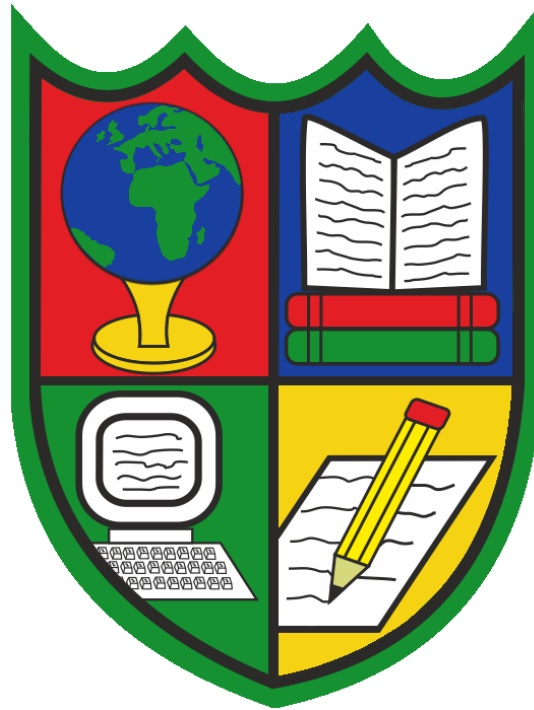


Highfield Primary School



Attendance Policy

Written: September 2025

Reviewed Annually

Introduction

At Highfield School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too that they arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

Highfield is a happy school with a strong pastoral tradition. Staff enjoy good relationships with pupils and parents. They are committed to promoting pupil welfare in a safe, secure learning environment.

At Highfield we emphasise the importance of regular attendance so that children learn effectively and don't miss vital steps in their learning.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school 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.

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
- Working together to improve school attendance (Aug 2024)

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

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and responsibilities

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

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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss D. Helme and can be contacted via 01204 571749 or helmed@highfield.bolton.sch.uk

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Send weekly attendance data and a list of children below 90% (PA) each Friday to the attendance lead.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with Early Intervention Team officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs S. Wakes who can be contacted via 01204 571749 and wakess@highfield.bolton.sch.uk

Class teachers

The class teachers are responsible for:

Monitoring and analysing attendance data. They are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using electronic registers:

Registers open at 8:40am each morning. Children who are in school between 8:40am and 8:55am will be given an attendance mark.

Taking registers again at the beginning of the afternoon session (same procedures to apply).

Working with parents to ensure their child is in school and report concerns to the Attendance lead.

School office

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and pass on to Attendance Lead
- Mark children arriving late from 8.55am to 9:30am with a code L (late before registers close).
- Mark children arriving after 9:30am with a code U (late after registers have closed).
- Mark children who are attending an appointment with a code M (medical).
- Support Attendance Officer to contact parents when a child is absent and the parent does not contact the school office.
- Issue letters regarding attendance (as directed by the HT/Attendance lead)

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 9.30am on the day of the absence, 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

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Recording attendance

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 at the start of the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

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 every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

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 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff or leaving a voicemail. **If by the third day, the child is still unwell, the parent/carer must telephone again with an update.** If the child is absent on a Friday and again on the following Monday, the parent/carer must provide another update on Monday morning.

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.

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. The office will request to see an appointment card. Failure to provide an appointment card or hospital correspondence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.

However, 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.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (8:55am to 9:30am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)
- Constant lates will be referred to the HT

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.
- 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 Early Intervention Team Officer, arranging an attendance meeting with parents or conducting a home visit.
- For any student who has a child protection plan or is looked after but placed at home who is absent, we will contact the Early Intervention Team on the first day of absence before 10am on 01204 334220. The Early Intervention team will then conduct a home visit.
- When a pupil has failed to attend regularly, which has resulted in 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence, a 'notice to improve' letter will be sent to the pupils' parents giving them 15 days in which to improve their child's attendance.
- If there is no improvement within the 15 day time frame, school will issue a penalty notice to parents

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports. Weekly class and school attendance is published through a Teachers2Parents email.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence (no more than 5 days) 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, before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments with evidence – **a full day will not be authorised.**
- 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
- Leave to take part in pilgrimage (no more than once during their time at school and not in Y2 or Y6)
- Bereavement/illness of a close family member (in this country or overseas)

In the event that a child is below 90% (Persistent absence), attendance will be unauthorised without a valid reason (the school may ask for medical evidence).

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.

Penalty notices issued for offences will be charged at a rate of £160 per parent per child if parents pay within 28 days of receipt of the penalty notice, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.

The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences because of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

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.

Strategies for promoting attendance

The school actively promotes good attendance and rewards good attendance. Trophies for the best attendance in each Key Stage and the most improved attendance in each Key Stage are in place, shared with the children during assembly times. For children whose attendance is above 95% there is an opportunity to be randomly chosen once a term to receive a £20 shopping voucher and have afternoon tea with the Headteacher and Deputy Head. Attendance for each class is published weekly on Teachers2Parents and on classroom doors.

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

We will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, 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
- Hold termly meetings to discuss individual children with Paul Harper (EIT attendance officer) and invite him to meetings with parents

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.

Analysing attendance

We 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

Using data to improve attendance

We 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

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 half termly meetings to discuss persistent absence and vulnerable pupils
- 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.

Attendance threshold procedures:

Below 92% attendance – raised as a concern at the half-termly attendance/vulnerable pupils meeting. **Below 90% attendance (PA)** – headteacher to be aware of individuals; attendance lead to inform teacher and parents will be sent an email or text expressing school's concerns and warning that if attendance does not increase a formal meeting or health assessment of their child may take place. **Below 80% attendance** – parents will receive an email/phonecall from the DSL inviting them to a formal meeting to discuss how this can be quickly improved.

Below 70%, attendance - parents will receive an email/phonecall from the DSL inviting them to a formal meeting to discuss how this can be quickly improved. An Early Help will be considered.

Each year a school attendance target will be agreed between the Governors, HT and staff.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Head teacher, DSL, Attendance Officer, all teaching / non-teaching staff, School Governors.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Working in partnership with all agencies can only enhance and help us realise the aims of this policy and what ultimately we are trying to achieve.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by Mr D. Glyn-Jones (Headteacher) and Miss D. Helme (DSL). At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governors Standards Committee.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

Codes	SIMS Description	DfE description / explanation	Statistical meaning
I	Present (AM)	Present at the school morning session.	Present
I	Present (PM)	Present at the school afternoon session.	Present
B	Attending any other Approved Educational Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity.	Approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance.	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence – regulated performance or employment abroad	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration	Dual registered at another school.	Attendance not required
E	Suspended or excluded without alternative	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision	Authorised absence
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Holiday not granted by the school.	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment).	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence – Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence
K	Attending alternative provision arranged by the LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved educational activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late arrival before the register is closed.	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason for absence not yet established.	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Absent in other or unknown circumstances.	Unauthorised absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Participating in a sporting activity.	Approved educational activity
Q	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangement.	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.	Attendance not required
R	Religious observance	Religious observance.	Authorised absence
S	Study leave for public examination	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public	Authorised absence
T	Travelling with parent for occupational purposes	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Arrived in school after registration closed.	Unauthorised absence
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Attending work experience	Attending work experience	Approved educational activity
X	Not required to attend – non-compulsory school age pupil	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Attendance not required
Y1	Unable to attend – normal transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.	Attendance not required
Y2	Unable to attend – widespread travel disruption	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.	Attendance not required
Y3	Unable to attend – Unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.	Attendance not required
Y4	Unable to attend – Unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly	Attendance not required
Y5	Unable to attend – criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.	Attendance not required
Y6	Unable to attend – Public health Guidance/Law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.	Attendance not required
Y7	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.	Attendance not required
Z	Pupil not on roll	Prospective pupil not on admission register.	Attendance not required
#	Planned whole school closure	Planned whole school closure.	Attendance not required

Appendix 2: Attendance Monitoring Letter

Monday 6th January 2026

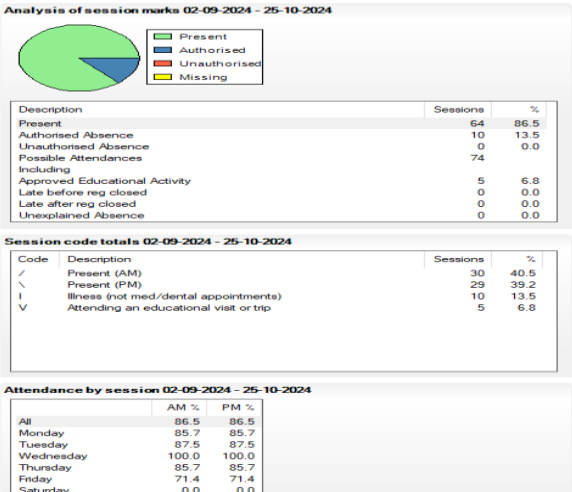
Dear,

RE: Attendance in Autumn Term 2

I have recently checked through the attendance and punctuality records and I am writing to inform you that attendance at the end of Autumn term 1 was 86.5% and it is currently 77.08%. I am aware that has had some illness and a family holiday, this letter is for your information only.

Attendance marks (Attendance Year 2024/2025)

Week Beginning	Mon		Tue		Wed		Thu		Fri	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
02-Sep-24	#	#	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\
09-Sep-24	/	\	/	\	/	\	I	I	I	I
16-Sep-24	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\
23-Sep-24	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\
30-Sep-24	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\	I	I
07-Oct-24	I	I	I	I	/	\	/	\	/	\
14-Oct-24	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\
21-Oct-24	/	V	V	V	V	V	#	#	#	#
28-Oct-24	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
04-Nov-24	I	I	/	\	/	\	I	I	/	\
11-Nov-24	/	/	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\
18-Nov-24	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	I	I
25-Nov-24	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\
02-Dec-24	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\
09-Dec-24	/	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
16-Dec-24	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\	/	\

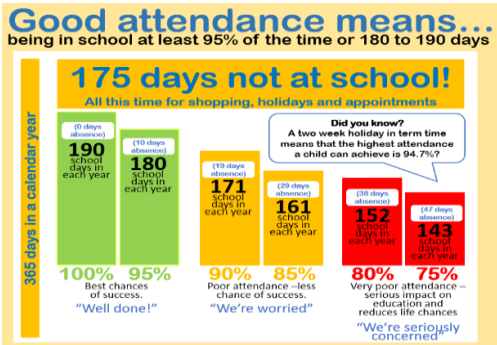


In line with the Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance (August 2024), school is required to invite you to a meeting to discuss attendance where there are more than 10 unauthorised absences (5 full days) in a 10 week period, which can lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

I would not like any of our families to incur a fine and ask that we work together to ensure attendance is as good as it can be.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D Glyn Jones
Head Teacher



Appendix 3: Punctuality Reminder Letter

Date:

Dear,

As a part of our monitoring of attendance and punctuality, in conjunction with the Early Intervention Team, this half term we are addressing our children who have been have arrived or been collected late on more than three occasions this half term. As you can see from our records, has arrived late on 9 occasions and been collected late on 4 occasions.

Highfield Punctuality Record Spring Term 2

Name	Class	26 th Feb – 2 nd Mar		5 th – 9 th Mar		12 th – 16 th Mar		19 th – 23 rd Mar		26 th - 29 th Mar	
		AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
		28 th 9.45am 29 th 9am 2 nd 9.20am	2 nd 3.28pm			12 th 9.05am 15 th 9.05am 16 th 9am	12 th 3.25pm 15 th 3.28pm	20 th 9.05am		28 th 9.05am 29 th 9.15am	
		28 th 9.45am 29 th 9am 2 nd 9.20am	2 nd 3.28pm			12 th 9.05am 15 th 9.05am 16 th 9am	12 th 3.25pm 15 th 3.28pm	20 th 9.05am		28 th 9.05am 29 th 9.15am	

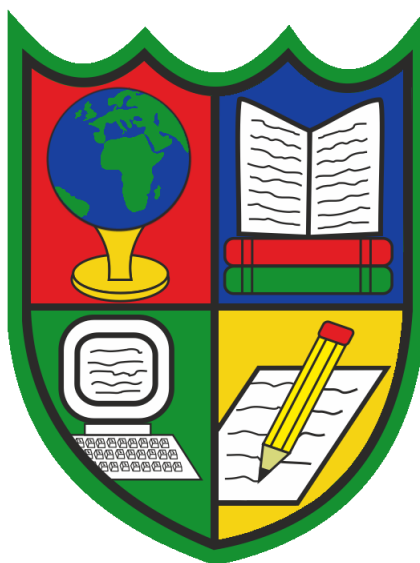
This time in the morning is important for the children in lining up with their class, settling into school, registration and there are intervention groups that the children would benefit from.

Please can you come into school to discuss this matter.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Mrs Sheridan Wakes
Attendance Officer

Appendix 4: Definitions of Attendance



Highfield Definitions of Attendance and Punctuality

Excellent:	98-100%
Good:	95-97.9%
Needs to improve:	92-94.9%
Cause for concern:	Below 92%

The school aims for all pupil attendance and punctuality to be good or better.

If a child's attendance or punctuality drops below 92%
or is significantly lower than usual it becomes
a cause for concern.

Please note that when no reason for absence is provided the system automatically generates an unauthorised absence that is recorded as N.

Appendix 5: Refusal Of A Holiday Request

Date:

Dear

REQUEST FOR HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

With reference to your recent request for additional holidays in term time for

Your request for authorisation of absence for a holiday during term-time has been carefully considered, but it has not been possible to authorise. I do not accept that the circumstances of your request are exceptional, therefore under Educational Law I am unable to authorise any absences for the period in question.

If you would like further information about this decision please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Glyn-Jones
Head Teacher

Appendix 6: Notice to Improve Letter

Date:

Dear

RE:

School attendance is hugely important. For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, for their learning, wellbeing, and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

You, are a parent/carer of, (called in this notice “the pupil”) who is a registered pupil at Highfield Primary School.

School have offered support to you and your family to try and help improve’s attendance, including:

1. **Telephone calls.** The school contacted you on, when your child was absent to understand why your child was absent and to offer their support with any issues your child may be having.
2. **An Attendance Overview Letter.** The school wrote to you, letting you know about’s attendance, the impact of their continued absence, and inviting you to contact the school to discuss the situation further.
3. **An Attendance Support Meeting Invite.** The school invited you to a meeting to discuss your child’s unauthorised absences and to offer support to ensure that their attendance improved. You were notified of the consequences should your child continue to have unauthorised absence and you did not effectively engage with the support offered.

Unfortunately, despite the support that was offered, attendance remains a cause for concern. Between and the pupil failed to attend regularly at Highfield Primary School, which resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absences being recorded. Please see the attached registration certificate for details.

You now have 15 school days (3 weeks) in which to improve your child’s attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any unauthorised absences from school during this period. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, a Penalty Notice may be requested. A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, with the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days. (this should be changed to omit the opportunity to pay the reduced amount if this relates to a second PN within a 3 year rolling period.)

NB – A Penalty Notice may be issued as soon as an unauthorised absence is recorded.

If you wish to discuss this notice, or discuss what further support is available, please contact Mrs Wakes or Miss Helme as soon as possible:

Yours sincerely,

Mr D. Glyn-Jones
Head Teacher

