategies to improve this.

#### 4. Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If we do not receive notification of the absence we will contact parents/carers and/or social workers to raise concerns about the pupils absence. This will be done in most cases via text message after morning registration closes.

Early intervention work is essential for schools in order to maintain satisfactory attendance levels. Attendance and attainment are linked. At Comberton Village College key personnel with responsibility for attendance meet on a regular basis. During these reviews we look at the overall patterns of absence as well as individual attendance data for pupils. Following this review meeting there could be the following outcomes:

- A message from the attendance officer may be sent via our MIS to parents/carers signposting suitable support and advising them to contact the school if further help is needed
- Advice to pastoral teams to follow up absence concerns with a one-to-one conversation with pupils and/or parents/carers.
- A 'Letter 1' is issued. This letter informs parents/carers that their child's attendance has dropped below 95%. This is intended to inform parents/carers and to offer support to improve attendance. This is usually followed-up with a conversation from the child's respective pastoral team (e.g. Tutor, Assistant Head of Year, Head of Year).
- A 'Letter 2' is issued. This letter invites parents/carers to meet with a member of the attendance team to discuss their child's attendance when it is below 90%. In this meeting the reasons for absence are discussed as well as strategies and potential referrals for additional support.
- A case is referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Where a child's attendance has continued to rise above 90% over a monitoring period a referral is made to the Trust Education Welfare Officer who will discuss the case with parents/carers. The Education Welfare Officer may put in another monitoring period, set targets for improvement or make referrals to external partners for support.
- A case is referred to the legal panel for review and potential fine. This is when attendance does not improve despite strategies put in place to support children and their families.
- A referral for a fixed-term penalty notice for unauthorised holiday is made. Prior to June 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed for headteachers to grant leave of absence for term-time leave or family holiday in 'special circumstances' and for extended leave in exceptional circumstances. Amendments to these regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave. The amendments state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Parents/carers can apply for a term-time leave of absence using the form found on the school website. If the school receives an application (and as an appendix to this policy) for term-time absence which is denied and the child is absent from school during this period or if the school suspects that an absence is related to a unauthorised term-time holiday a referral will made for a penalty charge notice.

## 5. Sharing data with external partners

When requested the school will report overall attendance statistics and other statutory data to the local authority. When necessary, in cases of referral to external partners, the school will share individual attendance records with the consent of parents/carers.

### Reporting to parents/carers

The College will:

- Ensure that school advice with regard to term-time holidays is clearly stated on the College website and is regularly communicated to parents
- Remind parents of the importance of ensuring their children's regular, uninterrupted school attendance and punctuality
- Actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term-time
- Unequivocally remind parents that they do not have any right or entitlement to expect term-time leave to be granted and that all leave is granted at the discretion of the Principal/Head of School (or those authorised to exercise discretion on their behalf)
- Advise parents that non-attendance or absence that is unauthorised that is 90% or less could result in parenting contracts, or legal enforcement including Penalty Notices, School Attendance Orders, Education Supervision Orders or prosecution
- Provide attendance data on the termly report
- Report on attendance to Governors
- Pass on attendance data to 16+ providers/centres as required
- Advise parents that if leave is taken without authorisation it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence, and that the matter may be referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer.

Authorised and unauthorised absence Granting approval for term-time absence The Principal will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless he considers there to be 'exceptional circumstances' – Cambridgeshire County Council states: The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are "*rare, significant, unavoidable, short*". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained previously
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Furthermore, the school will consider authorized absences in the case of:

- Study leave – this is only granted for pupils in year 11. A date when study leave commences will be given to parents/carers and/or social workers and pupils. Provision will still be made available for pupils who wish to revise in school. Further details of this will be shared with parents/carers of year 11 pupils as part of the school's communication regarding summer exams.
- Alternative Provision – when it is necessary to support pupil needs the school will authorize absence from school. Details of when, how and why this might happen are detailed in our Alternative Provision Policy.

Further examples of what might constitute an authorised absence can be found in the appendices attached to this policy.

## 6. Promoting Positive Attendance

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. Schools must share attendance data to the national average and share this with the local governing body and trustees. Each school in the trust must collect and store attendance data to use for internal purposes – for example, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Where a pupil's attendance is 50% or less they will be identified as 'Severely Absent' and will be identified as needing intervention and support to improve attendance. This may include alternative provision being provided to support reintegration into full-time attendance or to provide suitable access to education.

The College uses opportunities as they arise to remind parents and pupils of the importance of attendance, for instance through parent information evenings, the pupil homework diary, Parent Handbooks and CombertonPost. Attendance is also celebrated through assemblies, and awards.

## 7. The role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

As a school we believe that every member of staff has a part to play in promoting positive attendance. Responsibility for support positive attendance could involve the following personnel in school:

### Class Teachers

Teachers will:

- Maintain an accurate class register through the Management Information System, following internal procedures if a pupil is missing
- Praise pupils for their punctuality to lessons and follow up issues of punctuality and internal truancy (see Positive Behaviour Policy).
- Alert the Attendance officer if there are concerns over pupil absence

### Heads of Year and Assistant Heads of Year:

- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies and school events
- Monitor attendance targets and record keeping
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified
- Review attendance weekly via the school attendance team, the Education Welfare Officer, and Locality personnel where appropriate
- Work with the relevant Senior Leader, SENCO and Locality Team to create individual packages and reintegration plans, where appropriate
- Ensure work is provided for excluded students
- Look for patterns of absence and consider impact of curriculum upon attendance alongside other possible causes
- Lead on strategies to improve attendance of pupils who are identified as being a concern through meetings with pupils and parents
- Refer to the Education Welfare Service if absence is unauthorised with attendance at 90% or less over an eight week period or historically
- Support form tutors on issues of non-attendance and with internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions (in liaison with subject staff and following the school's Positive Behaviour Policy)
- Work with appropriate internal senior staff and external agencies with regard to providing packages of support for students with medical needs in accordance with relevant LA medical needs guidance

### Form tutors will:

- Keep accurate registers
- Be a good role model for pupils
- Give attendance a high profile by following periods of absence with a tutor 'check-in' and supportive conversation with

pupils.

- Praise pupils for arriving on time
- Take prompt action where pupils are late or absent without explanation, recording lateness and referring to Heads of Year/Pastoral Leaders
- Inform the Heads of Year/Pastoral Leaders when absence is causing concern
- Make contact with parents regarding attendance as appropriate

The Attendance Officer's duties include to:

- Oversee administration of the register system  
Streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures
- Keep parents informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised
- Support the work of the Senior Leadership Group, Heads of Year/Pastoral Leaders and form tutors, by:
  - Providing regular attendance information
  - Contacting parents on first day of absence
  - Monitoring attendance and punctuality
  - Alerting form tutors and Heads of Year/Pastoral Leaders when concerns arise
  - Liaising with Heads of Year/Pastoral Leaders to monitor accuracy of record keeping
  - Keeping the Principal informed of attendance issues
  - Keeping the Principal informed of inaccurate marking of staff registers as part of an alert system for staff who may not be maintaining accurate recording of registers
  - Monitoring applications for leave and responding to parents/carers appropriately.
  - Referring cases to the local authority when term-time holidays have been taken.
- Attendance and Family Support Worker
  - Work with parents/carers to ensure positive attendance when a pupil is either in danger of or is classed as being persistently absent.
  - Carry out meetings with parents/carers to support positive attendance at school
  - Make referrals to external partners to support pupils where necessary
  - Devise and monitor plans to support pupils by offering a modified curriculum and reintegration programme.
  - Liaise with Heads of Year and Heads of Department to arrange tutoring and/or work for pupils to complete at home when there is long-term absence (for example following a medical operation)
  - Work closely with the Education Welfare Officer to make necessary referrals for penalty charges relating to persistent absence.

Education Welfare Officer:

The Cam Academy Trust employs an Education Welfare Officer. The school and EWO always try to work with pupils and parents at an early stage to resolve problems. This is nearly always successful. However, the EWO also has a legal role and if other ways of resolving attendance have failed, these officers can use legal sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates court.

Senior Leaders (Inclusion and Attendance)

Senior Leaders will:

- Maintain oversight of whole school attendance including data relating to persistent absenteeism
- Maintain oversight of key cohorts of students who are likely to have attendance difficulties
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school for prolonged periods, are provided with work to complete at home, as appropriate, and in accordance with relevant LA guidance and the school's Alternative Provision Policy.
- Report regularly to the local governing body regarding attendance.

Alongside the personnel in school we also work closely with pupils and their families to ensure positive attendance at school. Parents/carers and pupils are expected to take responsibility for the following:

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will:

- Ensure that children leave for school on time every day

- Provide a written explanation for children's absences from school (this includes medical evidence if requested)
- Endeavour not to take children out of school in term time
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance
- Notify the school on the first and every morning the child is absent

#### Pupils

##### Pupils will:

- Arrive punctually for registration every morning and every afternoon
- Be punctual for lessons
- Make sure a note is sent from parents to explain absences
- Sign the Late Book if they are late arriving for school (after 8:45am)
- Sign the Signing Out Book if they leaving school at any point before the end of the day
- Tell their form tutor or Head of Year/Pastoral Leader if they are having any problems attending school

#### **7.** Support for Pupils and Parents

Our school provides support for parents and pupils if pupils are struggling to attend school. Measures include following:

- Attendance reports
- Attendance interviews and regular reviews with Heads of Year/Pastoral teams
- Meetings with Heads of Year/Pastoral teams, EWO and other external agencies to provide support for children and their parents (TAFs)
- Re-integration programme arranged between pupils, parents, Heads of Year/Pastoral teams, SLG Inclusion and SENCO if appropriate after long-term absence
- Individualised curriculum where appropriate (known as alternative provision)

#### **8.** Sanctions for Poor Attendance and Punctuality

Our school reserves the right to sanction students who fail to meet school attendance requirements, with any of the following:

- Detention for truancy or consistent poor punctuality

- Subject department detention for truancy or lack of punctuality
- Appropriate report for attendance/punctuality
- Other, more serious sanctions, for repeated defiance of school attendance rules

Poor attendance or punctuality leading to EWO involvement and referral may lead to:

- Parent meetings
- Parent Contracts
- PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence) meetings

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school offering the parent the opportunity to enter into a parenting contract following a pupil's truancy or non-attendance under section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school instigating a Penalty Notice under section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (instigated by the Principal and Deputy and Assistant Principals authorised by them, or so authorised by the Local Authority).

Amendments have also been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. The amendments described below came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

Penalty notices (fines) may be issued to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 within 21 days; or £120 within 28 days .

Parenting orders, Education Supervision Orders or Penalty Notices can also be issued. Prosecution by the Education Welfare Service on behalf of the LA.

Since September 2015, the level of persistent absence has been set at 10%.

Statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe In Education (2023) require that the school has "appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place to respond to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods." This may include raising a Child Missing From Education concern with the Local Authority, carrying out home visits and welfare checks and/or referrals to Children's Services (Children's Social Care).

## 9. Useful Contacts

The attendance team at Comberton Village College includes:

Attendance Officer – Mrs Prithi Solanki

Attendance and family support worker: Mrs Rebecca Gardiner

Assistant Principal – Mr Zach Beamish

Deputy Principal – Mr Sean Sycamore

Heads of Year

Ms Donna Jones

Mrs Ann Roberts

Mrs Marielle Burgess

Ms Rashpal Phull

Mr Matthew Knight

## Appendices: Comberton Village College

Appendix A: Procedure for Reporting Absence from School

Appendix B: Punctuality

Appendix C: Application and Guidance Note

Appendix D: Understanding Types of Absence

Appendix E: Understanding Registration Codes

Appendix F: Penalty Notices

Attendance Policy September 2021

## APPENDIX A: PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

**1.** If a child is absent from school, the following procedures should be followed to ensure the school is fully informed.

**1.1.** On the first day absence parents or carers should provide the pupil's name, form group and reason for absence, by either:

- Telephoning College Reception on 01223 262503
- Emailing a message to [COM-Attendance@combertonvc.org](mailto:COM-Attendance@combertonvc.org)

**1.2.** Third day absence:

- If the pupil is absent for three days, further contact with the Attendance Officer is required from the parent to provide details about the pupil's expected date of return

**1.3.** Continued absence:

- In the case of longer-term absence, the Head of Year is informed so that appropriate work or support can be provided

**1.4.** Ten days' absence:

- If a pupil is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days, this will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team. This is a legal requirement.

**2.** If a child needs to be absent during the school day the following procedures are required:

- Prior to the absence Mrs Prithi Solanki (Attendance Officer) should be informed.
- The pupil must sign out at the Attendance Office before leaving the school premises and sign in on return.

**3.** School action in the case of pupil absence:

- On the first day of absence, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent or carer if contact has not already been made, this will usually be in the form of a text message.
- An appropriate member of staff, accompanied by the Education Welfare Officer or a Senior Colleague is likely to make a home visit in cases that are deemed 'at risk' of poor attendance
- In the case of pupil attendance that is deemed 'at risk', the parent will be invited to school to discuss absence and actions for improving attendance
- In the case of a pupil absence moving towards the 90% Persistent Absence (PA) level, the College will inform parents they will not authorise further absence without medical evidence
- In the case of a pupil absence reaching 90%, the pupil will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer. In cases where pupils are 'absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods' a referral may be made to Children's Social Care.

## APPENDIX B: PUNCTUALITY

Poor punctuality is not acceptable at Comberton Village College. If a student misses the start of the day, they can miss vital work and information. Lateness is also disruptive to lessons.

### 1. The school day

The school starts with a form registration at 8.30 am. Pupils are expected to be in their form room by 8.25 am. Any pupil who arrives after this time is registered as late and minutes late will be recorded.

Form registers are closed at 8.45am. A pupil who is late after this time should sign in at Reception and a 'Late' mark will usually be given. A pupil who arrives after 9.00am will be marked as unauthorised absent for the morning session unless they have a genuine reason for lateness i.e. medical.

Afternoon registration is completed in lessons between 1.10 and 1.30pm.

If a child arrives late to school due to a medical appointment, a note must accompany the child on his/her return which should be handed to Mrs Prithi Solanki (Attendance Officer) upon signing in. In this case the absence will be recorded as authorised.

Please avoid making GP or dentist appointments during the school day.

### 2. Lesson monitoring

Every lesson is registered through the school internal system. Teachers are expected to ensure that the register is taken as promptly as possible. This is essential to track punctuality and in-school truancy. It is essential that registers are recorded accurately, using the internal system. In the rare occasion that the register is not accessible on the system, a paper copy of the register should be used. In this case the teacher is expected to complete the register, and inform the Attendance Office of any absences. If a pupil is late in arriving to lesson, the teacher will record lateness on the system to show the number of minutes late. In this case, the code N should be changed to L. The Head of Year has oversight of punctuality and will follow up lateness with individual pupils, who will be expected to make up the time lost. In cases of persistent lateness, Heads of Year will place pupils on monitoring report.

Students who are late more than once in a week to morning registration or afternoon registration will receive a Minor Offences Detention.

APPENDIX C: APPLICATION AND GUIDANCE NOTE  
COMBERTON VILLAGE COLLEGE

APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Surname of Child		First Name of Child	
Date of Birth		Tutor Group and Year	
Full Name of Parent/Carer		Does the above child reside with you full time?	Yes/ No
Email address of Parent/Carer		Home Address of Child	
Home Telephone No.		Does your child have any siblings for whom you are requesting absence in term time from any other schools?	Yes/No <i>If yes, please give child's name and name of his/her school</i>
Information about the request for your child's leave of absence:	Length of absence (total school days)	From (date) To (date)	
	Would he/she miss any tests/exams?	Yes / No	
	Has he/she already been absent for more than a three day period in the last three school years?	Yes/No	
Please set an attendance target for the remainder of the academic school year. If this is not reached the school reserves the right to unauthorise any previous periods of agreed absence.			
I confirm that I will ensure that my son/daughter completes any school work set for the above period of absence.			
I confirm that I have read and understood the Guidance Note for Parents accompanying this form.			
Parent/Carer Signature: ..... Date: .....			
PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER			

### GUIDANCE NOTE FOR PARENTS

Please read these notes carefully before completing the application form requesting permission for your child to take a leave of absence from school during term time.

*The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school during school for holidays during term time. By law you must ask permission from the Headteacher for your child to miss school. If you fail to gain the school's permission and you still take your child out of school you risk receiving a £60 Penalty Notice per parent per child and in some cases possible prosecution.*

Government Legislation which came into effect in September 2013 states that it is now illegal for any Headteacher to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. Therefore, Comberton Village College will not consider authorising an absence in relation to any holiday during term time unless exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence are detailed on the Application Form for Leave of Absence during Term Time which should be handed into the Attendance Officer at least two weeks before the period of absence requested.

Comberton Village College will consider each request for absence on an individual basis taking into account the following factors after the test of exceptional circumstances has been satisfied:

1. The time of year of the proposed trip and whether it is close to any exam dates
2. Whether any holidays have previously been taken in the current and/or in any previous school year
3. The student's overall attendance record
4. The ability of the student to catch up the work that he/she will miss
5. The age of the student and his/her stage of education.

While an authorised absence may very occasionally be authorised for exceptional circumstances, this decision is entirely a matter for the school and is not a parental right. If your application is refused and you proceed to withdraw your child from school, then the period of absence will be recorded as unauthorised on your child's school record.

*Unauthorised school absences may lead to a Penalty Notice or a Court Summons being issued against you for irregular attendance. Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. Therefore Penalty Notices will be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable.*

Having read these notes if you still wish to apply then please complete the Form overleaf. All sections must be completed; incomplete forms will not be considered. Please return the signed form to the Attendance Officer as far in advance of the proposed absence as possible but by not less than 2 weeks before the proposed period of absence.

APPENDIX D: UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, either as authorised or unauthorised absence.

**1. Authorised absences**

Authorised absences are approved by the Head of School. Here are a list of examples (although not exhaustive) which should illustrate which absences may be authorised or unauthorised:

'Exceptional circumstances' for which the College may grant a leave of absence include:	Circumstances under which absence will not be authorised include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate family bereavement, crisis or serious illness</li> <li>• Funeral of immediate family member</li> <li>• Religious observance</li> <li>• One day's absence for the wedding of an immediate family member, where the invitation has been provided as evidence</li> <li>• One-off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the Student is participating and is at County standard or above, and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence</li> <li>• One day's absence for an immediate family member's graduation ceremony/passing out parade</li> <li>• Medical appointments (please arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours when possible.) If the medical appointment is during the school day, evidence must be provided. The College will not usually authorise a whole day's absence for a morning medical appointment – the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family holidays</li> <li>• Weddings abroad – regardless of whether it is for immediate family members</li> <li>• Family anniversaries</li> <li>• Caring for other family members</li> <li>• Birthdays</li> <li>• Interpreting for other family members</li> <li>• Lack of school uniform/shoes</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Friendship problems</li> <li>• Head lice</li> <li>• Learning difficulties</li> <li>• Death of a pet</li> <li>• Travel problems (Unless the fault of the LA)</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

**2. Unauthorised absences**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which permission has not been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings

**3. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. The school monitors all absence thoroughly. If a pupil is deemed to be 'at risk' of PA, the parent will be informed of this by the Head of Year. PA pupils are tracked through the pastoral system, combined with academic monitoring. All PA cases are made known to the Educational Welfare Officer. Pupils at risk may also be referred to Attendance and Family Support worker who works with families to provide support and strategies to encourage attendance.

## APPENDIX E: UNDERSTANDING REGISTRATION CODES

### Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The following codes are used:

Codes: / \ L U indicate Present at School

Code / (am) and \ (pm) Present in school during registration:

Code L Late arrival before the register has closed:

Code U Arrival after register is closed

If a child arrives at registration later than 8:30 but before 9:15 they will be given an 'L'. When a child arrives at school later than 9:15 they will be given a 'U' in the register – this counts as an unauthorised absence.

Pupils must not be marked present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Codes B D J P V W indicate Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

Code B: Supervised educational activity such as a field trip, educational visit, work experience or alternative provision.

Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school.

Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

### Consortia Schools

Pupils attending consortia schools as part of their course only need to be placed on the register of their 'main' school rather than on all of the schools they attend. They should be treated as guest pupils at the other consortia schools.

The consortia schools however, must ensure they have suitable systems in place for monitoring and reporting the attendance and absence of the pupils involved, which must be shared with the 'main' school. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, but only when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

#### Authorised Absence from School

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Codes C E H I M R S T indicate pupil authorised absent from School: Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the legitimacy of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

Unauthorised Absence from School: Codes G N O U

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as

unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:
- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity). This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling.

APPENDIX F: PENALTY NOTICES NON-

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT

(Amended Aug 2017)

Introduction

1. Under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 local education authority officers, headteachers and the police have the discretionary power to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.
2. The new power provides an alternative to prosecution of parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days.
3. Should the Penalty Notice remain unpaid or have been paid only in part at the end of the 28 day period Cambridgeshire County Council must prosecute the parents for the offence to which the notice relates, or, in specified circumstances (see section 29 below), withdraw the notice.
4. Penalty Notices may only be issued in Cambridgeshire in accordance with the terms of this Code of Conduct. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that the power is applied fairly and consistently across the County Council and that suitable arrangements are in place for the effective and efficient administration of the scheme.
5. In implementing this Code of Conduct the County Council will liaise when appropriate with neighbouring education and police authorities.
6. This Code of Conduct has been drafted in accordance with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004: Statutory Instrument 2004 No 181 and guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills.
7. In preparing this Code of Conduct the County Council has consulted with Cambridgeshire headteachers and the Chief Officer of Cambridgeshire Constabulary. This complies with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

Circumstances in which Penalty Notices may be issued

8. Penalty Notice may be considered as an alternative to prosecution for failure to ensure regular school attendance in any given period of unauthorised school attendance as below:
  - A. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE: As the Government changed the PA (Persistent Absence) threshold to 90% (in effect from Sept. 2015), the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice in relation to a child whose attendance at school is less than 90% over a given period. To allow time and opportunity for early intervention work with the family, attendance will be monitored by school and Local Authority before enforcement actions are considered. Such a Fine

is intended to offer a rapid intervention, which may be used to address non-school attendance before it becomes entrenched, following guidance in section 13.

- B. UNAUTHORISED TERM TIME LEAVE (includes Holiday): Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. Therefore Penalty Notices will be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable. The absences must be recorded with a 'G' code in the attendance register. Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice. (*The Supreme Court Judgement in the case between Isle of Wight Council v Platt (6<sup>th</sup> April 2017) clarified the meaning of regular school attendance in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996. To attend school "regularly" means "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".*)

#### Procedural guidelines

9. The key consideration in deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice should be whether it is considered likely to be effective in helping the child to whom it relates to return to regular attendance.
10. Before issuing a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence (refer to section 8A), due consideration should be given to other strategies which may help return the child concerned to regular school attendance. Such strategies might include:
  - a) writing to the child's parents to remind them of their legal responsibilities;
  - b) meeting with the child's parents;
  - c) ensuring a first-day response to any absence;
  - d) setting targets for improvement;
  - e) referral to the Education Welfare Officer;
  - f) involvement of other services/agencies.

*NB. Above strategies do not apply to term time leave / holiday. (refer to section 8B)*

11. It is expected that schools will communicate with parents and issue a warning about potential Penalty Notice fine being issued for unauthorised absences. This warning can be in the form of communication sent to parents via school Newsletters, School Web page as well as any direct mail sent to individual parents
12. Head teachers and police officers should only issue a Penalty Notice following consultation, discussion, reflection and joint decision with a County Council Education Welfare Officer.
13. The Education Welfare Officer will not agree to sanction the issuing of a Penalty Notice unless he/she considers that with regard to the offence to which it relates there is sufficient evidence to secure a conviction under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Evidence could be letters sent to parent, minutes of meetings and record of telephone conversations.
14. A maximum of three Penalty Notices may be served on any one parent over a 12-month period.
15. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice. A parent should therefore, if possible, be given warning of the possibility of a notice being issued (refer section 13) in order to allow him/her to make representations should he/she wish to do so. If a head teacher refuses to authorise any absence or requests for holidays during term time and parents are not happy with the decision, they should make representations to the Governing Body of the school. They should not wait and make a representation to the County Council once a Penalty Notice has been issued.

#### Authority to Issue a Penalty Notice

16. An Education Welfare Officer / CCC Legal Panel may issue a Penalty Notice to the parent of a child who is a registered pupil at a school in Cambridgeshire or who is a registered pupil at a school in an authority, which has an agreement to that effect with Cambridgeshire County Council.
17. A headteacher or an authorised deputy or assistant headteacher may issue a Penalty Notice to the parent of a child who is registered at his/her school, in consultation with a CCC Legal Panel.
18. A police officer, including a community support officer or other accredited person, may issue a Penalty Notice.
19. Head teachers and Police Officers should comply with the terms of this Code of Conduct when issuing a Penalty Notice and should provide a copy of any notice issued to the relevant Education Welfare Officer.

#### Form and Content of Penalty Notices

20. A Penalty Notice should give the following particulars alleged to constitute the offence to which the notice relates and should contain:
  - a) the name and address of the person to whom the notice is issued;
  - b) the name and address of the child who is failing to attend school regularly and the name of the school at which he/she is a registered pupil;
  - c) the name, title and official details of the authorised person issuing the notice;
  - d) the date of the offence and of the issue of the notice;
  - e) the amount of the penalty which is to be paid and details of the timescales and any variation involved;
  - f) the address of the County Council office at which the penalty is to be paid and to which any correspondence relating to the notice may be sent;
  - g) the method/methods by which payment may be made;
  - h) the specified period within which the penalty should be paid;
  - i) a statement that full payment within the specified period will discharge any liability for the offence;
  - j) an explanation of the consequences should the penalty not be paid in full before the expiry of the specified period;
  - k) an explanation of the grounds on which the notice may be withdrawn.
21. Should there be more than one person liable for the offence (Section 576 Education Act 1996) a separate notice should be issued to each person, per each child.
22. Should the offence involve more than one child a separate notice should be issued for each child, per each parent.

#### Service of Penalty Notices

23. A Penalty Notice may be served by:
  - a) giving it to the recipient; or
  - b) leaving it at the recipient's usual or last-known address; or
  - c) sending it to the recipient at that address by first-class post.
24. Service by post is deemed to have been effected, unless the contrary is proved, on the second working day after posting the notice by first-class post.

#### Methods of Payment

25. The preferred method of payment of a Penalty Notice would be on-line payment via the Cambridgeshire County Council website. However, alternative methods are available on request. Late or part payments (including instalments) will not be accepted and no reminders will be sent.

#### Failure to Pay a Penalty Notice

26. Should the recipient of a Penalty Notice fail to pay the full amount before the expiry of the period for paying it the County Council will either begin proceedings against the parent under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or withdraw the notice in accordance with specified conditions (see section 29 below).
27. An electronic record will be retained to monitor that the recipient of a Penalty Notice has or has not paid the amount due on or before the date specified and presented as evidence in any subsequent Section 444 Education Act 1996 proceedings.

#### Withdrawal of a Penalty Notice

28. A Penalty Notice may be withdrawn by the County Council, regardless of whom within the authority issued it, if it is deemed that:
- a) the notice ought not to have been issued (i.e. where it has issued outside of the terms of this Code of Conduct or where no offence has been committed); or
  - b) the notice ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient.
29. Should a Penalty Notice be withdrawn:
- a) notice of the withdrawal should be given to the recipient;
  - b) any amount already paid by the recipient should be reimbursed;
  - c) any proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 instituted against the recipient should be discontinued.

#### Retention of Receipts and Revenue Collection

30. The County Council will retain all revenue from the issuing of Penalty Notices in order to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and the cost of prosecuting those recipients of the notices who fail to pay.
31. The County Council will produce an annual audit statement as part of its usual audit procedures in order to show that income received from Penalty Notices does not exceed enforcement costs as defined above. Any surplus acquired will be surrendered to a consolidated fund.