

SIR GRAHAM BALFOUR SCHOOL SPECIALISING IN MATHS AND COMPUTING



ATTENDANCE POLICY

*learning
working
together
succeeding*

CHANGE CONTROL

Date	Issue	Details of change
<i>17/05/04</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>Initial Document</i>
<i>10/07/07</i>	<i>1.a</i>	<i>Major rewrite</i>
<i>10/11/07</i>	<i>1.b</i>	<i>Revised following review by Students and Community</i>
<i>15/01/08</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>Issue etc updated following Governor approval</i>

AUTHORISATION

Approved at full Governors Meeting on 14th January 2008.

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Date:

SIR GRAHAM BALFOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Principles

Non-attendance is one of the single biggest blocks to achievement. Whether absence is due to term-time holidays, dubious illnesses or truancy, not being present at school disadvantages children.

There is a moral imperative to the focus on persistent absentees, because this is a group of young people which is unlikely to attain well at school, unlikely to stay on in education after the age of 16, and significantly more likely to engage in self-harming activities and anti-social behaviour. By focusing on good attendance we can make a significant impact across the range of outcomes stated in *Every Child Matters* for which we are held accountable, including those relating to school standards and narrowing attainment gaps.

The promotion of school partnerships with parents and carers, as well as with outside agencies, is important in reducing persistent absenteeism. Offering our students an exciting curriculum and ensuring that school is a safe and enjoyable place is an equally important aspect. In this way we hope that the School Environment and Ethos of inclusion will foster a coherent and effective approach to tackling the problem of persistent absenteeism.

Registering Attendance

This is the responsibility of the classroom teacher and the following procedures must be followed.

Statutory registration morning registration

Registers are to be marked using Lesson Monitor at the beginning of period 1.

Students not present in the lesson should be marked with an "N" (No reason yet supplied for absence).

Students who arrive late should be given an "L" mark and the number of minutes late recorded.

Students who arrive substantially later than the rest of the group are deemed to be interrupting learning and should be issued in addition with a BC1 by the classroom teacher.

Students present should be given a "/" mark (present for that session).

Paper registers should only be marked when there is no possible alternative (e.g. for cover lessons) and these should be returned promptly to the Attendance Officer.

All registers should be marked within 10 minutes at the start of the session.

Statutory registration afternoon registration

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Registers are to be marked at the beginning of period 6 using the above procedures.

Lesson registration (non statutory)

It is also school policy to mark registers using the above procedure for each lesson taught. This includes House Time.

Students of non-statutory school age

It has been agreed that the above procedures will be adopted for registration across the collegiate. (With the exception of the Behaviour Consequence strategy, BC system)

Students who arrive late

Members of Leadership Group have an established Rota built into the school timetable. The member of Leadership Group on duty monitors late morning arrivals at reception on a daily basis according to the Rota.

Students who arrive late for the morning session will be issued with a red slip indicating time of arrival at school.

Details of the lateness are to be recorded and for the first lateness a warning is issued.

The student will be marked late on the register by the School Attendance Officer using the above procedures and statutory codes.

Subsequent lateness will attract a detention during school time.

After the fourth lateness a letter is sent home informing parents that additional lateness will attract a Leadership Detention after school .

Each term the students start with a clean slate.

Lateness for the afternoon session is to be recorded using Lesson Monitor procedures and a BC1 should be issued if the student is substantially late without good reason.

Dealing with absence:

Authorised absences

These are sessions away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical appointments or compassionate reasons. Holiday leave authorised by the school after application by the parent/carer counts as authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

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These are sessions away from school where there is no good reason proffered or where leave of absence has not been approved.

Teaching staff should mark unexplained absence with an “N” whether or not they consider it to be authorised or unauthorised.

Recording authorised/unauthorised absence

This is the responsibility of the school Attendance Officer.

Absences can be authorised by the Attendance officer using the appropriate statutory codes.

Absence due to illness requires either a telephone call or letter from a parent. There is no necessity to have a doctor’s note, though this may be advisable if the illness is severe or long term. An exception would be a student with under 85% attendance where a letter has been sent home requesting medical notes.

Absence due to holiday or compassionate leave should be authorised only if the required application has been completed by the parent/carer in writing and approved by the Leadership Group member to whom that responsibility has been delegated.

Absences may also be authorised by the Attendance Officer using first day telephone calls. (First day calls are telephone calls to the parent //carer made on the first day of absence by the Attendance Officer or delegate).

Where possible, all absences for **statutory registration periods** should be cleared by the end of the day or if this is not practicable at the very least by the end of the week in which the absence has occurred. (Any “N” marks being replaced by the appropriate statutory code)

Attendance Monitoring Group

The LA parents leaflet (Appendix 3) sets out clearly guidelines for attendance target figures, indicating that attendance below 90% is considered worrying and any attendance under 85% may trigger legal action.

Sir Graham Balfour School considers good attendance to be of paramount importance and as a result has set up a group whose function is to both monitor student attendance, counsel students/parents/carers where attendance is an issue as well as recommending legal action in consultation with the Deputy Headteacher responsible for student support.

The group, consisting of the EWO, Student Support Manager, nominated Head of House and the School Attendance Officer, meets weekly.

Meeting dates and times are set annually by the House Head delegate after consultation.

The function of the group is to monitor student attendance of target groups of students as well as those students who fall below the 85% trigger.

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The monitoring group produces reports of any actions taken and distributes those to the relevant parties (House Heads, Tutors Leadership Team).

The group is responsible for initiating Fixed Penalty notices or legal action where that is deemed necessary after consultation, as well as recommending support structures to encourage better attendance for the individuals concerned. (See Appendices 1/1a)

The group also, in conjunction with the Attendance Officer, should keep House Heads up to date so they can be involved in the counseling and monitoring of students in their care.

The School Attendance Officer

This is a key post to ensure that attendance data is promptly and accurately recorded, this being essential if intervention is to be successful. Prompt action can prevent poor patterns of attendance becoming embedded. The provision of accurate data is also important in improving attendance by assisting in the management of rewards.

Responsibilities

Ensure that registers for statutory sessions are marked promptly and develop methods to ensure that this happens in conjunction with the Leadership link.

Record authorised and unauthorised absences using statutory codes and the procedures outlined above.

Attend meetings of the Attendance Monitoring group and provide and distribute data for this group.

Meet weekly with the Leadership Link to discuss any strategies needed to improve the recording of attendance.

Provide weekly reports four House Heads particularly of groups with poor attendance.

Liaise with the Student Support Manager setting up target groups for truancy watch as required. (This will also include lesson truancy/internal truancy.)

Monitor lates in conjunction with the Receptionist and ensure this information is passed weekly to House Heads.

Liaise with the Leadership Link and School Administration Officer to assist in the production of statutory reports and reports for Governors.

Work with the ICT technical staff, School Administration Officer to assist staff with Electronic Registration and manage the registration information on the Gateway. In addition, the Attendance Officer is to assist the head of Sixth Form by collating the attendance data for this group as well as managing the applications and

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subsequent paperwork of students eligible for E.M.A.(Educational Maintenance Allowance).

Leadership Link

This is member of the leadership group who has been delegated the responsibility of managing attendance. It is essential that the Leadership Group keep a watching brief over attendance as good attendance plays such an important part in ensuring the continued success of all students.

Responsibilities

Monitor and assist the work of the School Attendance Officer

Work with the School Administration Officer in preparing annual reports for Governors

Ensure that Leadership Group are kept up to date by presenting half termly reports.

Attend students and Community sub-committee meetings as appropriate.

Update the School Attendance Policy in consultation with Leadership Group and Governors.

Prepare and ensure the distribution to parents of annual letters setting out key dates and statutory information regarding attendance.

Consult with the Attendance Monitoring group to refine and improve procedures.

Family Holiday Requests During Term Time

The Head Teacher has the discretion to grant up to ten days authorised absence for family holidays in a school year. However, each application will be considered individually taking into account factors such as the timing of the holiday and the student's attendance.

- Parents cannot demand a leave of absence as an automatic right.
- Parental requests must be in writing.
- Schools cannot apply blanket policies to approve/reject all applications.
- All requests must be considered on their own merits.
- Extended periods of absence will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.
- The power to authorise/unauthorised a leave of absence belongs to the head teacher.

In order to ensure equity within and between schools, Sir Graham Balfour have decided to adopt the county protocols as detailed in appendix 2

Attendance Rewards

Rewards using the House Point System are an important part of Behaviour for Learning and this too should be applied to encouraging good attendance.

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Students with 98% attendance and above will receive a praise postcard from House Tutors each half term. Appropriate attendance data will be made available to House Tutors to ensure that this is manageable.

Students with 100% attendance will be awarded also with a certificate.

Students whose attendance is 100% for the year will be awarded a framed attendance certificate at the appropriate key stage celebration evening. In addition, those students will be entered into a separate attendance prize draw to be held annually.

Monitoring

An important part of monitoring is ensuring that the School has clear targets to achieve. Targets must be based on a recognised measure and to this end Sir Graham Balfour School will adopt the procedures outlined in appendix 1 using Free School Meals "Quintiles". (See appendix 3.)

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Leadership Link to set targets in consultation with the Leadership Group and Governors

Student absence will be monitored through the Attendance Monitoring Group and current Pastoral system using the data supplied by the School Attendance Officer.

Administration and procedures will be monitored by the Leadership Link and reported by Leadership Group minutes and students and community committee minutes.

Targets to be monitored by Governors through Head Teacher's report which will report data prepared using information obtained from SIMS lesson monitor.

Parents can monitor individual student attendance using the Gateway/School website

The policy is to be reviewed regularly according to the rota established by The Governing Body

A Code of Conduct Protocol for the issuing of Penalty Notices

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SGB Attendance
Appendix 1

Effective Date: 15th January 2008

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SIR GRAHAM BALFOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Children and Life Long Learning Directorate

STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY PROTOCOL Penalty Notice Protocol

Rationale:

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for students to maximise their educational opportunities. In recognition of this, the law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered student, without good reason or the agreement of the school.

Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under section 444, of the Education Act 1996 and section 36, of the Children's Act 1989, to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) is responsible for enforcing this responsibility for the County Council and does so by supporting parents and students to overcome barriers to regular attendance, via a range of assessment and intervention strategies.

Sanctions, of any nature, are for use only where parental co-operation is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem. They are used as a means to support parents to meet their responsibility in law and only where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure an improvement.

Legal Framework:

From 27th February 2004, section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, supported by the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004, empowers designated County Council officers, Head Teachers, Deputy & Assistant Head Teachers authorised by a Head Teacher and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

However, to ensure that the procedures used to determine when to issue a Penalty Notice are fair and objective, it must comply with other law, including the Human Rights Act and all Equal Opportunities legislation.

As a result, the County Council has responsibility for developing a local protocol that will govern how all of the partners named in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, will issue Penalty Notices.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence;

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- It is proposed that use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per student per academic year
- In cases where there is more than one poor-attending student in a family multiple notices may be issued. This decision will involve careful consideration and consultation with schools by the EWS regarding the family's current circumstances;
- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent or carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

To ensure that Staffordshire County Council has a consistent approach to the issuing of Penalty Notices the EWS will apply their current criteria to each case, i.e.:

- there must be at least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the student during the current or previous term, effectively an 85% attendance trigger; attendance should be calculated cumulatively.
- it is suggested that schools adopt the standard authorisation of holidays protocol as part of their attendance policy, as consideration of these cases will be based upon that protocol. Where parents fail to comply with procedure contained within the protocol a Penalty Notice may be considered.

Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:

- It is proposed that the EWS will issue Penalty Notices in Staffordshire either as part of their ongoing casework or following referral from schools. It is intended that this process will ensure consistent and equitable delivery, retain school-home relationships and allow cohesion with other enforcement sanctions.
- the EWS will only issue Penalty Notices by post and never as an on the spot action i.e. during a Truancy Sweep. This will ensure that all evidential requirements are in place and meet Health and Safety requirements for the County Council employees.

Where Schools, Staffordshire Police and neighbouring LA's ask that Staffordshire County Council issue such a Notice, their request will be investigated and only actioned by the EWS where:

- the EWS is satisfied that it has all relevant information;
- the circumstances of the student's absence meets the requirements of this Protocol;
- there is a reasonable expectation that the use of a Penalty Notice would improve attendance; and
- the issue of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies in place or enforcement sanctions already being used.

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The EWS will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt and where the criteria are met will:

- issue a formal written warning to the parent or carer that they may be issued with a Penalty Notice;
- in the same letter set a period of 20 school days within which the student must have no unauthorised absence; and
- issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 20 school day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

Procedure for withdrawing Penalty Notices:

Once issued, a Penalty Notice may be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- the Council is satisfied that there is proof that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person;
- the use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this Protocol; or
- the parent can show that they did not receive the Penalty Notice e.g. it was delivered to the wrong address.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

- Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice;
- Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's or carer's liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice;
- Payment of a Penalty Notice within 28 days is £50 and payment after this time but within 42 days is £100; and
- The County Council retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).

Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996.

Policy and Publicity

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- Identifying information about Penalty Notices issued to particular parent's or specific children should not be made public;
- Issuing of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Authority's Attendance Policy;
- All school Attendance Policies should include information on the issuing of Penalty Notices and this will be brought to the attention of all parents;
- The LA will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional or public information material.

Reporting & Review:

The EWS will:

- report at regular intervals to the Schools Forum and Staffordshire Police on the deployment and outcomes of Penalty Notices;
- make termly reports to the Staffordshire County Council's Management Committee on attendance matters which will include Penalty Notice use; and
- review Penalty Notice use at regular intervals and amend the enforcement strategy as appropriate.

Education Penalty Notices

Information for Parents

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children go to school regularly. The local authority can now issue Penalty Notices if a parent fails to make sure that their children receive the education they deserve. This leaflet tells you about these notices.

School Attendance and the Law

Any absence from school is a cause for concern. Only by attending every day will your child have the best chance to get the most from their education.

The headteacher at your child's school must decide whether to authorise an absence. That is to agree that there was a legitimate reason for your child not to be in school.

There are only four legitimate reasons for absence:

- Religious observance
- Illness of the child
- The death of a close family member
- An urgent medical or dental appointment

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) can take legal action against you if you fail to make sure that your children go to school regularly and there is no legitimate reason for the absence. This action might take one of two forms:

- The issuing of a Penalty Notice
- Prosecution in the local Magistrates Court

This information is about Penalty Notices and how the EWS will issue them.

What they are

Penalty Notices are fines, issued by Staffordshire EWS, for a child's unauthorised absence from school.

The service will always consider legal action when there is no legitimate reason for absence.

How they will be issued

Notices will be issued by post. They will not be issued during a Truancy Sweep or as part of a meeting with parents.

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This graph shows the effect of missing time from school over a year. Every school session is important if your child is not going to fall behind.

The EWS will not take legal action if previously poor attendance is now improving.

Instead they'll monitor the case and support the student. If attendance doesn't improve, or if absences begin to increase the EWS will re-assess the case to see if legal action is needed.

Penalty Notices

What they mean

Parents who are subject to a penalty notice have 3 choices:

Pay the fine early, within 28 days, and it is £50

Pay after 28 days but within 42 days and the fine is £100.

Don't pay the fine. In this case the Notice will be withdrawn and Magistrates Court proceedings will start. This could result in a fine of up to £1000 for each child whose attendance is causing concern and for each parent involved in the prosecution.

Further information

If you would like further information about Penalty Notices please contact your district Education Welfare Team:

If you have concerns about your child's education you should, initially, discuss these with school.

District	Telephone
Stafford and South Staffordshire	01785 356949



**SIR GRAHAM
BALFOUR SCHOOL**

SGB Attendance
Appendix 2

**APPLICATION FOR STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM
SCHOOL FOR PARENTAL HOLIDAY**

Full name(s) of child(ren):

Address:

Reason for application and dates:

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s):

Date: _____

Office use only

Request seen by Head Teacher/Head of Year: Y/N

Current Att %:

Agreement reached: Y/N

Other outcome:

Date:

The head teacher will consider the following points before authorising leave

1. The child's previous attendance history.
2. The age of the child(ren).
3. The child's stage of education.
4. The time of year (SATS or exams).
5. The nature of the trip (an exceptional experience).
6. Holiday already taken/granted within current academic year.
7. Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave from their employer.

School Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart

Name of student: _____
 The merits of each individual request should be evaluated by providing answers to ALL the following questions and scoring accordingly.

(* Where the holiday already taken in the current academic year exceeds the DfES guideline "i.e. maximum of 10 days in any academic year", any further requests should **NOT** be authorised.)

	Points Possible	Points
When is the holiday planned for?	September = 2pts May = 2pts Other dates = 1pt	
Student's attendance level is? (Up until Autumn half term use the % figure from the previous year.)	Less than 70% = 5pts 70% to 80% = 4pts 80% to 85% = 3pts 85% to 93% = 2pts More than 93% = 1pt	
How close is the student to a SATs assessment or other examination?	Non-SATs/Exam Year = 1pt More than 16 wks = 1pt 8 – 16 weeks = 2pts 2 – 8 weeks = 3pts less than 2 weeks = 4pts	
How much holiday leave has already been authorised in current academic year?*	8 or more = 4pts 5 to 7 days = 3pts 2 to 4 days = 2pts 1 to 3 days = 1pt	
Subtotal		
Any special mitigating circumstances/aspects of the holiday which can be classed as part of that students curriculum requirements (& work set to satisfy these) as below:	Subtract 2 points from subtotal.	
Details of mitigation:		
Total		
<p>Leave for family holiday where the total is 8 or more <u>should NOT be authorised</u></p> <p>The only exception to the above may be where there are, in the opinion of the head teacher 'exceptional circumstances.' (incl. religious and cultural considerations; add comment in mitigation box). If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings holiday should NOT be authorised.</p> <p>DELETE WHERE APPROPRIATE:- REQUEST APPROVED / REQUEST DENIED</p>		

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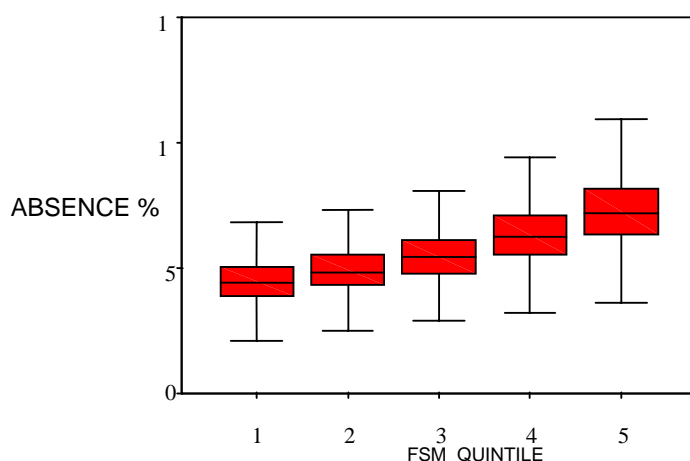
STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Children and Life Long Learning Directorate

SGB attendance
Appendix 3.

DfES Absence Targets

1. The new Public Service Agreement target for school absence is to reduce the 2002/03 level of school absence by 8% by 2007/08. Achieving the new target will result in around 36,000 more students back in school each day by 2008. In turn, we expect this improvement to support progress towards other targets, such as the key stage attainment targets.
2. The link between absence and attainment is clear. For example, in 2003, on average, three quarters of students in schools with absence levels of below 6.5% achieved five A*-Cs at GCSE. In schools where absence was slightly higher – between 7.5% - 8.5% - the number of students achieving 5 A*-Cs fell to little more than half.
3. The single strongest factor correlating with school absence rates - both authorised and unauthorised - is the proportion of students who receive free school meals (FSM). In estimating the level of improvement to be achieved by 2008, we grouped schools into quintiles according to their FSM rate in January 2003. The fifth quintile was divided into deciles (5A & 5B) due to its wide range. See tables below.

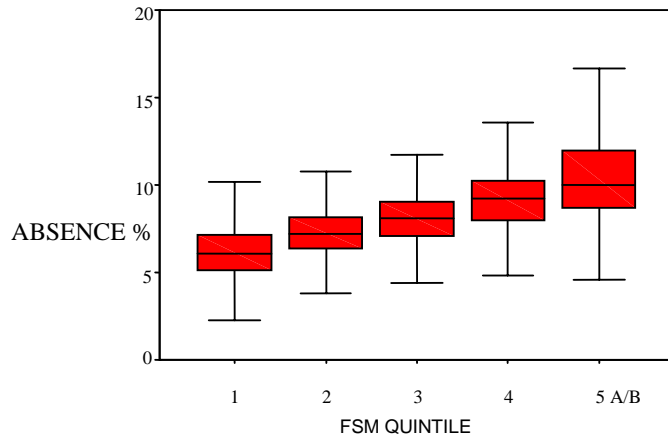
PRIMARY SCHOOL ABSENCE 2002-3 BY FSM



FSM Quintile	1	2	3	4	5A	5B
Level of FSM	0% - 3.4%	3.5% - 7.5%	7.6% - 13.9%	14.0% - 26.5%	26.6% - 37.1%	37.2%+
Absence						
Median	4.4%	4.8%	5.4%	6.3%	6.9%	7.5%

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SECONDARY SCHOOL ABSENCE 2002-3 BY FSM



FSM Quintile	1	2	3	4	5A	5B
Level of FSM	0% - 4.8%	4.9% - 8.5%	8.6% - 13.8%	13.9% - 24.2%	24.3% - 35.4%	35.5%+
Absence						
Median	6.1%	7.2%	8.1%	9.2%	9.9%	10.2%

4. The anticipated national level of improvement (8%) is based on the performance of all schools with absence levels above the 2003 median level for their FSM quintile improving to at least the 2003 median for that quintile. For example, a secondary school with an FSM level of 10% and absence of 9% would be expected to reduce its level of absence to 8.1% by 2008. In estimating the national level of improvement, schools at or below the median level of absence for their FSM quintile are being asked to maintain their current level of performance.

LETTER TO PARENTS/CARERS

DGW/DEM

February 2008

Dear Parent/Carer,

As part of our review concerning students' attendance and holidays taken during term time we have made the following decisions which are in line with Local Authority guidelines and the School Governors' recommendations:

- Only 10 days holiday in any one academic year (September – July) are allowed by the Local Authority. In some cases where a student's attendance is poor the holiday will not be authorised and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- Due to the importance of your child's academic and social education, **holidays at the following times are very strongly discouraged:**
 - Autumn term in Year 7
 - January to after SATS (mid May) in Year 9
 - Throughout Year 10, 11, 12, 13 (external examination years)
- Requests for holidays in term time should be made by using the Leave of Absence form attached. This will be considered by the Headteacher or his representative. You are reminded that holidays are not an automatic right.

I do hope you understand that the above decisions have been taken in the interests of your child's education and overall welfare.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Wright
Headteacher