



Jesus at the Heart
of all that we do

CHILDREN'S ATTENDANCE & TERM TIME LEAVE POLICY

November 2023

Ratified by Governing Body November 2023

SECTION 1: POLICY

The law states that a child is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

Regular school attendance and punctuality are extremely important. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. The school's ethos demonstrates that children feel that their presence in school is important, that they are missed when they are absent or late. The school will take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of the policy.

Aims:

- To maximise attendance of **all** children
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated at the school
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern, and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Local Authority Schools Attendance Support Officer and multi-agency teams

SECTION 2: ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE

Responsibilities of parents and carers:

By law parents and carers are responsible for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctuality rests with parents. However, where school attendance problems occur, the key to resolving these problems is engaging the child through collaborative working between the parent/carer, the school and the Local Authority.

Parents and carers should:

- Ensure their children attend school every day (unless they are sick)
- Ensure they are punctual for school
- Ensure they are appropriately dressed and in a condition to learn
- Comply with the attendance policy
- Make sure their child understands the reasons for good attendance and punctuality
- Make sure appointments are made outside of school hours wherever possible and show evidence of the appointment when it is not
- Notify the school on the first day **(by 09:00)** when their child is absent
- Not book holidays during term time
- Only allow absence from school for exceptional circumstances
- Work in partnership with the school

Responsibilities of the school

The school will:

- Have a registration system that is accurate, informative and consistent
- Analyse data regularly and identify the actions that need to be taken
- Follow up unexplained absences promptly
- Ensure that attendance and punctuality have a high profile in our communications with parents and carers
- Have clear written guidance for parents and carers
- Promote good attendance and punctuality for all
- Work in partnership with families

- Inform parents/carers of their child's attendance regularly during the school year
- Set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy

The Local Authority Schools Attendance Support Service will work with the school to :

- Identify children/families with attendance difficulties
- Agree time limited action which needs to be taken by the school
- Feedback on the progress of cases and exchange of information
- Support the school to issue penalty notices where applicable
- Provide advice to the school
- Work in partnership with the school and families

SECTION 3: SCHOOL PROCEDURES

- The school uses SIMS to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance. This system consists of specialised software.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a child's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

Absence

Parents and carers can be prosecuted if they do not make sure their child attends school, without reason (as defined in law) and if the child has too many unauthorised absences.

Lateness

All parents and carers are responsible for their child's travel arrangements to school and to ensure their child arrives on time.

School hours are as follows:

NB: your child will be recorded as late if they arrive 10 mins after their designated arrival time.

Year Groups	Arrival Time	End of School Day
EYFS and KS1 (Y1 and Y2)	08:55	15:30
KS2 (Y3 to Y6)	08:55	15:30

The school does not take responsibility for children on site prior to 8.45am unless they are attending the before or after school club or attending one of the school's extra-curricular clubs. Children must not stay on site after their end of day, unless they are taking part in an organised school activity.

- Children must arrive at school on time (just before 08:45 when the gates are opened)
- All classroom doors will be shut at 08:55 **Promptly.**
- Children arriving after their arrival time must enter school through the School Office
- Children arriving 10 minutes after their designated arrival time will be registered as late
- Children arriving after 09:30 will be recorded as an un-authorised late unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example an urgent medical appointment
- Lateness is monitored by Mrs Kelly and Mrs Somes the School's Attendance Team
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality
- We expect parents and carers to collect their child promptly at the end of the school day as it is upsetting for children if they do not. Children who are not collected within 10 minutes of the end of the school day are brought to the school office and parents/carers contacted. Where children are persistently collected late from school, parents will be

asked to meet with the school's Attendance Officer (Mrs Kelly) or the Attendance Lead (Mrs Somes)

Illness

- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school before 9.00am **each day** that their child is absent, providing the reason for the absence, to give an update on how the child is and when the child is likely to return to school
- Where the school is not made aware of the reason for a child's absence, they will contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team will be informed
- In the event of continued sickness, parents and carers are advised to provide information from a relevant practitioner. This keeps pastoral and attendance staff informed of the child's needs and appropriate support can then be arranged where necessary

(See Appendix 1 for School Absence Procedures).

Medical or Dental Appointments

Children must not leave the school premises during the school day without permission from the Headteacher, in consultation with the parents/carers. Routine medical or dental appointments should not be booked during school time. However, where appointments in school time are absolutely necessary, children should attend school for part of the day depending on the time of the appointment.

- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents should inform the school in advance and show the letter or appointment card as evidence
- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours

Missing Physical Activities

Permission to be excused from PE or swimming should be made in writing to the teacher concerned and should only be for medical reasons. An explanatory note from a medical professional may be required should the class teacher see it as necessary to confirm and endorse the request. Please note that PE and swimming is part of the National Curriculum.

SECTION 4: LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY for SCHOOLS

Holidays During Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force from 1st September 2013. The amendments remove references to 'holiday' from school and extended leave of absence, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances for example a family funeral – evidence may be requested.

Requests for leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a holiday. The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Headteachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances and it is only for the Headteacher to determine what is truly exceptional. School days are precious; children only attend school 190 out of 365 days.

Leave of absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Child's attendance is less than 96% in the previous 12 months
- During SATs year (Year 6)
- At the beginning of any academic year

- Retrospectively – requests received after leave has been taken
- If there are any other academic concerns such as poor punctuality, child's ability to catch up on the work missed etc.
- If leave of absence has already been taken in the same school year

We will also consider the following:

- The child's general absence/attendance record, e.g. unauthorised absence
- Amount of time requested
- Age of the child
- Length of the proposed leave – no more than 5 days
- Child's ability to catch up on the work
- Child's educational needs
- General welfare of the child
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Frequency of the activity
- When the request was made

Applications for Leave of Absence

Requests must be made in advance or the absence cannot legally be authorised. All requests must be made at least two weeks in advance to the Headteacher, by completing the school's application form – see Appendix 2. A parent/carer with whom the child resides must make the application. The form must be fully completed and you will receive a written response confirming if the request will be authorised or not.

If leave is granted (which will be extremely rare) and you are travelling abroad you will need to supply the school with confirmation of your return flight tickets, such as bringing a copy of the flight tickets into the school office for us to copy.

Unauthorised Absence

If you take your child out of school without the school's prior authorisation (which is illegal), the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and noted in your child's school records. Leave of absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

Where a parent/carer has taken their child on leave of absence during term time for 5 consecutive school days or more, without the Headteacher's authorisation, Luton Local Education Authority may issue a Penalty Notice. In these circumstances a warning will not be given. Penalty Notices are per parent/carer, per child as appropriate, so if there are two parents/carers, both will need to pay the fine. From 1st September 2013 penalty notices will need to be paid within 21 days at £60 or £120 within 28 days. Unpaid Penalty Notices could result in prosecution for the absence in the magistrate's court.

The school make the decision as to whether the request of leave should be granted or not and the Local Authority make the decision to impose a penalty for this.

Failure to return to school on the date expected

If there is a reason which delays the child in returning to school the parent/carer must inform the school immediately. The school will require evidence of this issue and will then decide whether the absence will be authorised. For any travel arrangements outside of the UK, we require proof of return flights, prior to the leave being taken. This may prevent you from receiving authorised absence for your child and being fined if they are unable to return on the date expected. Each case will be assessed individually and medical evidence from abroad will not be accepted routinely as evidence that a child was unable to attend school.

Roll Removal

A child can be removed from roll in either of these circumstances:

- If you take your child on a leave of absence which has been authorised by the school but your child fails to return on the agreed date, any extra time absent from school will be counted as unauthorised. If your child fails to return within ten days of the expected date of return, then the school may remove your child from the school roll and notify the Local Authority accordingly
- Or, if your child has 20 school days continuous unauthorised absence

If a child is removed from roll without information of a new school, the school will inform the Education Welfare Officer at the Local Authority and Child Missing in Education (CME) procedures followed.

Other Absence

Other absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or unauthorise the absence.

SECTION 5: MONITORING AND REPORTING ATTENDANCE

Attendance is monitored regularly,

- The Attendance Officer will telephone families whose child is absent on the first day of absence where no phone call is received or no reason has previously been given
- Teachers must inform the Attendance Officer when they notice patterns of absence
- Attendance data will be reviewed weekly, to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence; periods of un-authorised; and all children with attendance below 90%. This data will be discussed with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer, as part of the regular half termly meetings
- The school and Local Authority Education Welfare Officer, will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy, attendance target and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend an attendance target to the Governors
- Governors will receive attendance data and will hold the school accountable

Reporting Attendance

To Parents and Carers

All absences, both authorised and unauthorised, and lateness will be reported to parents and carers three times a year, during the Advent and Lent Parent/Carer Consultation Meetings and at the end of the academic year in their child's annual report.

In order to give parents/carers a benchmark for their child's attendance compared to other children in the school and nationally; the following grades will be used:

100%	Excellent
98% - 99.9%	Very Good
94% - 97.9%	Good
90% - 93.9%	Satisfactory
Under 90%	Unsatisfactory

Parents and carers are able to make an appointment with the Attendance Officer the Attendance Lead or Local Authority Education Welfare Officer, to discuss any concerns they have. (Appendix 3 – Attendance Factsheet)

Parents are given information about whole school attendance in weekly newsletters.

To Local Authority Education Welfare Support Service

The Attendance Officer provides an attendance print out of 95% and below to assist the Officer with their work.

To the Department for Education

Three times a year the school completes the Census return as per guidelines.

To the Governing Body

The Headteacher reports on attendance each term.

Promoting and Rewarding Good Attendance

Each week the class with the best attendance will receive a certificate.

Improving Poor Attendance

The regular monitoring and analysis of school registers, enables patterns and trends to be identified. See Appendix 4 for school monitoring procedures.

Children who are subject to either a Child Protection or Child In Need Plan (CIN), children who are in public care (CLA), Young Carers and any other vulnerable child's attendance are prioritised each day for absence phone calls and reporting. This is the responsibility of the Admin Officer who will report directly to the Attendance Lead/SLT with any concerns.

96% and below

If attendance drops below 96% the Attendance Officer will inform parents/carers with a letter (Appendix 5) advising them that their child's attendance/punctuality will be monitored for the next four weeks. Parents are able to meet the Class Teacher, Attendance Officer or a member of the SLT to discuss this further.

90% and below

If attendance drops below 89% the child is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee'. Parents will be invited to a meeting with the Attendance Lead and in some cases a member of the SLT. This meeting will be followed up with a letter (see Appendix 6).

85% and below

If attendance is below 85%, the child continues to be classed as a 'Persistent Absentee', at this stage the Local Authority Schools Attendance Officer, may meet with parents/carers. Fixed penalties may be incurred with the possibility of prosecution where no significant improvement is evident.

The aim throughout this process is to ensure all children have the best attendance possible. The school will work in partnership with parents/carers and take into account individual circumstances, applying the process accordingly.

A visit to families at home will be conducted, at any time, where necessary.

Improving Punctuality

Step 1

Once a child has arrived late for school on two occasions within a week a letter will be sent home with the expectation that punctuality will improve (see Appendix 7).

Step 2

If the child continues to be late in the following week the Attendance Lead or a representative from the school, will make a phone call to parents/carers to inform them of the number of lates their child has incurred and to find out reasons for the poor punctuality.

Step 3

If the child persists in being late the Attendance Officer will arrange a meeting with the child and parent/carer where actions and targets will be set (see Appendix 8).

Policy Implementation

The policy and associated guidance will be discussed with staff and governors.

A copy of registration guidance will be given to supply staff working in the school.

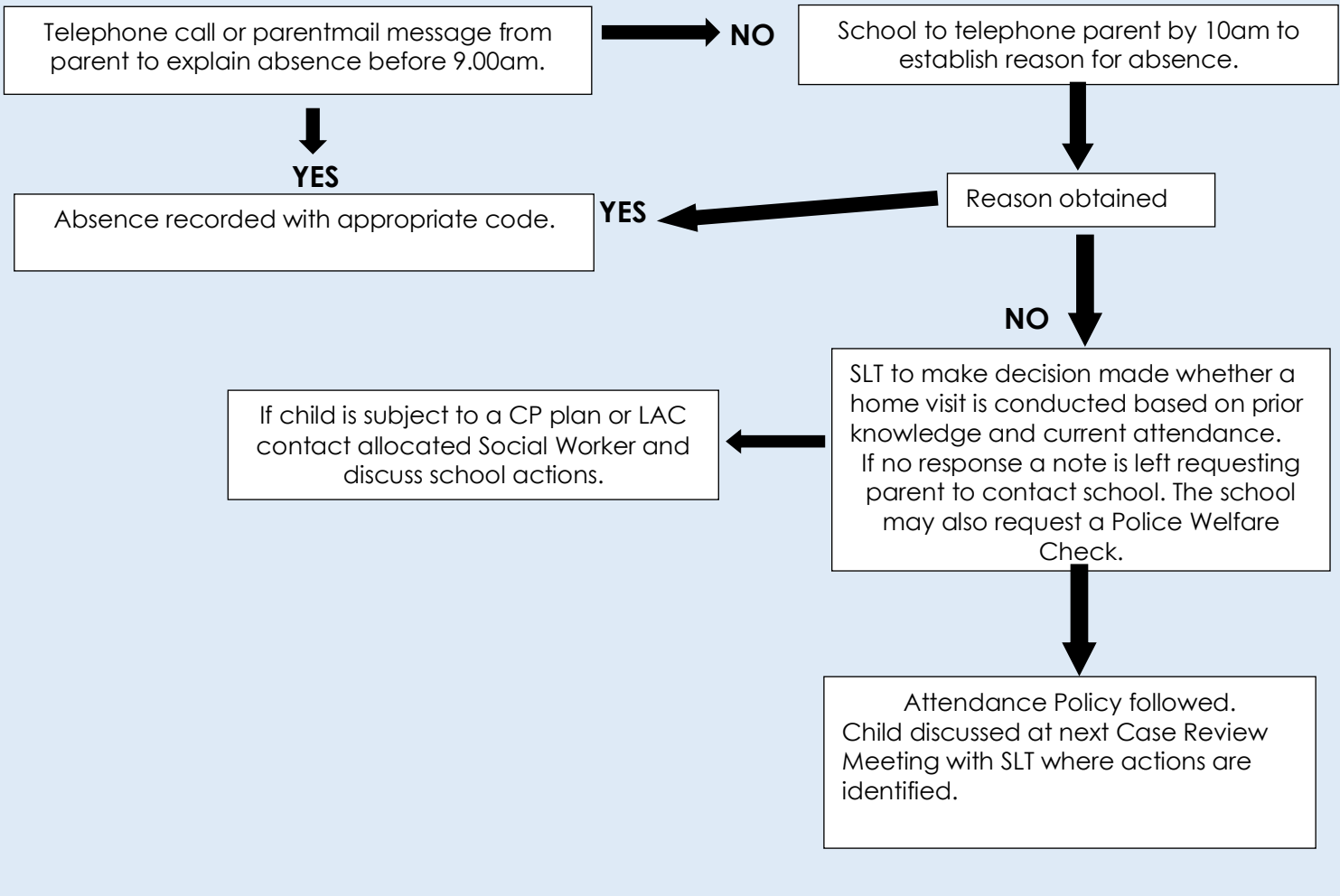
Families will be informed of the attendance procedures via the school website, school induction meetings and newsletters.

The policy will be reviewed in September 2024, or sooner if regulations change.

The term parent includes those who have parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act 1989 and as defined in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996. The latter gives parental responsibility to those who may not be the child's actual parents but have day to day care of the child.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

DAILY FROM DAY 1





Appendix 2 Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Langford Drive, Luton
Beds. LU2 9AJ
Tel: 01582 287480

CHILD LEAVE of ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Please complete a form for **each** child you are requesting absence for. You will receive a copy of this form once your request has been considered for authorisation and a copy will be placed in your child's file.

Date of Submitting Absence Request:	Name of Child:	Child's Class:
Date of Absence Requested:	From:	To (please note this is the date we expect your child to return to school):
Reason for Absence Request: (please note that the Headteacher will not authorise any holidays in term time)		
Parent/Carer 1 Name and Signature:		Parent/Carer 2 Name and Signature:

If there are two Parents/Carers in the family, both need to sign this form.

Please be informed that the school is not permitted to authorise any absence during term time for a holiday.

It is a legal requirement that registered pupils of compulsory school age (5+) attend school regularly and punctually and parents or guardians risk prosecution if they fail in this duty. Amendments to the 2007 Regulations in the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) came into force on 1 September 2013.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued when a child has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 6 week period in term time; (a school day is two sessions - morning and afternoon) or when a child has a series of unauthorised absences leading to irregular attendance.

A copy of the school's attendance policy is available on the website or upon request if you require further information.

School Use Only	Date request for absence received (Date Stamp) :		Child's Attendance:
Unauthorised	Authorised	Part Authorised	If Part Authorised How Many Sessions?:
Signature:		Print Name:	Date:

School Stamp:

Copies: SENDCo/ Family Worker / Pupil File / Office / Parents



Sacred Heart Primary School Attendance Information

Appendix 3

By law, all children must receive a full time education. As a parent/carer you are responsible for making sure that your child attends school regularly and on time.

Remember – Always apply to Mrs Somes via the leave of absence request form if you need to request leave during term time.

What can I do to help my child attend school regularly?

- Ensure your child attends school every day and on time
- If your child is ill, contact the school on the first day of absence by parentmail or phone call (01582 287450)
- Take an interest in your child's education
- Only take holidays in school holiday time
- Talk to the school if you have concerns

Illness

- Children must not attend school if they have any infectious illnesses (please take advice from your GP) e.g. Chicken Pox, Measles, German Measles, mumps etc.
- Sickness and Diarrhoea (48 hours)
- Flu (diagnosed by GP) etc.

The school will always contact you if your child is unwell – always try to send your child to school even if they feel a little “under the weather” e.g. runny nose, tummy ache, headache etc.

If you are unsure if your child can attend school, please contact the school office for further information and advice 01582 287450

Regular attendance also means PUNCTUAL attendance.

Arrive on time for your child's designated start time

Year Groups	Arrival Time	End of School Day
EYFS and KS1 (Y1 and Y2)	08:55	15:30
KS2 (Y3 to Y6)	08:55	15:30

All children arriving 10 minutes after their designated start time will receive a late mark (L code on the register)

Children arriving after 09:30am receive a “U” code on the register – unauthorised late absence

Please remember to pick your child/children up on time.

Unacceptable reasons for absence:

- Shopping
- Birthday treats and trips
- Looking after others at home
- Non-urgent medical or dental appointment
- Your car breaking down
- Picking up or taking relatives to the airport
- Family Holidays etc.

These absences will be marked as unauthorised

Appendix 4

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School's Attendance Monitoring Procedures

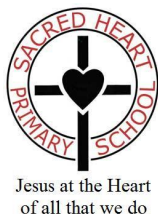
At Sacred Heart, we strongly believe that outstanding attendance is vital to ensuring that every child achieves their potential. Therefore, we strive to improve constantly and achieve an attendance of **96%** or above.

100-96%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Constant monitoring of attendance by Attendance Lead •Certificates issued termly to celebrate 96%+ attendance •Weekly rewards for classes with the highest attendance
Step 1 95-93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Constant monitoring of attendance by Attendance Lead •Regular monitoring by Education Welfare Officer •Child encouraged to improve attendance by Class Teacher/Key Stage Leader •Telephone home from class teacher to notify parents/carers that attendance has dropped below 96% followed up with letter 1 •Support offered to parents through meeting with Attendance Lead, family Worker, SENDCo, Class Teacher etc.
Step 2 92%-90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Daily monitoring of attendance by school •Parents/carers invited to meet with Attendance Welfare Officer •Parents/carers invited to meet with Attendance Lead, Key Stage Lead, Family Worker SENDCo etc. followed up with letter 2 and Attendance Action Plan with support from Family Worker, this may include a request for medical evidence to be provided in order for absences to be authorised •Home visit from school if appropriate
Step 3 89-85% Persistent Absentee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Daily monitoring of attendance by school and Education Welfare Officer •Parents/carers invited to meet with Attendance Lead and SLT, followed up with letter 3 and Attendance Action Plan •Home visit from school if appropriate
Step 3 84% & below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Welfare Officer will monitor attendance •Fixed penalties and fast track to prosecution for those parents/carers that do not demonstrate significant improvement actioned by the Education Welfare Officer.

Persistent Absentee







Appendix 5 (Letter 1)

Sacred Heart Primary School

Interim Headteacher: Mrs G. Some

Langford Drive,

Luton,

Beds. LU2 9AJ

Tel: 01582 287480

e-mail admin@sacredheart.primaryluton.co.uk

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer

Child's Name:.....

This letter is to inform you that your child's attendance has fallen below **96%**, it is currently

96% and above is considered good attendance, this letter is just to make you aware of your child's current attendance.

We know that illness happens occasionally, this cannot be helped and your child will need to stay at home to get better. There are also those days where it is not easy to decide if your child should be in school or not. We are happy for you to send your child in on these days as we will always contact parents if it is apparent that he/she is not well during the day.

If you would like to discuss any issues you are experiencing which may be impacting your child's attendance please contact the school office and make an appointment to see either your child's class teacher or one of the family workers.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and look forward to seeing the improvement.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kelly
Attendance Officer



Appendix 6 (Letter 2)



Sacred Heart Primary School

Interim Headteacher: Mrs G. Somes

Langford Drive,

Luton,

Beds. LU2 9AJ

Tel: 01582 287480

e-mail admin@sacredheart.primaryluton.co.uk

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer

Child's Name:.....

This letter is to inform you that your child's attendance has fallen below **90%** which is classed as **persistent absence**.

Attendance is currently

Absence from school impacts learning so there is an urgent need for this to improve as your child's education is being significantly affected.

We request that you come in to meet with myself and the Deputy Head so that we can discuss any issues you are experiencing which are impacting your child's attendance. We can look at any support that could be offered so that attendance improves.

Can you please come to a meeting on at

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kelly
Attendance Officer



Appendix 7 (Letter 3)



Sacred Heart Primary School

Interim Headteacher: Mrs G. Somes

Langford Drive,

Luton,

Beds. LU2 9AJ

Tel: 01582 287480

e-mail admin@sacredheart.primaryluton.co.uk

Date:

Dear

Child's Name:

Number of lates:..... between and

..... minutes of learning lost.

This letter is to share our concerns with you about your child's punctuality.

It is important that children arrive at school on time so that they are ready to start lessons at 9:00am.

When your child comes in late the lesson has already started and it disrupts the other children's learning as the teacher has to stop the lesson in order to explain to your child.

Failure to improve punctuality will mean that a meeting will be arranged with you to discuss this further.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if there is anything we can do to support you with your child's punctuality.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kelly
Attendance Officer



Appendix 8 (Letter 4)



Sacred Heart Primary School

Interim Headteacher: Mrs G. Somes

Langford Drive,

Luton,

Beds. LU2 9AJ

Tel: 01582 287480

e-mail admin@sacredheart.primaryluton.co.uk

Date:

Dear

Child's Name:

No. of lates:..... between and

Thank you for attending the meeting today to discuss your child's punctuality.

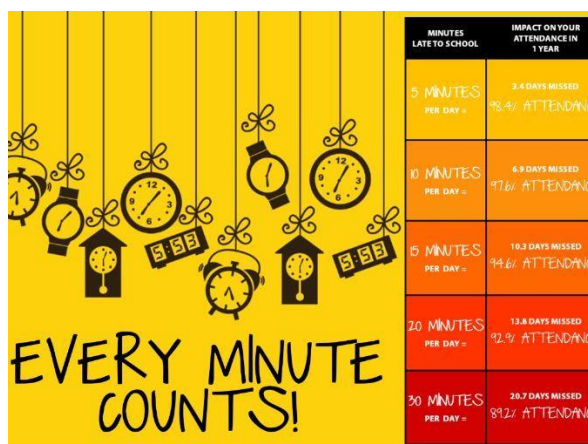
As discussed it is so important that arrives at school on time every day so that he/she is ready to start lessons at 09:00am.

We will continue to monitor punctuality and hope to see an improvement.

If for some reason there is no improvement we will have to refer to the EWO for further action and support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kelly
Attendance Officer



Appendix 8 (Letter 5)



Sacred Heart Primary School

Interim Headteacher: Mrs G. Somes

Langford Drive,

Luton,

Beds. LU2 9AJ

Tel: 01582 287480

e-mail admin@sacredheart.primaryluton.co.uk

Date:

Dear Parents/Carers,

We would like to congratulate you and **NAME**, for making the improvements necessary to meet the attendance target of 96% or above.

NAME's attendance has now reached **xxx%**

We have been really impressed by your hard work and hope that we will continue to see the impact of this in the future.

Well done to you all ☺.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kelly
Attendance Officer