

Attendance Policy

Reviewed	September 2022	Leader of Policy Review	Mr. J MacDonald
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Introduction

Regular school attendance is the prerequisite to success for all learners and its importance cannot be underestimated. It must be a whole school priority that is reviewed and refined and all stakeholders in the school must work collectively to promote and secure regular attendance for learners, as poor attendance is a barrier to both achievement and wellbeing.

A child's success at school is likely to be affected negatively by poor attendance. Those who do not attend regularly may not be able to keep up with their work and in a busy school day it can sometimes be difficult for schools to find the extra time needed to help a child catch up. In addition, research shows that children who are not in school are more vulnerable and can be easily drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour and are more likely to be unemployed after leaving school.

Hawarden High will encourage learners to attend regularly, promote the importance of regular attendance and support learners with poor attendance to remove the barriers underpinning this poor attendance. This whole school approach also covers the issues of punctuality, monitoring attendance, attendance interventions, rewarding good attendance, the role of the pastoral team, the home-school partnership and the EWS (Education Welfare Service).

Legal Responsibilities

Schools are required under The Education (Student Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to take an attendance register twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It may also contribute information to students' end-of-term reports, records of achievement and leavers' references. An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial if poor attendance and punctuality within a school are to be tackled. It is vital that students are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day.

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school, alternative provision or by elective home education (the parent can choose to provide education for their child).

A student's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parents / carers of a student who is persistently late are guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness (after the close of the Register) in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if late arrival is not resolved.

Principles

Hawarden High School will:

- Set high expectations in terms of attendance
- Complete a register twice a day at the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session for the purposes of school attendance

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- Complete lesson registers throughout the day for the purpose of lesson attendance
- Share absence reporting procedures with parents/ carers
- Establish an ethos of promoting and celebrating regular attendance, displaying rates around the school and rewarding good student attendance
- Support parents/ carers in improving their child's attendance and seek to remove the barriers to poor attendance
- Ensure that the school curriculum and environment are appropriate to all learners
- Communicate attendance concerns effectively to all stakeholders
- Liaise effectively with the ESW service and other external agencies

Roles in School

- Assistant Headteacher (AH)- Student Support is responsible for the strategic overview of whole school attendance
- Heads of House (HOH) are responsible for monitoring attendance in each house, actively promoting the importance of good attendance within the house (including within assemblies), implementing attendance interventions, conducting attendance meetings and liaison with school EWO.
- Assistant Heads of House work in conjunction with the HOH to monitor attendance and liaison with parents/ carers in relation to attendance, amending registers as necessary.
- Form tutors will mark the register accurately, record reasons for absence and safely store communications related to these absences.
- Classroom teacher will mark registers accurately.
- Office staff will liaise with parents/ carers in relation to attendance, amending registers as necessary.
- EWO will support the school by assisting in improving overall attendance and reducing persistent absence in school.

Role of the Local Authority Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service is a statutory service which supports schools to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly. Schools have a designated EWO who will liaise with the school on a regular basis.

The EWO will meet/liase with a senior member of staff to discuss cases and to highlight concerns. Schools have the lead role on all matters with regard to their attendance register and all recording of attendance marks is entirely at the discretion of a Headteacher in accordance with published WG Coding Guidance.

<https://gov.wales/school-attendance-codes-guidance>

The EWO service has adopted a revised approach to the manner in which it supports schools. The EWO Service has created a dedicated service statement and One Page Profile that underlines the manner in which the service now operates (See FCC Education Engagement Services Policy and Practice Model Document Sept 2022)

The EWO service now utilises current SIMS data to identify patterns and cases that may be of concern on a proactive basis. Regular school attendance data profiles are also conducted by the Senior Learning Advisor-Engagement to identify patterns and individuals that may require support
Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually under the Education Act 1996. Where parents fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child (or otherwise) they are potentially committing an offence and the EWO should be informed at the earliest opportunity.

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It is unfortunate, but on occasions recourse to statutory powers may be required. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) application or in the prosecution of parents/carers. It is FCC policy to prosecute all unpaid FPN cases. However the EWO services does not take this action lightly and will endeavour to work and support parents, schools and pupils to improve attendance levels until all of these avenues have been exhausted.

Role of School Improvement Advisors (SIA)

Schools should work with their School Improvement Advisors who engages with school and advises/supports to promote the school improvement process. The SIA and the LA EWO Service can work closely together where this is possible to discuss those schools that may require additional support and where attendance is a concern.

Attendance Panels/Attendance Improvement Plans

Attendance Panels are a strategy used in Wales to address attendance matters

Attendance panels often include School Governors, members of the Senior Staff in a school, EWO service, and parent/pupil. These panels can be utilised to examine progress and to review an Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP).

Parents should be invited into school as part of the graduated response to school attendance to discuss their child's attendance. An Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP) can be completed and signed during these meetings.

Letters of invitation to take part in Attendance Panel/AIP meetings should be sent to parents in advance by school wherever this is possible. If a parent/carer is not available to attend then another letter should be sent to offer a further opportunity. Failure to attend without notification can result in any absences remaining unauthorised by the Headteacher.

Community Education Patrols (CEP)

Community Education Patrols are a strategy employed under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 when hotspots are identified at VARM/ASB.

N Wales Police have the power to engage parents found with children during school hours. Any child found unaccompanied by an adult can be taken back to school or to a designated place of safety.

Community Education Patrols are employed as an occasional strategy that is dependent on the availability of resources and is intended to promote the benefits of regular school attendance/to promote partnership working.

Parents and pupils details are logged, along with the reasons for the pupil being away from school. Schools are emailed to inform them of the details obtained. (Not currently running within FCC)

Procedures

Marking a register:

- Group tutors and classroom teachers will only mark students present that are present in the room with them.
- The register should be taken in the first 5 minutes of the lesson, in silence, in line with the lesson routines expectations.
- Students arriving after morning registration but before 10.05am shall be marked as late (L)
- Students arriving after 10.05am will be marked absent from the morning session (U).

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- If students are extracted from a lesson, the responsibility for marking the student present lies with the member of staff that has extracted the student from the lesson.
- If any technological issues prevent attendance being recorded on SIMs, then a list of students present must be emailed or sent physically to the main office.
- The school office staff will email any staff that have not completed their registers at 10am and 2pm as a reminder that they urgently need completing.

Absence procedure

- Assistant heads of house will check that there are no missing registers at 10.30am.
- Parent/ carers of absent students will be messaged at 11.00am using SIMs
- If student brings a note, group tutor records the reason for absence and keeps the note in a folder in a safe and secure location. This note may be a note in the planner which can be retained there.
- If absence is reported via telephone, email or text message, office staff or AHOH, dependent on who takes the call or receives the message, will record reason for absence.
- Where there is still unauthorised absence after a one-week period, AHOH will run a report on SIMs which is passed onto tutors to share with students, who will write absences in planner.
- Where there is still unauthorised absence after a two-week period, or attendance has failed to improve, HOH will send a letter home.
- Where there is still unauthorised absence after a four-week period, or attendance has failed to improve, HOH will invite parent/ carer into school for an attendance meeting.
- Where there is still unauthorised absence after a six-week period, or attendance has failed to improve, parent/ carer is referred to EWO.

The schools Head Teacher is the only person that should determine whether an absence is authorised or remains unauthorised.

Absences maybe authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness.
- Religious observance.
- Medical/Dental appointments during school hours.
- Fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Holiday agreed by the Head Teacher.
- Agreed Flexi schooling
- Legitimate Dual Registration

Absences should remain unauthorised for the following reasons (Not Comprehensive):

- Truancy.
- Late after the close of registration.
- Staying at home for no legitimate reason – condoned absence.
- Shopping for school uniform.
- Birthdays.
- Holiday not agreed by the Head Teacher.

In addition there are several codes classed as a present mark which include the following:

- Late before the close of register.

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- Educated off site, pupils attending vocational courses at college/pupils attending alternative provision agreed by school.
- Sporting activity.
- Educational visit.
- Traveller absence.
- Interview.
- Work experience.

Monitoring attendance

- Regular meetings between HOH, AHOH and EWO to discuss poor attendance, persistent absenteeism, unauthorised absence and any other factors that may affect student attendance and/ or wellbeing.
- Regular meetings between AH and HOH to discuss attendance monitoring and interventions
- Where a student's attendance drops below 85% they may be referred to the EWO.

Dealing with punctuality

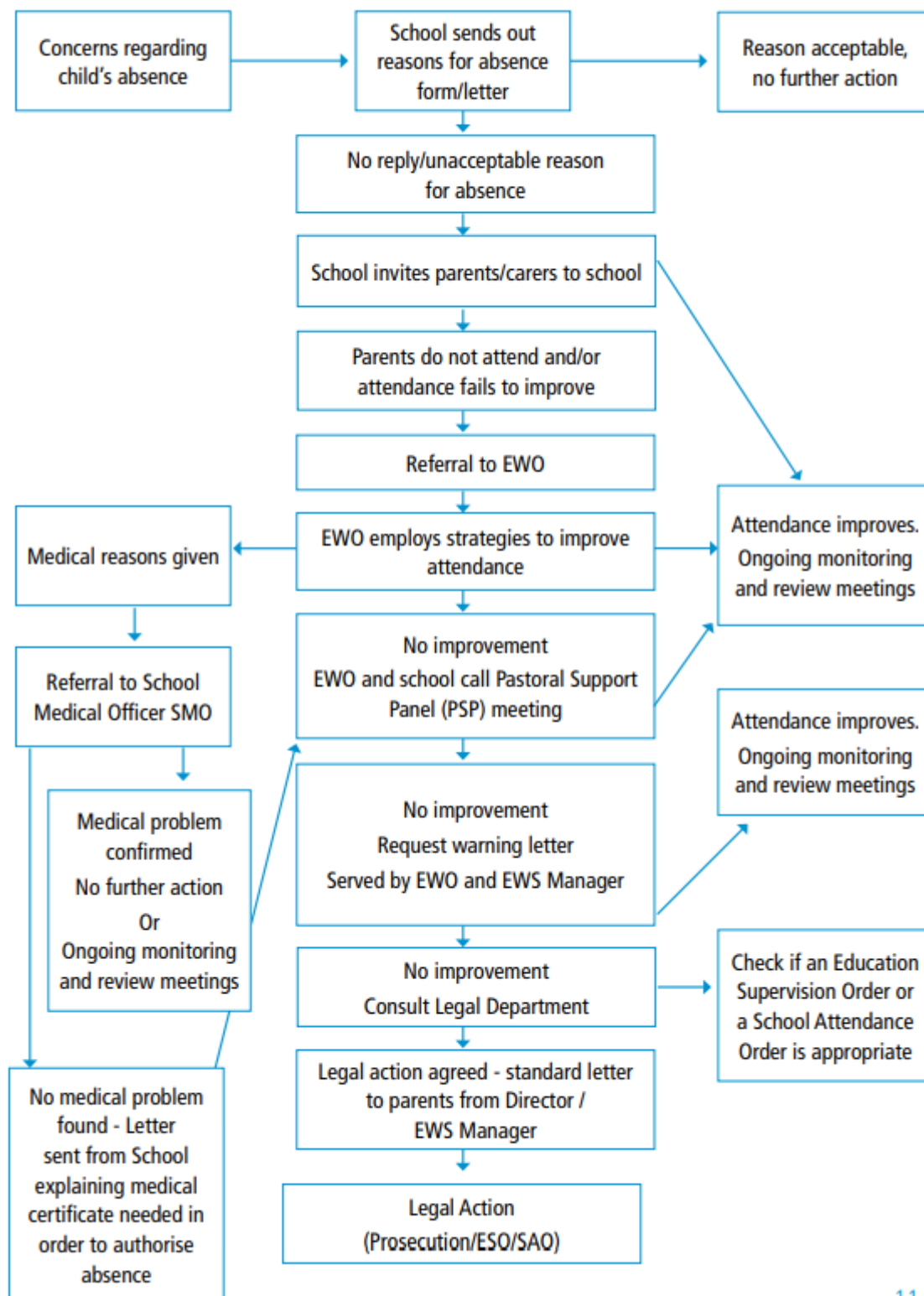
- Students that are late before the registration session is closed receive a standards card mark
- Students that are late to a lesson will receive a standards cards mark
- Students that arrive after registration, without good reason, will attend an afterschool detention; house detention on first occasion in a half-term, SLT detention on 2nd occasion and SLT detention (90 mins) on each subsequent occasion. Parents will be invited into school for a meeting with the HOH on 3rd occasion in a half-term.

Rewards

- Students with 100% attendance will be rewarded with E-Praise points and a certificate in assembly at the end of each half-term
- Students with 100% attendance for the whole school year will be recognised in the end of year whole school assembly
- A form competition will run, rewarding the form group with the best attendance

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Procedures for Non-Attendance



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RECORDING ATTENDANCE

All staff must use the following codes when recording attendance and absence for students.

DESCRIPTION	CODE USED	WILL BE RECORDED AS
Present in AM.	/	Present for morning session.
Present in PM.	\	Present for afternoon session.
Educated off site.	B	Present.
Other authorised absence (from school).	C	Authorised absence.
Dual registered at other school or PRU.	D	Present.
Excluded from school.	E	Authorised absence.
Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement).	G	Unauthorised absence.
Family holiday agreed.	H	Authorised absence.
Absent due to illness.	I	Authorised absence.
Attending interview.	J	Authorised absence.
Arriving in school before 10.05am.	L	Present.
Medical/dental appointment.	M	Authorised absence.
No reason given for absence.	N	Unauthorised absence.
Other unauthorised absence	O	Unauthorised absence.
Approved sporting activity.	P	Present.
Religious observance	R	Authorised absence.
Study leave.	S	Authorised absence.
Traveller absence.	T	Authorised absence.
Late to school after 10.05am.	U	Unauthorised absence.
Educational visit or trip.	V	Present.
Work experience (not work based learning)	W	Present.
Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students	X	Not required to attend
Partial and forced closure	Y	Not required to attend

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RECORDING LATE ARRIVAL

When a student arrives to school late they should be recorded as ...

L	... if they arrive between 8.45 am and the end of period 1 (10.05am).	This will register as a late arrival but be recorded as present for the morning session.
U	... if they arrive after the end of period 1 (10.05am).	This will register as a late arrival but be recorded as an absent for the morning session.

LATES

- All students should be encouraged and supported to be punctual for school.
- If a student is late the group tutor should confirm the reason.
- If the group tutor feels the reason is beyond the student's control, the late should be recorded with a note on SIMs explaining the reason e.g. school bus was late arriving in school
- If the late arrival is due to poor organisation or other reason within the student's control, the late should be recorded on SIMs and standards card mark.
- If a student arrives late for school 3 times within a single term (within their control), they should receive a HOH detention and a letter used to inform parents and record the concern.
- If a student arrives late for school 6 times within a single term (within their control), they should receive an SLT detention. HOH should arrange to meet with parents to discuss concerns and support.
- A **FPN** can be issued for persistent late arrival at school (10 late arrivals within one term).

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

In line with Flintshire County Council (FCC) protocols and procedures in relation to Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate when:

- At least 20 sessions (AM/PM) are lost due to unauthorized absence during the current term. These do not need to be consecutive;
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed (9.30am for morning session, 1.30pm for the afternoon session) in the current term. 'Persistent' means at least 10 sessions of late arrival;
- Truancy; defined as 'The action of staying away from school without good reason'. (Oxford English Dictionary).
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of any child in LA care.

The following must be considered by schools when determining whether a FPN should be issued:

- Level of absence;
- Regard to Equality and Diversity Legislation;
- Statement of Additional Learning Need;
- Previous history and actions taken;
- Defences which may be available;
- WG/LA guidelines;
- Likely effectiveness;

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- Level of parental engagement/cooperation.

Only designated officers within the Inclusion Welfare Service (IWS) can issue FPN within the county of Flintshire. The IWS will establish whether an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 or Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006; The Education (Penalty Notices) Wales Regulations 2013 has been committed.

Procedure for request for issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

1. If it is felt by school that issuing a FPN is appropriate the referral should be made to the Inclusion service using the correct request form (Appendix 1).
2. Officers at the school should also ensure the 'Checklist' (Appendix 1) should also be completed and submitted with the FPN request form.
3. The IWS will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt, and where satisfied that all of the relevant criteria are met, will issue a formal written warning to the parent of the possibility of a FPN being issued.
4. A period of 15 school days will be set within which the student must have no unauthorised absence. This also allows parents the opportunity to respond.
5. At the end of the 15 day period and following due consideration of the facts of the case, a FPN will be issued if the required level of improved attendance has not been achieved.

Process for referral to IWS regarding Issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice

1. School records 20 sessions of unauthorised absence within a term.	Referral is made to IWS using correct referral form.
2. IWS issues a letter warning of risk of issuing FPN and sets target of attendance as zero unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days.	
3.1 Student has no unauthorised absences within next 15 school days.	Process put on hold.
3.2 Student has further unauthorised absence within 15 school days.	FPN is issued.
4 Student has further unauthorised absences within same term.	Return to stage 2 and process repeated.

NOTE

The above procedure 'resets' at the beginning of each term.

However, the IWS have the option to carry over absence data in extreme cases.

A fixed penalty notice can be issued only ONCE per student per academic year.

Repeat offences are likely to be dealt with via legal proceedings which will include additional legal and recovery costs.

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Payment of FPN	Payments made within 28 days of issue - £60 Payment made after 28 days but within 42 days - £120 Payments will not be accepted after 42 days have elapsed and cannot be paid by instalments. FCC retains revenue from FPN.
Non Payment of FPN	Non-payment may result in prosecution for the period covered by the FPN under section 44 of the Education Act 1996.

Application for leave of absence for annual holiday.

The Education Act 1996, section 7, states that parents or carers of children of compulsory school age (ages 5 years to 16 years) must ensure that they receive full time education.

The Welsh Assembly Government advice to local authorities states, "Parents should not normally take students on holiday in term time." Holidays taken in term time are NOT a parental right.

Under normal circumstances the school will NOT authorise any term time holiday requests.

The School does have the discretion to allow up to 10 days authorised absence for the purpose of an annual family holiday in exceptional circumstances. An annual family holiday is a single period of absence that takes place once over the course of one academic year.

The School does not have to agree to absences for holidays; however it has the power to do so. Any more than ten school days holiday in any academic year cannot legally be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances. An exceptional circumstance is likely to be seen as a one-off situation e.g. a close relative is seriously ill, a significant trauma in the family or the holiday may be a "once in a lifetime" unique never-to-be-repeated occasion.

The School will consider every request for leave individually.

The School will consider requests for a term time holiday very carefully, taking into account the student's age, timing of the proposed holiday, its nature, the student's overall attendance and their stage of education and progress. Parents are requested to complete an Application for Leave of Absence for Annual Holiday, which is available from school and this should be presented to the school at least 2 weeks prior to the dates requested. The School has the discretion to allow work to be provided for your child while they are away.

If the School agrees to a holiday in term-time, the student concerned must return to school promptly. In line with the All Wales Attendance Framework 2011, if parents keep a student away for longer than was agreed, the additional time is left as 'unauthorised' and a child who fails to return to school within ten days of the agreed date may be removed from the school register unless an acceptable reason is given for the absence.

Holidays taken without the consent of the school will be recorded as unauthorised and will contribute to overall unauthorised absence figures when considering whether to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

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Appendix 2

Holiday in term time request

Section A

To be completed by the Parent/Carer at least 2 weeks in advance.

Name of Child:	Class	dob	Address	Tel no.
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Holiday dates: (including possibility of late flight arrivals if possible)

From: to

Destination

(NB – This is for child protection reasons ensuring all our children are safeguarded)

Declaration:

I understand that this holiday request may be authorised or not authorised and the Headteacher will use his/her discretion in making the decision based on my child's circumstances. If the Headteacher does not authorise this holiday, this may lead to a request for a Fixed Penalty Notice to the Local Authority EWO Service which will be determined in line with the schools attendance policy. (Please ask for a copy at school or the schools website)

Parent/Carer

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Green	100%	Not missing any lessons.
	99%	Missing about 10 lessons.
	98%	Missing about 20 lessons.
	97%	Missing about 30 lessons.
Amber	96%	Missing about 8 days of school. It will be difficult to catch up on the lost learning from about 40 lessons.
	95%	Missing about 2 weeks of school.
	93%	Missing 14 days of school. This is almost three weeks of Education lost
Red	92% and below	Missing more than 3 weeks of Education. A serious loss of learning that may have a detrimental effect on achievement.

Section B

To be completed by the Head Teacher within at least 1 week from the request.

Reasons for refusal to authorise absence

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Reasons for authorising

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The Head Teacher has authorised/unauthorised (* delete) the following holiday request for the reasons specified above.

Please see attached attendance registration certificate.

Signed

Administration Use	
Statutory/Non-Statutory:	Statutory
School Website:	Yes
Document Author:	Mr. J. MacDonald
GB Committee Overview:	Well-being & Community Committee
Date Document Reviewed and Approved by Committee:	17 January 2023
Document Formulated:	
Date Reviewed Document Approved by FGB:	March 2023
To be Reviewed:	Every two years
Next Review Date:	March 2025