The Sherwood School

Attendance Policy

Our Mission Statement:

We are dedicated to providing the best possible education for every pupil in a safe, inclusive and stimulating environment. UNICEF's convention on the Rights of the Child is embedded within our ethos and curriculum and is valued and supported by our staff, children and families.

Approved by:	Full Governing Board	**Date:**	July 2026
Last reviewed on:	July 2025		
Next review due by:	July 2027		

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1. Aims

Article 28: every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this. UNCRC

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
- Our Rights Respecting Schools ethos embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, Sherwood believes a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance, and the link this has to achievement and attainment as well as social and emotional development.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). Legislation sets out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963
- The Equality Act 2010

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

Our link committee for monitoring attendance is the Teaching, Learning and Community committee. Attendance is reported and discussed in every meeting.

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
- Providing support to families where appropriate, alongside other members of staff
- 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 Senior Attendance Champion

The headteacher, Mrs Andriana Samouel, is the school's Senior Attendance Champion and can be contacted via telephone on 0208 764 5100 or email: adminoffice@sherwood.merton.sch.uk

The Senior Attendance champion 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

3.4 The attendance officer

The school's attendance officer is Mrs Leah Jenkins and can be contacted via telephone 0208 764 5100 or via email at adminoffce@sherwood.merton.sch.uk

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion / headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue penalty notices

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 at **8.50a.m.** and by **1.30p.m.** on the same day.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

3.7 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 **9.00a.m.** on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one 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

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50a.m. on each school day. 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 a link to Merton's Attendance Policy which includes the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- (For pupils of compulsory school age) 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.50a.m.** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.50a.m.** and will be kept open until **9.20a.m.** The register for the second session will be taken at **12.30p.m.** and will be kept open until **1.30p.m.** due to staggered lunch timings.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by **9.00a.m.** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

- Phone: 0208 764 5100
- Email: adminoffice@sherwood.merton.sch.uk

School will phone parents and carers on the first day of absence if we have not received a message explaining why a pupil is not in school (first day calling). 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.

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

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the code 'L'
- After the register has closed will be marked as an unauthorized absence, using the code 'U'

In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if your child arrives after the registers close, they will receive a mark, code U, that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice or other legal action if the problem persists.

Where children are frequently late for school, parents and carers will be contacted by the Headteacher to discuss reasons and discuss how we can support improved punctuality. Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

You may approach the school at any time for support and advice if you are having difficulty getting your child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason (first day calling). If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit, contact the police or refer to Children's Services.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, through termly reports, parent consultation evenings and attendance meetings.

4.7 If a child is not collected after the end of the school day or from After School Club

Please also see our Collection & Drop-off Policy. School ends at 3.20pm for Reception-Year 6 children.

All pupils - where after school childcare provision is available If a child is not collected after the end of the school day, the School will make every attempt to contact the parent/carers and emergency contacts. We will arrange for children to attend our After School Club until they can be collected and parents / carers will be charged the appropriate costs. The charge for this service is currently £5.00 for a half session (until 4.30p.m.) or £10 for a full session (until 5.30p.m.)

Please see the following information which has been taken from Merton's "LBM Children not collected from school policy."
https://www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/school-attendance-welfare-and-support/overview

All pupils - who usually attend after school childcare provision – Staff will attempt to contact the parent/carer/emergency contact up to 30 minutes after the official closing time of the provision (i.e. 6.00p.m.) After 30 minutes, following alerting police on 101, if the child is a Merton resident call the Children and Families Hub 020-8545-4226 or 020-8545-4227. If the child is not a Merton resident staff will contact the children's social care department for their home Local Authority.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence – Absence & Exceptional Leave Policy

The Governors of The Sherwood School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a student's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

The School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.

2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form. (Available from the school office) Verbal requests will be recorded in writing.

3. This must include the reason why you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to you within 7 days.

Schools will need to be able to evidence that the parents were informed, in advance, that a particular holiday absence would not be authorised and that a penalty notice might be the result.

There may be occasions, however, where authorisation was not applied for and if there is a real and genuine documented belief by the school that Leave of Absence was taken without a prior request and either attributed to other reasons or no explanation for the absence was provided. In this situation appropriate evidence should be presented to the Local Authority to support this belief, for example, a home visit being undertaken during the period of absence and any other evidence as agreed with the Senior Education Welfare Officer. The School/Academy would need to record the absence using the G code

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued and/or prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996, by the London Borough of Merton. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £160.

The Head Teacher and the Governing Body will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. 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.

If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form available from the school office. It should be noted that if any application is declined and an absence occurs of 5 or more unauthorised days, (or 10 sessions) in a rolling 10-week period, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

The following will not usually be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday
- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Parent/carer's working commitments - if a parent provides evidence that they cannot take LOA in school holiday periods consideration of this evidence will be given.
- Holiday pre-booked by another family member
- Study leave for grammar school exams
- Birthday treat.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. A letter outlining the decision of the school (whether absence is authorised or unauthorised) will be sent within seven days.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine / prosecute parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. The Local Authority must consult schools and police on their Code of Conduct, which is published on Merton's website.

Schools must give consideration to issuing a PN after each period of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 week period. These 10 sessions can include a mixture of unauthorised LOA and other unauthorised absences.

If issued with a Penalty Notice, the fine, issued to each parent, is £160 payable 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 leave of absence 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. Any subsequent fine will be £160 with no option to pay a reduced figure and any further enforcement action will be via prosecution under s4441/4441a Education Act 1996.

5.3 Suspension from school

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also the penalty notice section.

5.4 Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Article 28: every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this. UNCRC

The school will use the following strategies to promote good attendance:

- Attendance will be updated on the school website and newsletters to inform parents about strategies being used in school to raise attendance.
- Weekly assemblies will also raise awareness for attendance with all children. The class with the highest attendance will receive the attendance award.
- Children will receive certificates and prizes for 100% attendance at the end of each term.
- Children with improved attendance will also be celebrated and rewarded.
- Attendance is included with children's termly reports.
- Children will be invited to Attendance Club with weekly and termly prizes and recognition for improved attendance

Attendance is monitored by the admin officer weekly and figures are reported to the Headteacher, senior leadership team and governors on a termly basis. Any weeks where attendance falls below the school's target of 96% the Admin Officer will inform the headteacher.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored regularly by the headteacher, admin officer and Education Welfare Officer to identify any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem, depending on severity, using strategies such as:

- Headteacher speaking with parents / carers / child
- A letter from the admin officer initially and then from the Headteacher
- A meeting with the Headteacher
- A meeting with the Education Welfare Officer
- TAC meeting or referral to social care

The school may request reasonable medical evidence (and provide parents with guidance on acceptable examples of medical evidence) in cases where clarification is needed to accurately record absence in the attendance register. Where a parent cannot provide evidence in the form requested but can provide other evidence, the school will take this into account. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence the school will have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may in itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence. The school will also refer the child to the School Nurse or the Specialist nurse in the Education Welfare Service if there is a high level of absence for medical reasons.

If no reasonable evidence is provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. A high level of unauthorised absence will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer who will issue a Penalty Notice warning. A monitoring period will then follow, and if attendance does not improve within the monitoring period, a Penalty Notice will be issued which carries a fine of £160 and/or prosecution.
For pupils with appropriately evidenced illness, the school will follow appropriate protocols to offer support.

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 Analysing attendance

The school will:

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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

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 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
- Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 days in a term will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Education Welfare Officer. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Attendance Targets

- The school will set attendance targets each year. Progress towards these targets will be analysed regularly by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and strategies adopted in line with this policy will be implemented to achieve or exceed the target. It is the responsibility of the parents, staff and pupils at Sherwood Primary School to ensure good attendance and achievement of targets. Our school’s target is: 96% (2026-2027)

Attendance Contracts

- An Attendance Contract is a formal written agreement with the School, Parent(s), Pupil(s), and School’s Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Attendance Contracts should be in place for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months. The aim is to offer support by listening to the reasons for absence and difficulties that prevent regular school attendance during a meeting with the Parents, Child, School staff and EWO. The purpose of the meeting it to set out an action plan to address the poor school attendance of the pupil with realistic achievable targets to be made within a

reasonable time scale. (See Appendix 4 for a sample attendance contract. Where no improvement is made after 1 month the Attendance Contract can be closed.

Please change parent to attendance contract throughout the document.

Ten days' unauthorised absence and fifteen days attributed to illness

- We have 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 missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

7.5 Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a pupil moves too far from The Sherwood Primary to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad the parents must complete a school leavers form, available from the school office. This will provide The Sherwood with the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

8. Monitoring arrangements

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

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The attendance codes are available on Merton's website:

School attendance, welfare and support : Overview | Merton Council

Appendix 2: Exceptional Leave of Absence Form

The Sherwood School

Specimen Exceptional Leave of Absence Form

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

Request for Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances during Term Time

It is not advisable to take your child/ren on a leave of absence during term time as this causes disruption to their education. Schools must follow the law in this regard and may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances if certain criteria are fulfilled.

School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024

- **Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances is authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher.** (This is **not an automatic right** of parents/guardians)
- You should not normally take your child(ren) on a leave of absence during the school term.
- **Please do not book your leave of absence until authority is given.**
- Each request for leave of absence will be considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request and any supporting evidence provided.
- If the absence is approved by the Head Teacher you will be advised as to how many days the Head teacher has approved for your child's absence.
- If the school does not agree the absence and you take the leave without permission or your child is absent for more than the agreed number of days the absence will be unauthorised.
- Leave of absence taken without the authorisation of the school may lead to your child(ren) being referred to the Education Welfare Service and the possibility of statutory action and a fine/prosecution

In order for your application for absence to be considered, please complete below:

Name(s) of Child(ren)**……**

Form/Year----------

Home address:

……

……

Dates of absence: From**……** To:**……**

Reason for request **(additional evidence may be required)/**Who is travelling?

……

……

……

Signed: Parent/Guardian **…….**

Email address:**…….** Mobile phone number**:…….**

Date form submitted:**……..**

The above request for leave of absence in term time for **……...** has/has not been authorised. If authorised, your child/ren should return to school on:**……..**

Signed**……** Headteacher/Principal……

School Data Checklist:

For School Office Use Only

Pupil's name	
Previous leave of absence requested/taken (last 2 years)	
Nature of exceptional circumstances and evidence provided	
No of days granted (if any)	

Appendix 3: Absence and Exceptional Leave Policy

For use from July 2026

The Sherwood School

ABSENCE AND EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE POLICY

The Governors of The Sherwood School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a student's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

The School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.

2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form. (Available from the school office) Verbal requests will be recorded in writing.

3. This must include the reason why you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to you within 7 days.

Schools will need to be able to evidence that the parents were informed, in advance, that a particular holiday absence would not be authorised and that a penalty notice might be the result.

There may be occasions, however, where authorisation was not applied for and if there is a real and genuine documented belief by the school/academy that Leave of Absence was taken without a prior request and either attributed to other reasons or no explanation for the absence was provided. In this situation appropriate evidence should be presented to the Local Authority to support this belief, for example, a home visit being undertaken during the period of absence and any other evidence as agreed with the Senior Education Welfare Officer. The School/Academy would need to record the absence using the G code

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued and/or prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996, by the London Borough of Merton. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £160.

Appendix 4: Example Attendance Contract

The Sherwood School

Attendance Contract

Student's Name		**DOB / Year group**		**Student's school**	
Parent/carer 1 full name		**Parent/Carer 2 full name**		**Address**	
Contact number		**Contact number**			
Child's ethnicity		**Any SEND**		**Date**	
				Time (start/end)	
Attendance during last 12 weeks		**Sessions of unauthorised absence**		**Number of late marks**	
What are we worried about?		**What's working well?**		**What needs to happen? What will it look like to not be worried anymore?**	
•		•		•	
0 ……10					
On a scale of 1 to 10 , where 10 means is attending school regularly on every day the school is open and only absent in exceptional circumstances and when authorised and 0 means that attendance is not improving, where do we rate the situation?					

Targets for pupil, parent, school and agencies	**Date to be achieved by**	**Review of targets**

Date of review:

This is a voluntary agreement where all parties agree to work together to follow the agreed plan to support the pupil attend school regularly and punctually.

I agree to work together with school and the local authority to follow the agreed plan

Signed: …… Date: …….. Student's score ……
[child]

Signed: …….. Date: …….. Parent's score …….
[parent]

Signed: …….. Date: …….. Parent's score ……..
[parent]

I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.

Signed: …….. Date: …….. School score ……
School

I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.

Signed: …….. Date: …….. EWO's score ……
Lead professional/ EWO

Signed: …….. Date: …….. Professionals score ……

Other professional List job title/role

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.