

PRIORS FIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Priors Field School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

Poor attendance disadvantages children. Any unnecessary absence from school is to the detriment of the child's education. All school staff work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school challenges the behaviour of those parents who give low priority to their child's attendance and punctuality.

Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

To meet our own objectives as well as our statutory duties, Priors Field Primary School has an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

We always aim to:

1. Improve the overall percentage of pupils attending school.
2. Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
3. Maintain a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils so that we have positive and consistent communication between home and school.
5. Maintain a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. Where necessary, promote effective partnerships with the Attendance Compliance Enforcement Service and other relevant services and agencies.
7. Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Aim No. 1: To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at school

1. Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
2. Maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
3. Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
4. Monitor progress in attendance measurable outcomes.

Aim No. 2: To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors

1. Use school prospectus (published on school website).
2. HT to report on attendance in HT reports to Governors and to inform parents termly via school newsletter.
3. Provide training for new teachers so that they are aware of their statutory responsibilities.
4. Display materials at focal points - entrance hall, outside noticeboard.
5. Use newsletters to make parents aware of any changes to leave of absence regulations
6. Following receipt of holiday application form Priors Field School to use the Warwickshire LA Process Map (Appendix 1) before informing parents of decision by letter from Headteacher.

Aim No. 3: To maintain a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks

1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
2. Attempt to make phone contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence using the contact numbers which parents have provided to the school.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
4. Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
5. Review attendance monthly and take prompt action where individual children's attendance falls below 90%.

Aim No. 4: To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils so that we have positive and consistent communication between home and school

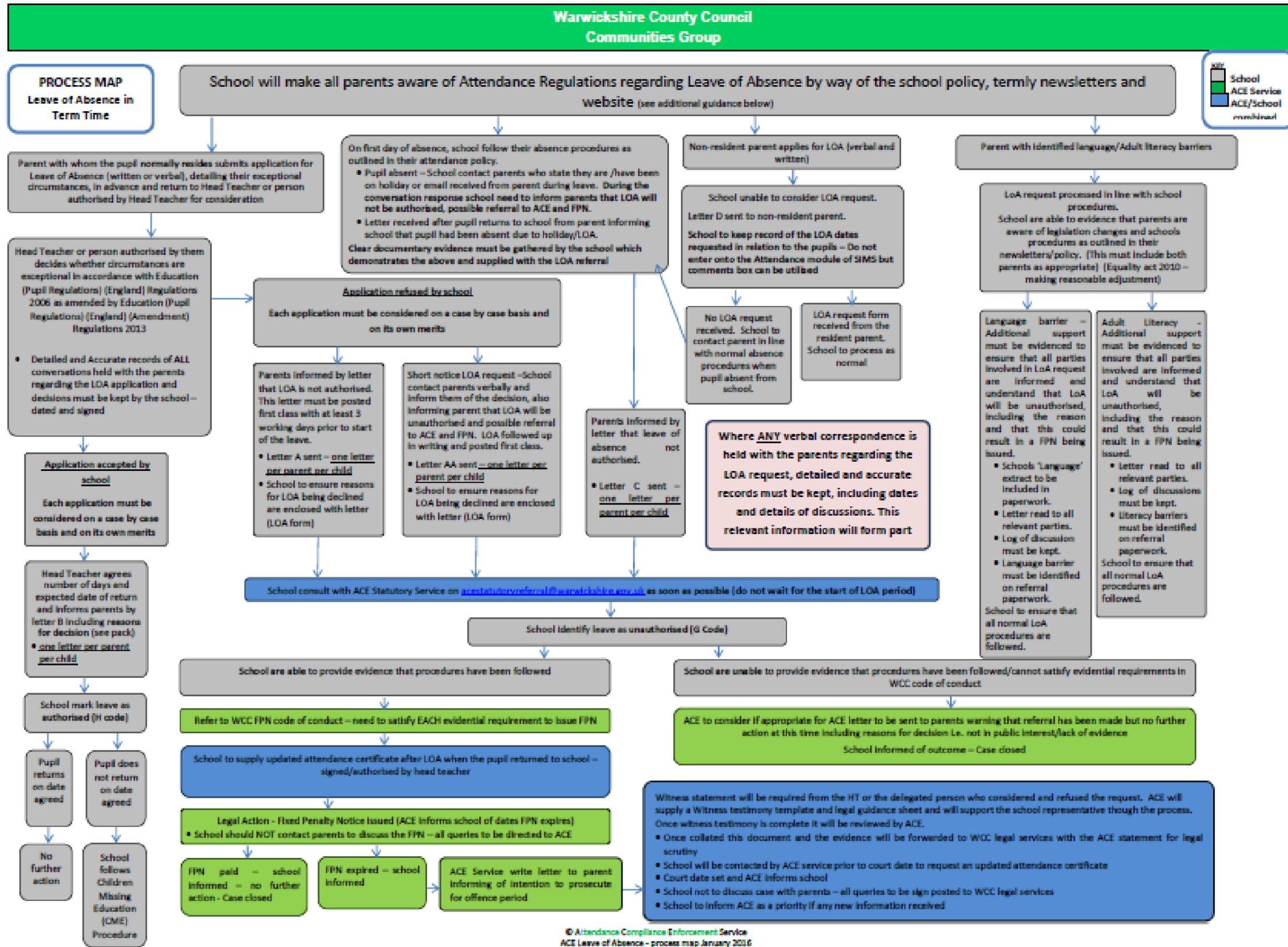
1. Highlight to children attendance issues via:
 - PSHE&C
 - Assemblies
 - Staff available to talk to pupils
 - Making use of available resources
 - Displays
2. Set aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
3. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.
4. Maintain first day absence contact.
5. Maintain accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
6. Involve parents from earliest stage.
7. Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written where appropriate).

Aim No. 5: To maintain a systematic approach in gathering and analysing attendance related data

1. Maintain a school register for attendance and ensure pupils are marked absent or present at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
2. Adhere to the following procedures:
 - Any child arriving after the 8.55am bell is signed in by a parent, using the 'signing in book' situated in the porch area.
 - Any child arriving after 8.55am but before registration closes at 9.25am is marked 'late'. Arrival after 9.25am is unauthorised absence unless a legitimate reason is supplied e.g. doctor/optician/dentist.
 - Any child arriving after 1.10pm but before registration closes at 1.25pm is marked 'late'. Arrival after 1.25pm is unauthorised absence unless a legitimate reason is supplied.
3. Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

Aim No. 6. Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

1. Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
2. Involve/inform all staff in/of reintegration process.
3. Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
4. Consider peer support and mentoring.
5. Involve parents as far as possible.
6. Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
7. Include ACE, parents and pupil in reintegration plan.



School must be able to evidence the following prior to FPN being issued (as per WCC's code of conduct for penalty notices). It is recommended that the WCC guidance and letter templates are used in relation to LOA with no changes

- School Attendance Policy (if available) outlining LDA OR
- Information about school's communication with parents regarding leave of absence within the current academic year (e.g. newsletter- it is advised schools regularly reference to LOA in newsletters) AND
- Leave of Absence Request Form (if completed) or detailed notes of discussions with parents relating to the request (these must include dates and times of discussions) AND
- Copy of letter from Head Teacher advising parent request for leave of absence has been refused (this also includes a copy of LDA request outlining the reason for the decision- school use only box) AND
- Attendance Certificate for the relevant period signed by the head teacher

Documentation to be sent to ACE

- Referral form (ensure front cover and sections 1, 2 and 5 are completed in full)
- Copy of Newsletter/communication to parents within the relevant academic year and/or copy of Attendance policy (if available) outlining LOA.
- Signed and dated copy of letter from head teacher including copy of the reasons for refusal (LOA Applications)
- Full legal registration certificate including name and address of parent (this academic year and previous academic year)
- Records of conversations between school and parents. (Signed and dated)
- Any additional information (Signed and dated)

Important points to note

It is vital that parents are informed in verbal communications that the application for LOA has been refused stating the reasons for this and that this may result in a referral to the ACE service which may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued. (minutes to these discussions must be dated and signed)

- It is the Head Teachers/designated person's decision to not authorise/authorise absences and to forward a LOA referral to the local authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice. It is advised that schools should not inform parents that it is the Local Authorities decision in relation to LOA and not the schools. It is the Local Authority's decision (if the schools evidence is sufficient to issue an FPN in line with the code of conduct)
- Head teachers/Designated person must be prepared to complete a witness testimony in the event of a FPN not being paid. This will involve support by the ACE and WCC legal services. It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that these are provided to a satisfactory standard with supporting evidence within tight timescales which may include school's holidays
- Once the legal process has been initiated (ie FPN issued) the school must direct any queries from parents to the ACE service – ensure you record and then inform ACE of these discussions