

WREN'S NEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Key Policy for 2024-2025

Attendance Policy

September 2024

Document to be read in conjunction with ***other key school policies (listed within document)***

Introduction:

As a school, we do our utmost to develop a partnership with parents and value the relationship between school and home. We work with the community to drive the school forward and ensure the children in our care are the very best that they can be. You and your child/ren play an important role in making our school successful.

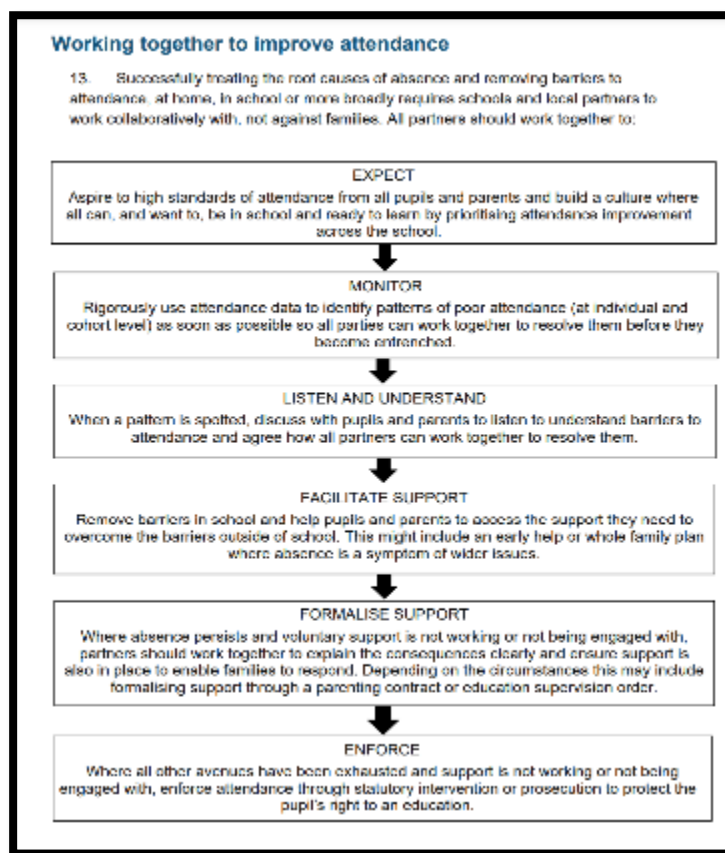
For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. We expect your child to be at school, on time, every day, unless the reason for the absence is **unavoidable**. It is important that you make sure that your child attends school every day that school is open.

“Attendance is everyone’s business” (DFE 2022)

**At Wren’s Nest Primary School, we Aim for 96% Attendance and above.
This means that your child has no more than 7 school days absence in the whole academic year.**

In the DfE document, ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’, listening to and working with both children and their families is highlighted as the main strategy for achieving great attendance and improving it were necessary.

This flow chart is an extract from the document and gives a clear route as to how at Wren’s Nest, we will continue to promote and support good attendance for all.



Key personnel for this policy document:

Mrs Sarah Parkes – Headteacher and leader for strategic approach to attendance

(Tel contact: 01384 818515 sparkes@wrens-nest.dudley.sch.uk)

Amber Harris – Governor with responsibility for Attendance and Deputy Headteacher

(Tel contact: 01384 818515 aharris4@wrens-nest.dudley.sch.uk)

Mrs Hannah Smith – Attendance Champion, DSL and Reading Lead

(Tel contact 01384 818515 hsmith@wrens-nest.dudley.sch.uk)

Mrs Tracey Cadman – Family Support Worker and Attendance Officer

Tel contact: 01384 818518 or on school mobile - **07856 674181** tcadman@wrens-nest.dudley.sch.uk

Mrs Jo Hill – Attendance Support

Tel contact: via Main school office 01384 818515

Mrs Kim Jones - Independent Attendance Consultant

Tel contact: via Main school office 01384 818515

Responsibilities of the School Attendance Champion:

The Attendance Champion works closely with all members of the pastoral team. The pastoral team each have a very specific role to play in supporting the school to maintain high levels of attendance. The Attendance Champion's essential purpose is to support parents and carers to meet their responsibilities for ensuring that their children regularly attend the school at which they are registered and to support school to develop effective systems for managing attendance.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important?

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Good attendance is a learned behaviour and a key skill for future life experiences. Good attendance is promoted throughout daily practice at Wren's Nest and great importance is placed upon it.

Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working Together To Safeguard Children' (Feb 2023) Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge (this bullet point is new)
- Protecting children from maltreatment, **whether that is within or outside the home, including online** (this last part has been added)
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Making sure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

The Law relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Punctuality and School Registration

Wren's Nest School promotes good habits of attendance and punctuality from the day your child joins our school.

Morning Registration:

Children should arrive between **8:40am - 8:50am**. Activities in the classroom start at **8:45am**. The class register closes at **9:00am**. If your child arrives late - after the gates close, they must come through the main reception, be signed in and will receive an 'L' late mark. The school register closes at **9:30am**. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as a 'U' which is classified as an unauthorised late absence. **If unauthorised lateness persists it could result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice or Enforcement Proceedings against you.**

Afternoon Registration:

Reception	12.45 – 12.50pm
KS1	12.45 - 12.50pm
Year 3/4	1pm – 1.05pm
Year 5/6	1.30 – 1.35pm

Afternoon registers close 5 minutes after the end of registration. Late arrivals should report to the office.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff and/or our Attendance Support Officer to resolve the problem. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Attendance/Absence Procedures for Parents and families

- Ensure your child/ren attend school every day that school is open.
- Contact the school office or school mobile (**07856 674181 or 07858 986604**) by 9.30am each day when your child is absent giving the reason for absence. (School may decide to authorise or unauthorised the absence)
- Notify School of any changes to emergency contact details.
- Notify school of any medical issues that may have an impact on your child's attendance.
- Avoid taking Holidays/Leave of Absence in term time unless there is exceptional circumstance. Parent/carer must notify the school at least 4 weeks prior to travel via a school Notification of Leave form.
- Attendance levels must be at 'Gold' for it to be considered by school and Governors.
- Leave of absence may lead to a penalty fine being issued.
- Book routine medical appointments outside of school (where possible) or bring your child in for part of the school day when possible. Provide medical evidence for appointments eg. hospital letter, appointment card, text message.
- Engage with school, attendance support and the Local Authority if your child's attendance starts to deteriorate.
- For parents whose child has 90% or below attendance, engage with further support offered, such as attendance support and family liaison visits, Early help, parenting contracts and the Local Authority to prevent further legal action.
- If your child has a place in Time for Two's, Nursery, Pre-School or Reception they must also attend regularly. You are expected to contact school if they are unable to attend through unavoidable cause.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This decision can only be made by school, not by parents. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other

unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children, oversleeping or birthdays
- Unauthorised leave of absence/holiday or day trips in term time.
- Absences of children whose attendance is a concern and parents have been requested to supply medical evidence.

Whilst any child may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This can often make your child feel more anxious over time and make matters worse. **If there are any problems with regular attendance, please contact school to discuss these matters as early as possible so we can support you and your child.**

If your child has been identified as having **attendance below 93%**, they may have all further absence **unauthorised** on the school register. However, should parent/s provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary, the absence for the evidenced period will be authorised.

School Attendance Procedures

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or send a message to you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. We may also e-mail you to ensure we make contact with you.
- Undertake a 'Safe and Well Check' to the family home if absence continues.
- If no contact has been made, other named emergency contacts will be called.
- Invite you to discuss the situation with our Independent Attendance Consultant and Family Support Worker. We will listen, help and support. **Supporting the family to improve and maintain regular attendance is our priority.**
- Attendance Support plans and meetings - following government guidelines, we formalise support offered by inviting parents and families in for an Attendance Support Plan Meeting. This will be held with our Attendance Officer, Tracey Cadman, Hannah Smith Attendance Champion and Attendance Consultant, Kimberley Jones.
- If, after a number of strategies have been put in place and absences persist, you will be invited into school to talk to Mrs Parkes or Miss Harris about next steps.
- Refer the matter to Kimberley Jones, our Attendance Support Officer and/or the Local Authority if attendance moves below 95%.
- If the child is considered to be at risk, child protection procedures will be followed.

At all stages, the safety of the child is paramount and our procedures reflect this.

Irregular Attendance:

Irregular attendance and patterns of absence are monitored weekly. Attendance below 90%, 93% and 95% are targeted, as well as patterns of absence. The Headteacher will issue letters to inform parents if attendance is causing concern. This will be after discussions with school are had to see how we can help

and support improving attendance. Only if irregular attendance continues, despite the support offered, will a letter be issued by Mrs Parkes. Mrs Tracey Cadman, our Family Support Worker, may speak to parent. Kimberley Jones, our Independent Attendance Consultant, may visit the home of children whose attendance is being monitored to ensure the family is fully committed and supported to improve a child's attendance. School may request that medical evidence be shown to authorise a child's absence.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to overcome this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and regularly. Any case that is seen to have reached the 'PA' mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

Children who have reached the Persistently Absent level are monitored carefully through our pastoral team and staff. We also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states: If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

Improving Attendance and Initiatives

School staff are committed to working with children and parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Strategies to encourage good attendance are:

- Our 'Wise Up' programme. There are 5 Attendance categories – Gold 97%+, Silver 95-97%, Bronze 93 -95%, Red 90-93% and Wise Up level (below 90%). Certificates & badges are awarded for each term – **see Appendix A**
- Promotion of good attendance in school – see whole school assembly re Attendance Matters.
- Gold attendance for a term (certificate and prize given to child) and for the whole year – trophy awarded to child – **see Appendix B** for an example
- Whole school Newsletter for families and weekly videos from Headteacher – **see Appendix C**
- Celebration assemblies for children achieving their Gold attendance award – families are invited to attend. Children are presented with award and then have time to celebrate with their families
- Every half term a group of children (Year 1 and any children new to the school with attendance issues) will have their attendance tracked. Those reaching their attendance target will receive a prize.
- Class of the week certificate – presented in whole school assembly together with a rosette towards Class of the Year competition.
- Half term class champions attendance cup – presented in assembly.
- Class of the Year certificate and special class trip at the end of the Summer term.
- Class Attendance charts showing weekly percentage and an up/down arrow in designated class attendance area
- Attendance ambassador representative within Pupil Parliament - elected by the children in school.
- Carrying out home visits/in school meetings where necessary – identifying how school can help families to improve attendance/remove barrier to good attendance.

Attendance Consultant

Wren's Nest Primary School employs an Attendance Consultant, Kimberley Jones, from 'Instill Excellence Ltd' who advises on attendance issues. Mrs Jones will contact families where attendance is causing

concern and work with them to try to improve the situation or by agreement with school, may use the following strategies:

- Weekly attendance analysis
- Phone call to discuss attendance concerns
- Home visits
- Improved attendance letter. Parents of children with an attendance below 90% during a school year will be contacted by letter at the start of the new school year. Progress will be tracked throughout the year.
- Attendance figures for the year will be issued on each child's school report at the end of the Summer Term. This includes a breakdown of authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Attendance certificates
- Attendance assemblies
- Interventions (mentor/meet and greet)
- Maintaining positive communication (school refuser/long term illness etc)
- First day absence contact
- Unexplained absence letter
- Punctuality letter
- Suspected holiday in term time letter
- Issue below 95% attendance letter
- Issue below 93% attendance letter (medical evidence required)
- Issue below 90% (persistent absence) letter
- Attendance clinics
- LA referrals

Please see the Attendance Road Map (Appendix E) which outlines the steps of support and also the procedures for referrals and sanctions.

Statutory Referrals to the Local Authority

Both the school and Dudley Local Education Authority have the authority to levy fines upon parents for their child's unauthorised absence from school, particularly when the child is of compulsory school age. The decision to issue a penalty notice rests with either the Headteacher, a local authority officer, or the police.

Any unauthorised absence may prompt a referral to the local authority, potentially resulting in the issuance of a penalty notice in accordance with the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' guidelines.

Within a 3-year rolling period:

- First penalty notice: £160 (if paid within 28 days) or reduced to £80 (if paid within 21 days).
- Second penalty notice: Flat rate of £160 (if paid within 28 days).

No Third Penalty Notice:

- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the date of the first notice.
- If the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative actions (such as prosecution or other attendance legal interventions) will be considered.

Parents may wish to contact the Education Investigation Service (EIS) themselves to ask for help or information. This service is independent of school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the School Office or by contacting the Local Education Authority Helpline: **01384 814311 OR 01384 814317** (Duty Officer)

Supporting Students with Medical Conditions/SEND

The school aims to provide a supportive environment for students whose attendance may be impacted by medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Measures include:
Developing individualised healthcare/support plans for students with chronic/ongoing medical needs.
Making reasonable adjustments and accommodations to the school environment and curriculum access.
Facilitating access to the school nurse, counselling, or other therapeutic services as needed.
Coordinating with parents/carers and external providers to ensure continuity of learning during absences.
Considering flexible attendance arrangements, part-time schedules, or home instruction when appropriate.

Children Missing Education

If you move out of area and the distance is too far to travel to Wren's Nest Primary School, please notify us immediately. We advise you contact the Admissions Department (of the Local Authority where you now reside) as quickly as possible to obtain a new school place, as often places are limited.

All schools must notify their Local Authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the Regulations D of E (2016). If your child ceases to attend school and we have had no contact from you the parent/carer, we will deem this as a safeguarding issue. We will try to contact you and may undertake a home visit. We will then follow the Local Authority Referral Procedure for a Child Missing Education before removal from roll.

Holidays in Term Time / Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, schools cannot authorise any holiday taken during term time. This is a directive to all schools following Government Legislation (The Government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.)

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will the Headteacher be able to authorise a leave of absence from school. School requests that any parent who still takes their child out of school for a holiday complete a 'Notification of Leave Form' – **see Appendix C**. School will not then be un-necessarily concerned when a child is not present in school for a period of time.

The 'Notification of Leave' forms are available from the school office. Any unauthorised absence accrued due to holidays or for any other reason can result in referral to Dudley Local Authority, Education Support Service and could have legal consequences.

Unlike the majority of schools, Wren's Nest Primary School has taken the decision not to automatically issue Penalty Fines for those taking holiday as we understand the importance of enriching a child's experiences. If you wish to take a holiday during term time, **PLEASE** attach it to an already existing, planned school holiday (e.g. Half Term breaks). You **must** also make sure that your child attends school every day they can during the school year. Each case will be reviewed as part of the child's overall attendance, and if necessary, further referral action to proceed to fine will be taken.

Referrals will be made for holidays if attendance is low or if we have not been notified that the child is going on holiday, and we do not know their whereabouts. Referrals may also be made for those taking more than one holiday during a year.

We think we have a fair and reasonable policy towards holidays in term time, but this does depend on parents also being fair and reasonable with the school.

Codes used in the register: On any occasion that school denies a request for leave in term time, should parent/carer proceed with the leave, it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on school's register. Failure to notify and/or request Leave of Absence in term time, without providing at least 5-day notice will result in all absence being recorded as (O) (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

Collaborative Approach with Local Partners

The school recognises that strong partnerships across local services are essential for supporting attendance and removing barriers. As such, the school will:

- Develop relationships and communication pathways with local authority early help services, social care, health providers, and police.
- Establish procedures for making referrals to appropriate services when additional support is needed for the student or family.
- Participate in multi-agency meetings to coordinate a holistic plan for students facing complex challenges.
- Work with partners to understand and address root causes like poverty, mental health, community issues impacting attendance.
- Collaborate on truancy sweeps, home visits, or other engagement initiatives in the community.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation by Attendance staff.
- Half Termly collation of monitoring data, Persistent Absence pupils (PA) and cohort groups.
- Attendance staff/ Attendance Consultant - monitoring of all PA pupils and evaluation of progress.
- Strategic monitoring and evaluation – Headteacher, Attendance Consultant, FSW and Attendance Governor.
- Family Support Worker reports to Governors as part of the Head teacher's termly report.
- Attendance monitoring and target setting. This Academic year 2024/2025, our Attendance target is 96%.

The policy will also be promoted and implemented throughout the school by all staff. The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Reporting to Governors

To ensure transparency and accountability, the school leadership will provide regular attendance reports and updates to the governing board. These reports may include:

- Overall attendance rates for the school and breakdown by grade levels
- Progress towards annual attendance goals and targets
- Updates on the implementation and effectiveness of specific attendance initiatives
- Identification of persistent issues or areas requiring additional governance support

Links with Other policies and documents

The Attendance Policy links closely with a range of other policies to provide a coherent package of provision for Children at Wrens Nest:

- DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance (applies from 19th August 2024)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2024
- Working together to Safeguard children 2023

Date of Review: September 2024

Policy to be reviewed: September 2025

Wren's Nest Primary School

Attendance Wise Up Levels

GOLD

Attendance is 97% and above – absent for less than 6 days in the year. Your child is giving themselves the best chance of achieving their full potential at school. They are **Wised Up!**

SILVER

Attendance is 95-97% - absent for less than 10 days in the year. Your child is **Wise** regarding attendance and has a good opportunity to achieve at school.

BRONZE

Attendance is 93-95% - missing up to 13 days in the year. You and your child **could be wiser**. These absences make it difficult for your child to achieve their best.

RED

Attendance is 90 - 93% - missing **up to 30 days** a year! **Six weeks!** Your child needs to **Wise Up**. Missing so much time makes it very hard for your child to keep in touch with lessons.

WISE UP

Attendance is below 90%! You could be found to be failing in your duty as a parent, regarding your child's attendance. You and your child need to **Wise Up Now**. Missing so much time from school means it will be almost impossible for your child to keep in touch with their lessons.

Appendix B:



Appendix C:



News from the Nest

15th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers, Children and Families,

I am delighted to see all children back after the Summer holiday.

School attendance and safeguarding remains a priority. It is compulsory that all children should attend school regularly. Failing to attend school on a regular basis could be considered a safeguarding matter.



As a school and in line with the DfE document, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', we have been assessing our procedures, monitoring attendance individually as well as looking at the overall whole school picture. Any child who has 90% or below attendance is classified by the government as being 'persistently absent'. If you have any worries or issues that are having an impact on your child/ren's attendance, please contact school to speak to Hannah Smith, Tracey Cadman or our Attendance Support Officer, Kim Jones. We are more than happy to support you as a family to improve attendance.

One of the key factors in supporting a child in having good attendance is by maintaining good communication between school and home. This is successfully done by:

- Ensuring your child attends on-time each day. (See the table below for the impact absence can have upon a child's education.) Remember - start of the school day is 8:40am. The register is completed and closed at 9am. Remember - Breakfast Club is available for 8:20am.
- Contacting school when your child is absent and report any medical issues. (See contact details below.)
- Providing evidence of illness when at all possible so that we can authorise absence - for example, PCR test results and medical appointments.
- Try to book general medical or dental appointments either outside of school hours, close to end of day or bring your child back into school after their appointment.
- Reporting any changes to personal information including address or emergency contact numbers.
- Avoiding taking holidays in term time. *There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.* Leave of absence cannot be granted unless you as families can prove 'exceptional circumstances'. All applications must be made in writing at least 4 weeks prior to the requested leave date. (Please see our Attendance Policy for details or ask at the main school office). Whilst we support all of our children taking part in wider enrichment experiences, prioritising children's learning in school is key to them achieving educational success in the future. Unlike the majority of schools, Wren's Nest Primary School has taken the decision not to automatically issue Penalty Fines for those taking holiday. However, if holiday is a must, then PLEASE attach it to an already existing, planned school holiday (e.g. Half Term breaks). In addition to this, you must also make sure that your child attends school every day they can during the school year. Each case will be reviewed as part of the child's overall attendance, and if necessary, further referral action to proceed to fine will be taken.

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one typical school year (190 days)	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed (6 per day)
95%	10 days	2 weeks	60 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	Over 100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	Over 220 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	Over 300 lessons

Thank you for your on-going support regarding promoting good attendance and punctuality - both important life skills that provide a successful future for your children. Good attendance will ensure that your child can reach his/her full potential. To help us in supporting your child to achieve this, your child needs to attend school every day.

As always, take care,

Sarah Parkes - Headteacher

Useful Contacts:

School Website:
www.wrens-nest.dudley.sch.uk

School Email:
info@wrens-nest.dudley.sch.uk

School Mobile number:
[07856 986604](tel:07856986604)
[07856 678181](tel:07856678181)

Wren's Nest Primary School



Notification of Leave

Child(ren) name/s Year Group/s

Address

I would like to apply for 'Leave of Absence' from school for the above named child(ren).

Current attendance.....level.....

From (date) To (date)

Destination and Parent(s)/Carer travelling with child(ren)

.....
The Head Teacher may only grant 'Leave of Absence' in exceptional circumstances. Please give the reason that leave is requested :

.....
Other leave of absence this academic year.....

By signing this form, I understand the following:

1. The Schools Attendance Policy states that absences during term time will not be authorised unless the Head Teacher agrees that there are exceptional circumstances and that any absences will be recorded as unauthorised on the school register.
2. Wren's Nest Primary will not authorise leave of absence for any child with attendance below 97%.
3. Any unauthorised absences may be referred to the Local Authority - Education Support Service.
4. I understand that if a referral is made to The Education Support Service, I may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £160 in respect of **each child and each parent**, and/or be subject to further legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.
5. If we are delayed in returning, we will contact the school to explain why as soon as possible.
6. If my child does not return to school after the above leave of absence date, school will follow the Local Authority child missing education procedure and may remove my child's name from the school register under Regulation 8, 1 (f) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Signed Name

Date Relationship to child

Names of each adult who has Parental Responsibility for each child:

.....
Address if different to child's

.....

Wren's Nest Primary School

In line with the DfE Statutory Guidance (in force from 19th August 2024), we will continue to offer a supportive, stepped, attendance approach. **We will continue to offer a welcoming ethos with high expectations for all.** We will assess data to identify absence trends and use preventative discussions/meetings with families to listen, understand and support them, enabling us to remove barriers together. Where needed, we will formalise support to nurture improvement with Attendance Contracts, and as a last resort, we will consider intensifying support and/or enforce legal sanctions.

