

Bickerton Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School



Attendance Policy

Person responsible for policy:

Georgina Whitfield

Approved:

11 December 2023

Signed:

Claire Carman, Chair of Governors

To be reviewed:

September 2025



Our School Prayer

This is our school,
Let peace be here,
Let it be full of happiness.

Let love be here.
Love of one another,
Love of everyone,
Love of life itself,
And love of God.

Amen

Our Mission Statement

Respect for oneself and others is central to our mission of giving every child in our school the highest standard of education and care within a Christian community.

Vision Statement:

'Life in All its Fullness'

I have come so that you may have life-life in all it's fullness. (John 10:10)

At Bickerton we provide every child with a loving, caring environment, where each pupil feels safe, respected and valued. Encouraged by a supportive family ethos and Christian worship which teaches of God's, unconditional never-ending love, Bickerton pupils are determined, ambitious learners, each feeling nurtured as they strive to fulfil their potential, emotionally, socially and intellectually. Our Christian ethos and curriculum are interwoven so as to teach children empathy and compassion for others, alongside knowledge, thoughts, actions and attitudes for themselves, so that they are guided to make a positive impact in the world, both now and in the future.

Core Christian values:

Love and Kindness

Bravery and Courage

Teamwork

Friendship

Exploring and Learning/Wisdom

Honesty

Contents

Aims

2 2. Legislation and guidance

2 3. Roles and responsibilities

3 4. Recording attendance

5 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

7 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

8 7. Attendance monitoring

8 8. Monitoring arrangements

9 9. Links with other policies

9 Appendix 1: attendance codes

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our wholeschool culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

- The governing board is responsible for:
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Have a link governor for safeguarding (including attendance).

3.2 The headteacher

- The headteacher is responsible for:
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Meeting with the link governor regularly to provide information on attendance and punctuality

3.3 The attendance officer

- The school attendance officer is responsible for:
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis (morning and afternoon sessions), using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

3.5 School Office staff

- School Office staff will:
- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system Contact parents of any absent child by 10:00am if no reason for absence has been provided
- Provide a report for the Headteacher weekly identifying pupils who have an attendance below 90%

3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:20am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence unless agreed by the headteacher), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes. We will also record:

Whether the absence is authorised or not

The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

In Key Stage One:

Pupils can enter the school from 8:30am. Pupils in key stage one must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day. Any pupils arriving after this time will need to enter the school via alerting office staff who will open the gate. They will be given a late mark on the register. The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00. The register for the second session will be taken at 14.50. School will finish at 3:15pm.

In Key Stage Two:

Pupils can enter the school from 8:30am. Pupils in key stage two must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day. The school gate will be closed at 9.00am. Any children arriving after this time will need to enter the school via alerting the office staff who will open the gate. They will be given a late mark on the register. The register for the first session will be taken at 09.00. The register for the second session will be taken at 14.50 pm. School will finish at 3:25pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:20am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7). We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

If a pupil experiences high levels of absence due to illness the Headteacher will discuss this directly with parents, and may ask for consent to involve the school nurse.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This should be done by contacting the school office, and evidence of the appointment should be shown to a member of the office staff when the child is collected. If a pupil experiences high levels of absence due to medical appointments, the headteacher will discuss the directly with parents, and will ask for proof of appointments. We encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Where concerns around punctuality are identified the Headteacher will discuss this directly with parents to find solutions to the problem. Pupils with identified concerns will be monitored weekly. If improvements are not made parents will be invited into school for further discussion. Ultimately, the school do have the authority to request a fixed penalty notice be issued if poor punctuality persists (see Cheshire East attendance doc, point 3.5)

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/schools/attendance/code-of-conduct-on-penalty-notices.pdf>

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will persist in trying to contact, via phone and email or home visits.
- If we have been unable to contact by the start of the second day of absence, we may contact the Local Authority or the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be done by:
 - Verbal feedback at parent's meetings (Autumn, Spring, Summer)
 - A letter to parents for all pupils who have attendance below 90% (throughout the year)

In the year report

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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
- Wedding of a close family member Funeral of a close family member
- Public examinations
- Graduation of a close family member
- Other requests that the headteacher deems as exceptional

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice. 10 sessions (equivalent to five days) or more of unauthorised absence within a term or two consecutive half terms can lead to a penalty notice being issued.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- Pupil-level absence data will be 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.
- The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The School will:

Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Meet termly with the designated local authority officer to discuss concerns

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of 3 years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2

Letter of notification – Attendance below 90%

Letter 1

Dear Parents,

We have noticed that your child [Child's name] attendance has dropped below 90%. Their attendance currently is [%]

Cheshire East Council are working with schools to try and improve school attendance because we know that school attendance makes such a big difference to children's' futures. The Department for Education tell us 'school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.' (DFE 2023).

We also want to remind you that the Education Act 1996 section 444, requires you to make sure that your child attends school, on time, every time the school is open.

If there are any issues that may be impacting on your child's attendance, please contact Mrs Whitfield to discuss further.

Further Information can be found on the websites below

Attendance information

[School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Attendance and children out of education \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Early help support

[Early Help Assessment \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Mental health support

[Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

[Anna Freud on my mind](#)

Yours sincerely



Georgina Whitfield Acting Headteacher

Deborah Woodcock

Executive Director of Children's Services

Appendix 3

Warning Letter

Letter 2

Dear [Parents name]

It has been brought to my attention that your child has not been attending regularly at school. According to the Attendance Register, [Child's name] attendance is currently [insert %], this is below the schools expected attendance.

[Child's name] currently has [insert number] unauthorised sessions, if this reaches 10 unauthorised sessions within 2 half terms then school can apply to the Local Authority to issue you with a Penalty Notice warning period, which could result in each parent receiving a £60.00 fine, increasing to £120.00 if not paid within 21 days.

I must remind you that S.444, Education Act 1996 requires you to make sure that your child attends school, on time, every time the school is open. I am writing this letter to give you an opportunity to make sure that from now on and in future, your child attends school regularly.

If your child continues to not attend regularly, a referral will be made to the Local Authority to pursue further action. These interventions may include,

(A) Issuing you with a Fixed Penalty Notice under S.444A Education Act 1996 which will make you liable to a penalty of up to £120. **(As above)**

(B) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444(1) Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you may be fined up to £1000.

(C) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444(1A) Education Act 1996. If convicted of this offence you may be fined up to £2,500 or be sent to prison for up to 3 months or both.

To avoid Local Authority intervention, please ensure your child attends school regularly and on time.

If there are any issues that may be impacting on your child's attendance, please contact [named person at school] to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

Georgina Whitfield

Acting Headteacher

Appendix 4 – Attendance Contract



Parenting contract for attendance.

Child's name and DOB:	
Current attendance:	
School/Year group:	
Parent(s) name (s):	

Senior staff member with overall responsibility:
Member of staff responsible day-to-day:
Local Authority Officer (if applicable):

The specific targets of our plan. What we aim to do:
--

Achieving these targets

We (Parents names) the parents of (Child name) agree to:

*

School Staff agree to:

*

Attendance Children out of school service agree to:

*

Other professionals agree to:

*

Comments by the child/young person:

*

Agreeing to the contract:

I have agreed to this Parenting Contract and will

- (a) work with the school (and council) as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance,
and
- (b) carry out what we have promised to do.

I also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us.

I understand that if concerns continue about my child's/children's absence from school, a Penalty Notice or prosecution may follow without further warning. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.

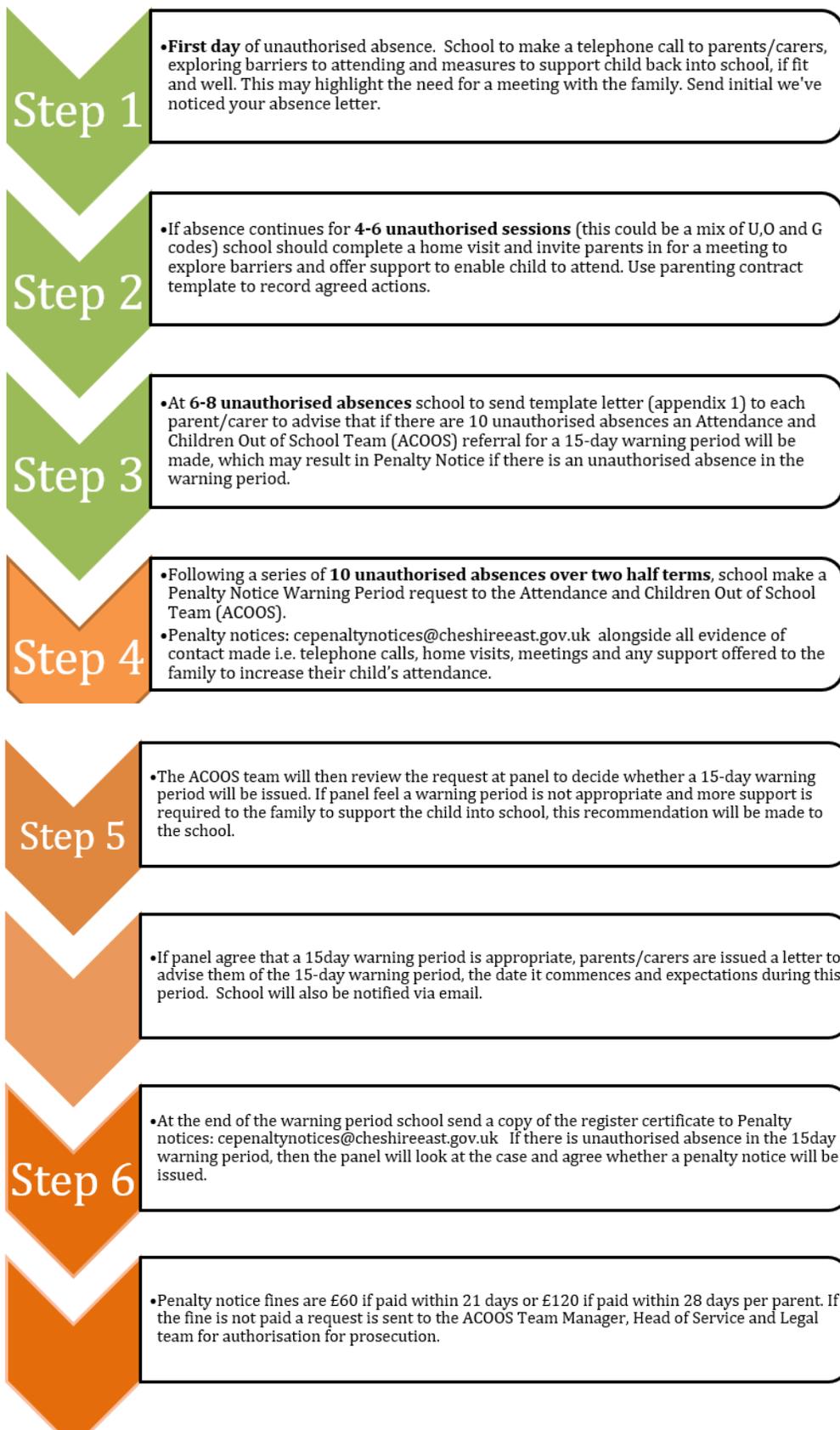
Role	Name	Signature	Dated
Parent			
Parent			
School representative			
School representative			
ACOOS representative			

This parenting contract will be reviewed as follows:

Appendix 5

Penalty Notice Pathway

If the child/YP does not attend school as expected and no reason to authorise the absence is established, then the child will be coded in the register with an unauthorised code.



Appendix 6 – Request for Leave in Term Time

Request for Leave of Absence in Term Time

The 2013 regulation amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. The head teacher and the governing body will determine what exceptional circumstances are.

Before authorisation is considered for leave of absence to be taken during term time, please complete the form below and return it to the school's administrative officer. Completion of the form does not guarantee leave of absence will be authorised.

Pupil's Name _____ Class _____

Dates of Leave of Absence: From: _____ To: _____

Please give full reasons for requesting leave of absence in term time:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please ensure you have read the school's Attendance Policy which is available from reception, and on the website under the 'Policies' tab.

Taking your child out of school without the school's authorisation may result in the local authority issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice to each parent / carer for each child. The table below shows the Local Authority's penalties for unauthorised absence.

Penalties for Unauthorised Absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will be summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at school.	You will be summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance .

For Completion by School

Name(s) of Child(ren)

Authorised	Register Code H
-------------------	-----------------

Unauthorised	Register Code G
---------------------	-----------------

Reason for Leave of Absence Being Unauthorised:

Request does not constitute exceptional circumstances.

Other

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Copy to:

Parent

Pupil file

Local authority educational welfare officer

Parents / carers requesting leave of absence during term time will be sent the following letter:



Bickerton Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School
Long Lane, Bickerton, Malpas, Cheshire SY14 8AP
Telephone: 01829 720 240
Email: admin@bickerton.cheshire.sch.uk
Website: www.bickertonprimaryschool.net

Date:

Name(s) of Pupil(s):

Dates of Requested Leave of Absence:

Dear

I am writing in response to your request for leave of absence in term time for your child(ren).

Following changes in regulations, leave of absence may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. As your request does not constitute exceptional circumstances in this instance, we are unable to authorise it.

If you continue with your plans and take your child(ren) out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. As such the school may inform the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued. Failure to pay the fine within the required time may result in prosecution.

Please refer to the chart below for details of the FPN process including fines and timelines.

Penalties for Unauthorised Absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will be summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at school.	You will be summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance.

Yours sincerely,