



Attendance Policy for Pupils

Date: November 2023

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School Vision:

"At PAWS we have an ambitious vision to work in partnerships with families, the church and the wider community to prepare all our children with the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours they will need in order to flourish, reach their potential and enjoy fullness of life."

(John 10:10)



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1. Aims

At Pevensey and Westham Church of England Primary School, 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
- Ensure families are kept informed of their child's current level of attendance
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending school.

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](#)

It also refers to:

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

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

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

3.3 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 including monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with families to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating APDoR attendance plans (Assess Plan Do Review) in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Work with the East Sussex Attendance Support Team to tackle persistent absence
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) regarding the absence of children about whom there are safeguarding concerns.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Class teachers share children's attendance figures with parents/cares at parents' evenings and through school reports, highlighting where there are concerns

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls or access online communications from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to relevant staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Alert the DSL of the absence of any identified pupils about whom there are safeguarding concerns on the first day of absence

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school via Arbor to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence. Parents should notify the school by 8.30am on each subsequent day of 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

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

Pupils in Year 1, 2 and 3 must arrive at school by 8.40am on each day.

Pupils in Early Years, Years 4, 5 and 6 must arrive at school by 8.45am on each day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken when the children return to class from lunch.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible via Arbor.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than, e.g., 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for 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 unauthorized and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

If a child arrives late to school, they must enter the building via the main school office with an accompanying adult and inform the office of the reason for lateness.

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

Lateness is monitored regularly and if a pattern of lateness is identified then parents will be contacted by the school attendance team and support put in place to ensure that it is addressed. If parents fail to engage or lateness does not improve, a more formal procedure will be put in place setting targets and consequences for the parents, which may result in a penalty fine being issued.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence (Appendix 2)

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

- 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 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 may make enquiries to known friends or wider family. Staff may visit the family home to try to establish contact.
- 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 the East Sussex Attendance Support Team.
- Where a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start child missing in education procedures as set down by East Sussex County Council guidance. The school will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers.
- The school has a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of being missing in education. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

If a child is leaving the school (other than when moving on to secondary school), parents are asked to give the office staff comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.

4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be through letters, written reports and during parents' evenings. Parents also see their child's current level of attendance when the log in to Arbor.

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 fundamental principles for defining exceptional are: rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

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 Withdrawal from Learning Application form (Appendix 3), available from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental 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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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

The following are NOT considered legitimate reasons and are likely to be **unauthorised**:

- Trips to visit family and friends
- Cheaper family holidays
- Your child's birthday
- Tickets to sports/cultural events

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carer 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school promotes high attendance through:

- Regular sharing of information with parents/carers regarding their child's attendance
- Celebration of high attendance through emails directed to pupils
- Celebration of attendance for school newsletters
- Celebration of improved attendance
- Dedicated page on school website
- Liaison with the East Sussex Attendance Support Team for advice
- The regular sharing of information with parents/carers regarding the importance of attendance such as:
 - statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%
 - regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
 - regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
 - regular attenders find learning more satisfying
 - regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

7. Attendance monitoring

The school regularly monitors all pupils' attendance with a specific focus on pupil who are or who have historically been persistently absent (below 90% attendance).

7.1 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.

7.2 Analyzing 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance update 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

7.4 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/carers 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
- The school will share concerns with parents/carers using a variety of forms including 1:1 conversations, telephone calls, letters and formal meetings.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Positive Relationships and Behaviour policy
- Home/School Agreement

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

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

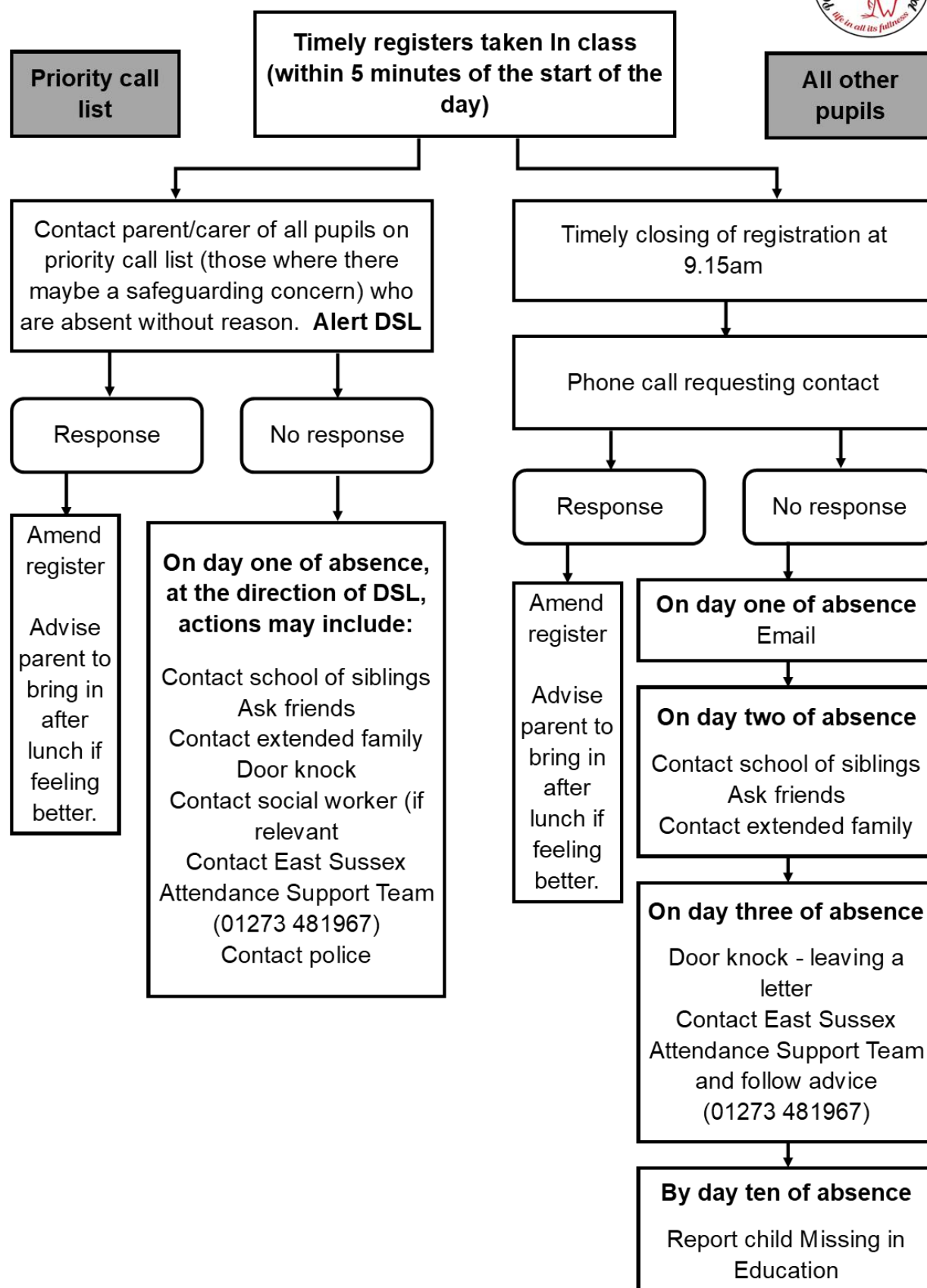
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the 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
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: Daily absence procedures

Daily absence procedures



Withdrawal from Learning Application: For Exceptional Circumstances

Did you know that across the year there are just 190 school days? That means there are already 175 days set aside for weekends, holidays, family visits and rewarding days out. We believe every school day counts to give your child the greatest opportunity of attaining a good education and to support a happy and healthy future.

With 175 days already marked out as 'non-school-days', you should have an exceptional reason to withdraw your child from school.

The following are NOT considered legitimate reasons and are likely to be rejected and unauthorised:

- Trips to visit family/friends
- Cheaper family holidays
- Your child's birthday
- Tickets to sports/culture events

100% is recognised as an expected level of school attendance. If your child is out of school for 3 days each term, then their attendance is below 95% and they're spending more days out of school than in it! Should your child need time off due to illness, this figure will quickly become even lower. Because five days of school equates to 25 hours of learning, catching up with extra work out of school is unrealistic.




From a young person's perspective, missing schools means:

- Missing out on fun projects and school activities
- Struggling to catch up on work
- Disconnecting with school friends

The vast majority of headteachers do not authorise any absence in term time, in fact, many schools refused 100% of requests last year.

Think twice about whether you want to proceed.

Your child has the right to a full-time education and the opportunities that this can bring. We hope that you will work in partnership with us to make sure that your child attends school every day, allowing them access to the education they deserve.

WHAT IS GOOD ATTENDANCE?					
190 days	180 days	178 days	163 days	161 days	143 days
100%	95%	94%	86%	85%	75%
Good		Worrying		Serious Concern	
					
Only 1-2 day missed per term		Between 3-8 days missed per term		More than 9 days missed per term	

Withdrawal from Learning Application for exceptional circumstance:

I understand that if the request is unauthorised the Education Support, Behaviour & attendance Service will be notified of the absence taken and a Penalty Notice may be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. I understand that if I do not pay this will result in legal action.

To be completed by parent/carer:

Name of Parent/Carer

Childs/Children's Name

Year group(s):..... Class name(s)

Date of withdrawal from learning..... Date of return to learning.....

Total number of learning days missed.....

Reason withdrawal from learning requested:

Signed:..... Date:

Home Address

.....

This form will be submitted to the Headteacher for review. A member of staff may conduct a telephone interview with you to discuss the request and to confirm the decision.

Headteacher decision:

Last year's attendance figure:

This year's attendance figure:

Good attendance 96% to 100%	Average attendance 95% to 96%	Cause for concern 90% to 95%	Persistent absence and serious cause for concern Below 90%
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Date of any telephone interview:..... Date decision form sent home:.....

- ☐ **Authorised:** Your request has been authorised for the following dates:/...../..... to/...../.....
- ☐ **Unauthorised:** Your request has been unauthorised for the following dates:/...../..... to/...../.....
- ☐ **Penalty Notice request to ESBAS attaching telephone interview log**

Headteacher signature..... Date:.....

