

Scotholme Primary School's Attendance Policy

based upon

City of Nottingham LA
Common Attendance Protocol



**Promoting and maximising school attendance across
Nottingham city**

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INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT

Nottingham City Council (the Local Authority), **Shine Multi Academy Trust** and **Scotholme Primary School** are committed to raising the educational attainment of pupils within the city and affording them the best possible life chances following statutory education. In order to achieve this, children and young people need to attend school regularly and be equipped to learn. This, as well as punctuality, is a precondition of social inclusion and a prerequisite to effective learning. Irregular school attendance is a contributory factor in social exclusion and underachievement. Pupils who fail to attend school regularly are more likely to be the victim of crime themselves or to become exposed to offending behaviours by others. City children should attend the school in which they are registered and should arrive on time.

The Local Authority aims to improve school attendance and punctuality by:

- a) promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance;
- b) providing consistent information to schools and families;
- c) reducing all forms of unauthorised absence.

Scotholme Primary School's aim is 100% attendance.

The Children and Young People's Plan incorporates a range of statutory and non-statutory attendance and absence targets. Targets are best achieved where active, meaningful partnerships have been formed, and the entire attendance agenda is fully owned and supported by all.

Targets for attendance need to be understood and owned by parents, pupils, parents and Governors alike. The expectation applies throughout the education system, ranging from Early Years,

Primary and Secondary phases including any alternative learning provision.

Every school should have clear incentives, which encourage and support the drive for good attendance.

The Local Authority expects that where alternative learning arrangements are in place, then the standard Service Level Agreement is used and completed fully.

Scotholme Primary School's attendance target is for all children within the school to have an attendance of 100%. This is shared with the pupils and parents at the school and agreed by the Governing Body.

Class teachers, the School Business Manager, office staff and the Leadership Team monitor and support pupils in achieving this.

DEALING WITH ABSENCE

GETTING STARTED - A GOOD FOUNDATION

Parents choosing to have their children attend in Foundation Stage are under no legal obligation to do so and therefore the child is not of compulsory school age. However, the engagement in education at this stage in a child's development is **crucial**. Regular attendance is encouraged from the outset and helps create good habits for the future.

This early message, communicated to parents, will underpin the expectations of the statutory requirements once the child actually is registered on roll at school, the term following their fifth birthday. This is achieved in the Welcome meetings before children start the Foundation Stage.

Scotholme Primary School, Shine MAT and the Local Authority will work together with other agencies and services to ensure the consistent delivery of this message.

Addressing concerns around non-attendance at Foundation /Early Years:

- ❖ The responsibility for each child attending school is solely that of their parent\carer.
- ❖ Every attempt will be made to address any concerns, either initially by trying to discuss with the parent /carer any issues when they bring the child to school or by a home visit that may be arranged. Alternatively, this may be by telephone contact/letters or all of these. All information should be logged.
- ❖ All absences will be followed up by the school and the school will determine whether an absence is authorised or not, according to the school procedures. Where an absence has not been explained, a series of letters will be sent home to ascertain the reason behind the absence.

- ❖ Scotholme Primary School will use the School Comms system and/or a phone call home to contact parents, if their child is absent, even if they are not statutory school age.
- ❖ If a child has numerous or frequent absences due to illness, or if the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school may request parents to provide medical evidence such as an appointment card, doctor's note or prescription to support any absence due to illness. Medical evidence may also be requested for absences due to illness, if a child's overall level of attendance is of concern. If evidence is not forthcoming, or if the school is not satisfied that the illness required absence from school, the attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.

[Please see 'Keeping Pupil Registers' June 2008 guidance'](#)

- ❖ Any ongoing health issues or bouts of illness will be discussed with the School Nurse so that the correct support can be offered or a Health Referral will be made.
- ❖ Parents will be encouraged to book all medical appointments outside school hours but where this is not possible, we will need to know which health professional is being seen and for what purpose. All children with more long term medical issues will have any attendance difficulties or issues recorded in their Healthcare Plan.
- ❖ Foundation children will be asked to fill out a Leave of Absence form (School form for F2 and Nursery form for F1) to apply for any period of extended leave. The school may agree to this leave or not, please refer to the section concerning granting of extended leave.
- ❖ Statutory Attendance will be monitored every half term. For every child whose attendance falls below 90% - a letter of concern will be sent to the parent/carer asking them to improve attendance over the next two weeks. If there is no improvement at this point, a further letter will be sent to the parents asking them to attend a meeting in school to discuss any issues. The school should take full account of all that is known about the child and consider initiating a CAF; liaising with Social Care or Education Welfare or making a health referral, if no satisfactory reasons for absence have been received. If following a further fortnight, no improvement has been made, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Services. (See appendix 3) This may well lead to a court appearance and subsequent penalty notice.
- ❖ A child who fails to attend nursery for a prolonged period of time, without any good reason or communication, will lose their nursery place, as set out in the Statutory Guidance - Keeping Pupil Registers 2008 reasons for taking non-statutory children off roll.

Addressing concerns around non-attendance in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2:

- ❖ The responsibility for each child attending school is solely that of their parent\carer.
- ❖ Every attempt will be made to address the concern, either initially by trying to discuss with the parent /carer any issues when they bring the child to school or a home visit that may be arranged. Alternatively, this may be by telephone contact/letters or all of these. All information should be logged.
- ❖ All absences will be followed up by the school and the school will determine whether an absence is authorised or not, according to the school procedures. Where an absence has not been explained, a series of letters home will be sent to ascertain the reason behind the absence and kept in the child's records.
- ❖ Scotholme Primary School will use the School Comms system and/or a phone call home to contact parents, if their children is absent on the first and each subsequent day of absence.
- ❖ If a child has numerous or frequent absences due to illness, or if the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school may request parents to provide medical evidence such as an appointment card, doctor's note or prescription to support any absence due to illness. Medical evidence may also be requested for absences due to illness if a child's overall level of attendance is of concern.
If evidence is not forthcoming, or if the school is not satisfied that the illness required absence from school, the attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.
[Please see 'Keeping Pupil Registers' June 2008 guidance'](#)
- ❖ Any ongoing health issues or bouts of illness will be discussed with the School Nurse so that the correct support can be offered or a Health Referral will be made.

- ❖ Parents will be encouraged to book all medical appointments outside of school hours but where this is not possible, we will need to know which health professional is being seen and for what purpose. All children with more long term medical issues will have any attendance difficulties or issues recorded in their Health Care Plan
- ❖ All children will be asked to fill out a Leave of Absence form to apply for any period of extended leave. The school may agree to this leave or not, please refer to the section concerning granting of extended leave.
- ❖ Statutory Attendance will be monitored every half term. For every child whose attendance falls below 90% - a letter of concern will be sent to the parent/carer asking them to improve attendance over the next two weeks. If there is no improvement at this point, a further letter will be sent to the parents asking them to attend a meeting in school to discuss any issues. The school should take full account of all that is known about the child and consider initiating a CAF; liaising with Social Care or Education Welfare or making a health referral, if no satisfactory reasons for absence have been received. If following a further fortnight, no improvement has been made, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Services. (See appendix 3) This may well lead to a court appearance and subsequent penalty notice.
- ❖ Any child who is absent for 10 days or more, without any communication with the school, will be referred to the Missing Children's section of the LA. If no communication is made within the next ten school days, the child will risk losing their place at the school. See Children Missing from Education procedures - appendix 4.

HOLIDAYS AND EXTENDED LEAVES OF ABSENCE

The 2013 Amendments of the 2006 Education Act say that Extended Leave may only be allowed in '*exceptional circumstances*' at the Head Teacher's discretion.

At Scotholme Primary School, the Leadership Team will not authorise any request for leave, except in exceptional circumstances, such as a death of close family member or life threatening illness.

Further information can be found in *Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulation 2006*.

All applications for leave of absence should be made at least 4 weeks in advance by the parent(s) or carer(s) in writing or on the form available from the school office.

All requests will be treated on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration:

- a. the circumstances of the leave - it must be EXCEPTIONAL circumstances;
- b. the amount of time requested;
- c. age of the pupil;
- d. the pupil's general absence/attendance record;
- e. proximity of SATs and public examinations.

School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing, giving the reasons for the decision. It is particularly important that letters approving a request clearly state:

- a. the expected date of return;
- b. that the parents are expected to contact the school if anything delays the pupil returning to school when expected;
- c. what action will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected.

Similarly, a letter refusing a request will explain the reasons for the refusal and what action will be taken if the parents ignore the refusal and keep their child away. Failure to comply with the school procedures will result in further action being taken

Effect of any kind of absence on pupil's attendance level

NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL	CHILD'S ATTENDANCE AT THE END OF THE YEAR
If your child has 1 day off school during the year...	...their attendance will be 99.5%
If your child has 2 days off school during the year...	...their attendance will be 99%
If your child has 5 days off school during the year...	...their attendance will be 97.4%
If your child has 10 days off school during the year...	...their attendance will be 95%

If a school agrees to extended leave, the absence is authorised (use Code H).

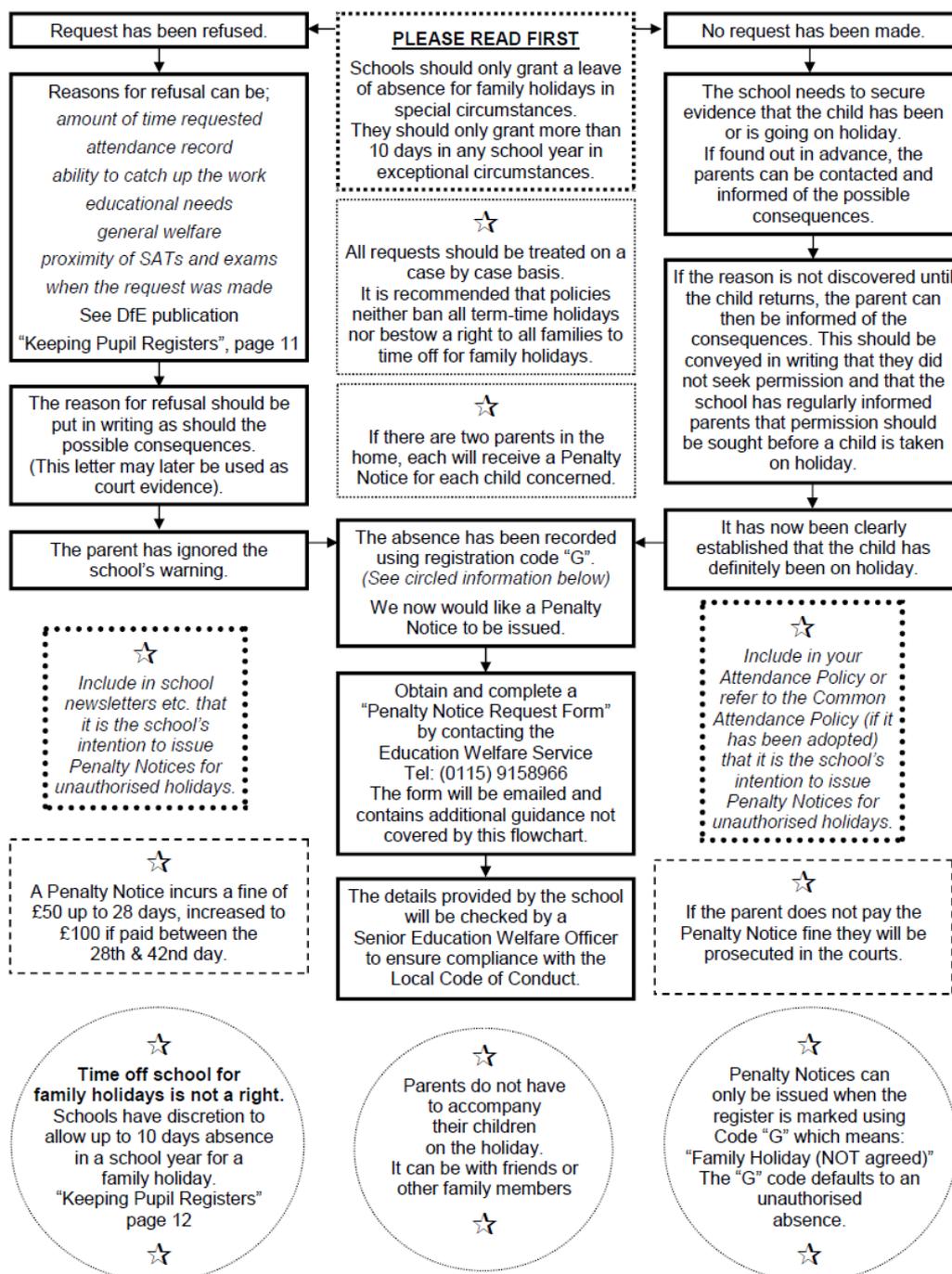
If the parents do not apply for the leave of absence in advance of taking it, the pupil must be recorded as unauthorised absence using code G. This will result in an application for a penalty notice from the Local Authority levied against each parent of each child.

If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on extended leave, the absence is unauthorised (Code G). If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised (Code G). This may result in an application for a penalty notice levied against each parent of each child. The child's school place may be at risk should they not return on the date given

If the school considers that there are exceptional circumstances why the pupil should be granted approval for a leave of absence of more than 10

days, this approval can be given and the absence would be authorised and recorded under Code F.

PENALTY NOTICES FOR HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME - SCHOOLS' FLOWCHART



For any additional information contact your school's EWO or telephone (0115) 9158966 (EWS admin)
 The above is taken from the DfE publications - "Keeping Pupil Registers", "Absence and Attendance Codes" and "Penalty notices (Education)".

SAFEGUARDING/HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME/EXTENDED HOLIDAYS

Any safeguarding issues pertaining to a child being taken out of school in circumstances that cause concern, will be addressed directly to the Social Care Duty Team covering the area where the child lives

DEALING WITH PUNCTUALITY ISSUES

The Registration period at Scotholme Primary School is at 8.50am (in the morning), 12.45pm for Key stage 1 and 1.30pm for Key Stage 2 (in the afternoon). Registration periods will last for ten minutes after which time the register will close. Any pupil arriving after this registration time but before 9.20am will be recorded as an L, which signifies late.

Any pupil arriving after 9.20am will be recorded as U, which signifies that they arrived after the official close of the register and will therefore denote an unauthorised absence. A similar period will apply in the afternoon. (After 1.15pm for Key Stage 1 and after 2.00pm for Key Stage 2)

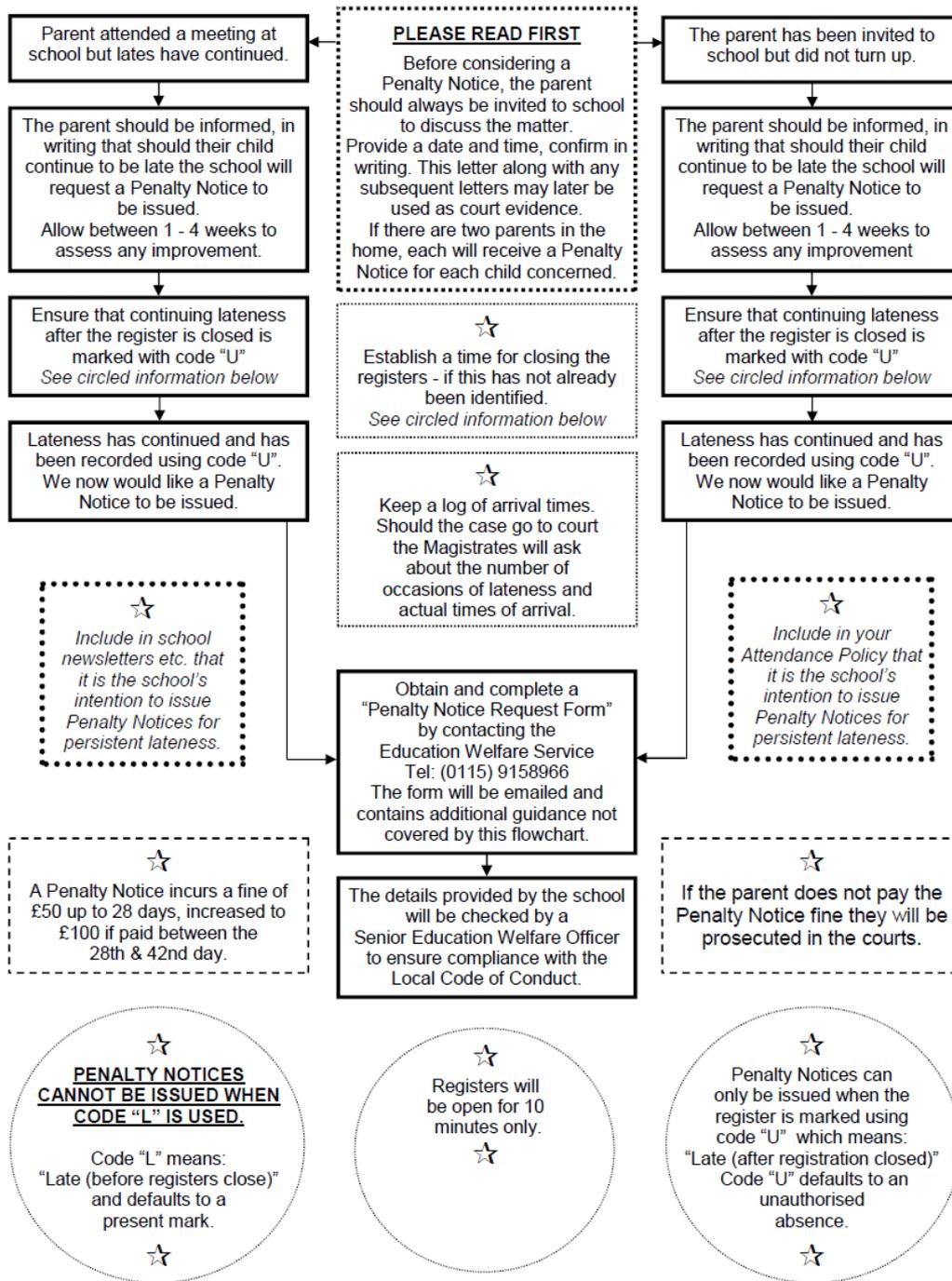
Issues relating to punctuality will be addressed with the pupil/parents by speaking with them; correspondence and meetings in school etc. All interventions must be clearly recorded. We are fully appreciative of individual family circumstances, especially if the children of the family are in a number of schools and will decide the course of action on an individual basis. The Head Teacher will use his/her discretion at this point.

All of the above will be reflected in school brochures, newsletters and on the school website.

The Local Authority will use the following as a trigger that allows schools to request a Penalty Notice. This applies to both Primary and Secondary phase:

Any pupil registered late (recorded as U) at least five times in a four-week period. (Refer to the 'Lates' Penalty Notice Flow Chart)

PENALTY NOTICES FOR LATES - SCHOOLS' FLOWCHART



For any additional information contact your school's EWO or telephone (0115) 9158966 (EWS admin)
The above is taken from the DfE publications - "Keeping Pupil Registers", "Absence and Attendance Codes" and "Penalty notices (Education)".

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Nottingham is a vibrant and diverse city that promotes respect for the faiths and values of all its communities. There are many religions celebrated in our schools and it is important that we recognise the diversity of the school population. At Scotholme Primary School, we celebrate our diverse heritage as one of the strengths of our school.

It is acknowledged that different schools have different arrangements according to the ages of the children, the type of school and the percentage of pupils from different religious backgrounds. This section promotes community cohesion by recognising the diverse needs of all sections of the school community.

In Nottingham City, **one day for each religious festival** (no more than three days in any one academic year) should be counted as authorised absence. The Pupil Regulations 2006 state that absence for religious observance should be treated as authorised (absence) **'on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs'**. Additional days off for shopping or for extended celebrations will be treated as unauthorised absence. At Scotholme Primary School, we follow this directive.

In the case of pilgrimages, the school will request copies of travel information. Dates of return must be agreed prior to the period of leave. Parents must be advised about this policy and the procedures regarding unavoidable delays in returning or if they take extended leave that has not been authorised by the school.

APPENDIX -1

KEY DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

Penalty Notices- Code of Conduct

Appendix 1 -Penalty Notices Code of Conduct NB this is subject to change in accordance with Government Guidelines

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Penalty Notices for Truancy, Excluded Pupils, Persistent Lateness, Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time-Local Code of Conduct

Introduction

1. This Code of Conduct will govern all Penalty Notices issued in respect of children of compulsory school age who are registered at a maintained school, a Pupil Referral Unit, an Academy, a City Technology College, or a City College for the Technology of the Arts, and those attending alternative provision within the jurisdiction of Nottingham City Council, hence referred to as the LA (Local Authority).
2. In the context of the Local Code of Conduct the term "school" will cover all the above-mentioned educational establishments, including Pupil Referral Units and attendance at alternative provision arranged by the LA.
3. The purpose of the Code is to ensure that Penalty Notices are issued consistently and fairly across the LA.
4. Penalties are set at £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is paid, the absence covered by the Penalty Notice cannot be cited again.
5. The LA is responsible for the operation and administration of the Penalty Notice scheme. To ensure consistency all Penalty Notices shall be issued by the LA for and on behalf of those persons designated by the regulations as having authority, i.e. schools, limited to Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and Assistant Heads Teachers, authorised LA staff, the Police, Community Support Officers and other accredited persons.
6. An unauthorised absence level of 25% or more over a period of six school weeks will be used as a general trigger guide. However, shorter timescales may be applied depending on the circumstances of the unauthorised absence or truancy.

Penalty Notices that can be issued by the LA on behalf of schools

7. When a child has been absent without the authorisation of the school in accordance with paragraph 6.
8. Holidays taken in term time not authorised by the school.
9. Persistent lateness after the register has closed, where there has been a minimum of 5 Us in a 4 week period
10. Excluded pupils failing to attend provision after the fifth day of exclusion.
11. Excluded pupils seen in a public place within the first five days of the exclusion.

Penalty Notices that can be issued directly by the LA or on behalf of other partners

12. Cases recommended by a *Legal Intervention Officer following a case recommendation*.
13. As part of the LA's fast-track to attendance procedure.
14. Where a pupil has been stopped on more than one occasion during a three-month period by the Youth Issues Team or other accredited persons having authority to do so.
15. On behalf of neighbouring local authorities in accordance with agreed protocols.

Limitations

16. A parent will be issued with no more than three Penalty Notices, relating to the same child, in any twelve month period.
17. A Penalty Notice shall only be issued in compliance with the Local Code of Conduct. The Education Welfare officer must be informed if they are involved with the case?
18. Penalty Notices shall not be issued if legal proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 are under consideration or are in progress, unless used within the framework of the LA's fast-track procedure.
19. The LA reserves the right to limit or restrict the use of Penalty Notices at any time if the number of requests or court cases resulting from non-payment compromises the effective administration and/or integrity of the scheme.

Non-payment

20. If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it, the LA shall institute proceedings in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Withdrawal of Penalty Notice

21. The LA may only withdraw a Penalty Notice where:
- it ought not to have been issued i.e. it has been issued outside the terms of the Local Code of Conduct or where no offence has been committed; or
 - it has been issued to the wrong person; or
 - it contains material errors.

Service of Penalty Notices

22. Service will be by first class post and 2 days are allowed for postal delivery.

Definition of parent

23. The term “parent” used in the code of conduct is that defined by Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 2 of the Children Act 1989.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY ENQUIRIES RELATING TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT PLEASE TELEPHONE (0115) 876
2965**

IF YOU PREFER LARGER PRINT PLEASE TELEPHONE (0115) 876 2965

APPENDIX -2

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE - Nursery

For all children:

- There must be a recorded reason (on SIMs) for every absence. The only reason for recording it as an unauthorised absence is if we do not support the reason given - it does not just mean that we do not know why the child was absent.
- All parents must fill in a leave of absence form for nursery age pupils and provide flight information/bookings etc so that we are aware of when they will return.

APPENDIX -3

Alterations to the Register

As the school register is a legally binding document, it is therefore important that it is completed carefully and accurately by ALL members of staff.

As part of their roles in monitoring attendance and absence, the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and School Business Manager will correct any oversights where the incorrect code has been entered

e.g where a U code should have been entered instead of L

or

e.g. where I has been put into the register for illness, after a letter stating the need for medical proof (due to low attendance) has been sent home.

The alteration will be noted in the comments box along with the date. The following abbreviations will be made:-

KH - Kate Hall Head Teacher

CH - Carl Hollis Deputy Head Teacher and Attendance LEAD

DGR - Dean Grimshaw - School Business Manager

This appendix was added following discussion with a member of the EWS team Nottingham City Council in a meeting at school on Wednesday 4th May 2016

Appendix 4

Procedure for Children whose attendance falls below 90%

The government has defined a child whose attendance falls below 90% as a persistent absentee. Schools need to do their utmost, working alongside parents and other agencies to ensure that children with this level of attendance improve, in order that their education does not suffer.

These are Scotholme Primary School's procedures for dealing with these children and their families.

1. Attendance will be monitored each week to identify children falling below 90% attendance.
2. A first letter will be sent to the child's parents to highlight the concerns about attendance and ask the parents to improve this over the next fortnight. If attendance improves, no further action will be taken and regular monitoring will continue.
3. If no improvement has occurred, a second letter will be sent to the child's parents asking them to attend a meeting in school to discuss the attendance and any issues pertaining to it.
School will take full account of all that is known about the child and consider initiating a CAF; liaising with Social Care or Education Welfare or making a health referral, if no satisfactory reasons for absence have been received.
Furthermore, no absence for illness will be authorised at this point without medical proof, either a doctor's appointment card or prescribed in date medication.
If attendance improves at this point, no further action will be taken, except for regular school monitoring of attendance.
4. If, however, after a further fortnight no improvement in attendance has occurred, the school will refer the child to the Education Welfare Service with all the relevant documentation. This may then lead to a court appearance and subsequent penalty issue being issued.
5. These procedures will be recorded on the school's electronic child protection system - CPOMS for each individual case.

Appendix 5

Scotholme Primary School Children Missing from Education Procedures

Key Principles (from Children Missing Education (DfE) September 2016)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Local authorities should focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

Methods Employed by Scottholme Primary School to prevent CME occurring

At Scottholme Primary School, we employ several procedures to help prevent children becoming missing from their education.

- The Office staff daily send text messages to parents, if their child is absent from school.
- If a child is still absent after 3 days and no contact has been made, a phone call will be made to enquire about the absence.
- Both the Office staff and Classroom teams will report a missing child to the Attendance Lead, if no contact has been made on the 5th day.
- The Attendance Lead will then follow up this action by firstly trying to contact the parents or other contacts and if there is still no contact, by visiting the home address. A letter advising of the visit will be posted at the address.
- All absences are followed up by the Office, firstly through the use of the daily text service and then through a series of three letters asking for an explanation why the child was absent. On reaching the third letter, the Attendance Lead is informed and if no reason is forthcoming, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If parents are looking to take an extended leave of absence of any kind, they are encouraged to fill out an extended leave of absence form and provide all relevant details and paper work that must accompany this

request e.g. flight details. School will then send a letter either sanctioning or denying the request with reasons given.

- Parents are able to discuss leaves of absence with members of the class team and the Leadership Team.
- All information regarding attendance and leaves of absence are sent to the parents at the start of the year and provide in packs for new parents. They are also available as parental leaflets, both at the reception desk and on the school website (www.scotland.com)
- If after 2 weeks, no contact has been made and there is no response at the home address, the relevant CME referral form will be completed and sent to the Children Missing from Education department of Nottingham Local Authority.
- The CME of Nottingham LA will then take up the search for the child using their resources and will report back to the school, within the next 2 weeks.
- No child will ever be taken off roll without the permission of the CME LA.

As part of our commitment to ensuring all children remain safe, from September 2017, we will be asking for 3 emergency contacts for each child and children's details will be routinely checked each term.

Also for families who move from abroad, a previous address from the families' home country will be required, wherever possible

Flow chart for possible CME

<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Action</u>
<u>Day 1 to 3</u>	<u>Text messages sent via the School COMMs system</u>
<u>Day 3 and 4</u>	<u>Phone calls made to all contacts of the family that the school holds</u>
<u>Day 5</u>	<u>Attendance Lead informed, follow up calls made and home visit instigated. Letter posted through door at the address.</u>
<u>Week 2</u>	<u>Further texts, calls and home visits undertaken. Attendance Lead will also contact schools where siblings may attend.</u>
<u>Day 10</u>	<u>Referral to the CME Nottingham LA</u>
<u>Day 10 - 20</u>	<u>CME department of Nottingham LA to follow up on missing child, School to continue to monitor</u>
<u>Day 20</u>	<u>CME Nottingham LA make recommendation and report to the school</u>

Procedure outlined by Carl Hollis (DHT and Attendance Lead)

June 2017