



Vanguard Learning Trust

As a group of local primary and secondary schools, Vanguard Learning Trust's mission is to serve its local community by providing outstanding, inclusive education. The Trust has a collective purpose and responsibility to provide effective teaching, through a curriculum based on equality of opportunity and entitlement that allows students to shine both in and out of the classroom. Each school in the Trust has its own ethos, which also complements the Trust's vision and values, with the common aspiration that all students can achieve their potential.

Attendance policy

Part B: Vyners School

Summer 2024

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Part B: Vyners School

1. Expectations

The school's view on attendance is that it is everybody's responsibility. Every student is a valued member of the school and their presence is crucial for the collective success and well-being of the community overall. Aligned with the recommendations from an ImpactEd report entitled '*Understanding Attendance*' from January 2024 ([click here](#)), the school is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and that they belong. The school aims to foster strong, positive relationships between students, and between students and school staff, to help build a supportive and connected community. Additionally, the school strives to communicate the importance and benefits of good attendance at every opportunity, helping students understand how their learning experiences contribute to their personal and academic growth.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Although attendance is everybody's responsibility, some members of the school community have a specific role in supporting attendance or providing oversight of the school's endeavours. These roles are outlined below.

2.1 The board of trustees

As outlined in Part A, the board of trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures across Vanguard Learning Trust on at least a termly basis, which includes Vyners School. The board also holds the headteacher of the school to account for the implementation of this policy.

2.2 The local governing body (LGB)

The LGB of Vyners School is responsible for regularly reviewing attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Further information about the LGB's role in reviewing attendance data can be found in Part A.

2.3 The headteacher

The school's headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy at the school and monitoring school-level absence data, which is then reported to the governors. Additionally, the headteacher supports staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students as well as trends and patterns across groups of students. The headteacher works closely with the local authority to consider a range of legal interventions to improve attendance, including the issuing of penalty notices as a last resort.

2.4 The senior leader for attendance (the 'attendance champion')

Vyners School's attendance champion is Mrs Bashford-Hynes. The attendance champion plays a crucial role in promoting and managing student attendance across the school. Their responsibilities include working with the attendance officer to monitor attendance by regularly tracking and analysing attendance data to identify patterns, trends and areas of concern. Their role also involves maintaining accurate records and ensuring that attendance registers are up to date. They support students and families by addressing barriers to regular attendance, offering support and advice and arranging meetings. The attendance champion is key in fostering a culture where good attendance is valued and recognised, contributing to the overall well-being and academic success of students.

2.5 The attendance officer

The school's attendance officer is Ms Ahmed. The attendance officer liaises closely with class teachers to ensure that registers are completed accurately and are available for scrutiny. They are responsible for notifying the local authority's school attendance support team of persistent absences and collaborating with them to support improvement. The officer monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level. They notify parents of student absences when parents have not informed the

school; this is done through 'Edulink', which sends a text or email to parents once morning registers are taken to highlight absent students. The attendance officer reports attendance concerns to the headteacher, assistant headteacher or designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and advises the headteacher when to issue legal interventions, such as fixed-penalty notices. They also report on students with persistent absences to year leaders and the senior leadership team (SLT), send out student absence letters on behalf of the headteacher, and provide general management information on student attendance as required by SLT or the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH). Additionally, the attendance officer accurately and promptly enters any manual registers onto the school management information system ('SIMS'), which includes attendance information for students offsite, oversees the signing in and out process by students and informs appropriate pastoral staff of any concerns. They ensure that latecomers are correctly recorded in the attendance registers and liaise with the pastoral team to arrange the collection and dispatch of work for students absent due to long-term illness.

2.6 Year leaders and the senior leadership team (SLT)

Year leaders and the SLT of Vyners School are responsible for monitoring attendance data both across the year group and at an individual student level. They pay particular attention to the attendance of students categorised in vulnerable groups. Additionally, they report any attendance concerns to the attendance officer and SLT. Collaborating with the attendance officer, teachers, family-liaison officers and the school attendance support team, they work to address and reduce persistent absenteeism. To further support these efforts, year leaders and SLT arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and record any actions taken.

2.7 Tutors and class teachers

Tutors and class teachers are responsible for accurately recording attendance within lessons on a daily basis, using the correct codes and saving this information on SIMS. They are also responsible for monitoring, flagging concerns and being a point of contact between home and school to discuss attendance concerns.

2.8 Parents/carers

By law, all students of compulsory school age (normally 5 to 16 years old) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure this happens, either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements to provide them with a suitable, full-time education. Once a child is registered at a school, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring they attend; this means students should not have sessions of unauthorised absence.

2.8.1 How parents/carers can support good attendance

To support their child's school attendance, parents/carers should take several actions. First, they should establish good attendance habits by acting as role models and showing students that good attendance and punctuality are important. It is crucial that they ensure that their child has a good rate of attendance, ideally 97% or higher. Creating a good routine for mornings at home so that students can arrive punctually and be properly equipped will also help mornings start calmly. Establishing a good bedtime routine is essential so that children can sleep well, get enough rest and make mornings less of a struggle. Reading all school communications helps parents stay informed about what's going on at school and can encourage conversations with their children. Attending all school open evenings and functions is another important step. Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside of the school day. Parents should only grant days at home for genuine illness and contact the school via 'Edulink' or the Vyners School absence line as soon as possible to explain why their child is absent and when they are expected to return. Parents/carers should not take holidays during school time.

2.9 Students

Students at Vyners School are expected to attend school every day and be punctual. This means arriving at school on time, ready to begin the day's activities. Regular attendance is crucial for ensuring that students do not miss out on important learning opportunities. In addition to being on time for school, students must also ensure they attend every lesson promptly. This punctuality applies to each class throughout the school day, reinforcing the importance of being present and ready to engage in learning activities from the

beginning of each session. Unless absolutely necessary, students should remain in every lesson for its entire duration. This policy is designed to maximise learning time and minimise disruptions, helping students fully benefit from the instructional time provided.

3. Communication

Effective communication is paramount in ensuring high attendance rates at school, as it fosters a collaborative environment between the school and families. Vyners School’s attendance officer plays a critical role in monitoring and promoting good attendance, acting as the primary liaison between the school and the parents or carers. They are supported by the family liaison officers and the attendance champion, a senior lead dedicated to attendance issues, ensuring that robust systems and strategies are in place. The school utilises a variety of communication methods, including regular updates to parents and carers about their child’s attendance and absence levels. These updates can be disseminated through emails, letters and parent-teacher meetings, helping to keep families informed and engaged. Vyners School maintains a 'buzz' of attendance through a well-planned calendar of events and communications that highlight the importance of regular attendance. To support these efforts, the school’s designated attendance champion and attendance officer will work closely with pastoral staff, including year leaders, class teachers and welfare staff, all of whom are instrumental in supporting various attendance initiatives. The pastoral team can be contacted for further assistance in addressing attendance concerns and providing additional support to students and their families. The use of individual attendance plans (IAPs) aims to remove barriers to school attendance for individual students and their families. By employing a comprehensive approach that includes clear communication and dedicated support roles, Vyners School aims to minimise student absences and promote a culture of regular attendance.

4. Procedures

Procedures are crucial for the monitoring of attendance because they ensure consistency, accuracy and accountability. They provide a standardised approach for recording and tracking student presence, enabling timely identification of absences. This facilitates early intervention for at-risk students, promotes a safe learning environment and supports legal compliance regarding compulsory education. Clear procedures also streamline communication between stakeholders ensuring everyone is informed about attendance-related issues. Additionally, accurate attendance records are vital for funding, resource allocation, and analysing patterns to improve overall school performance and student engagement.

4.1 Arriving at school and lateness

Students are expected to arrive promptly for school by the times outlined below.

Table 1: Start times for Vyners School

	Students should be on-site	Registers taken in tutorial	School finishing time
Years 7, 8 and 9	8:25am	8:30am	2.55pm
Years 10, 11, 12 and 13	8.25am	8.30am	3.00pm

4.1.1 Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at Vyners School on time each day. Sometimes unexpected lateness occurs which cannot be helped. The perimeter gates close promptly at 8.30am, after which time students are late to school. Students who arrive after the official start time indicated in Table 1 must sign in at reception before making their way to their tutorial or lesson. Parents to the front office. Students who are late will receive a 20 minute lunchtime detention.

If a child arrives before the end of period 1, they will be marked in the register as 'authorised late: late before registration closes.' If a child arrives after period 1, they will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence: late after the register closes.' An unauthorised late will affect a child's overall rate of attendance. Arriving late means that students miss the crucial input for their day, which puts them at a disadvantage to their peers. Students who are persistently late will be placed on late report and meetings with parents/carers will be arranged.

4.2 Absences

Each school day consists of two sessions, a morning (referred to as AM) and an afternoon (referred to as PM). Therefore, if a child is absent from school for one whole day, this will equate to two sessions of absence. There are two types of absence: authorised and unauthorised. The school is responsible for deciding whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised therefore the information you give us determines the outcome of the absence. As a school, any authorised absences ultimately will be the decision of the headteacher and the school has the right to request any evidence of any absence. Any absences that have not been reported will be marked as unauthorised.

4.2.1 Notifying the school

Parents must inform the school via 'Edulink' if their child is ill and will be absent from school. A detailed reason for absence must be received by 8:25am on each day of absence. A child simply being 'unwell' is not a reason to be absent from school. Parents will be notified via an 'Edulink' message if their child has not been registered before 9.00am. Although medical appointments and illness constitute an authorised absence, they will still affect a child's percentage attendance, therefore the school requires parents/carers to provide documentation for these absences. Following guidance from Public Health England, the school operates a strict period of 48 hours from the last spell of sickness/diarrhoea before a child is allowed to return to school to which parents/carers must adhere. For advice and information on whether children are well enough for school, parents/carers are advised to visit the related page on the NHS website ([click here](#)).

4.2.2 Contact details

Vyners School must have a minimum of 2 up-to-date contact numbers for every child. This is so that the school can contact parents/carers when children are absent or in the case of an emergency.

4.3 Working with the local authority

Vyners School recognises that collaboration between schools and local authorities is crucial for improving attendance. Joint efforts ensure that barriers to attendance are identified and addressed, providing holistic support to students and families. This partnership fosters a community-focused approach, enhancing engagement, resources and interventions, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes and reduced absenteeism.

4.3.1 Issuing of penalty notices

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties continue, the school may refer the child to the attendance team at the local authority. The team will also try to resolve the situation but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance fail and unauthorised absences persist, the team can use sanctions such as the issuing of a penalty notice as a last resort. This is currently £60 per parent rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days, a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid penalty notice, which could lead to a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. More information can be found in the Department for Education's statutory guidance: '*Working together to improve school attendance*' ([click here](#)). Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the local authority attendance team themselves to ask for help or information. The attendance team is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858. Attendance advice may be sought at any time by the school and it may be necessary to fast track a referral to them.

4.3.2 Child missing from education

If a child has been absent for 10 school days they are classified as a child missing from education (CME). A referral to the local authority's CME team will be made for further advice and support.

4.4 Exceptional leave during term time

The school will not authorise any leave during term time. Parents/carers who feel it necessary to take their child out of school for an extended period of time due to unavoidable and extreme/exceptional circumstances must make a formal request by completing the '*Request for leave of absence during term time*' document (Appendix B). This should be submitted to the headteacher at least two weeks before the intended period of absence. Any supporting documents should be submitted with the request form, such as flight details or exam letters. There is no right of appeal in regards to any decision made concerning requests for exceptional leave during term time. If the child will be late returning from a period of leave, the school requires parents/carers to produce documentation to evidence this. Where holidays are taken which have not been authorised, the school will inform the local authority attendance team, who may issue a penalty notice of £80 per parent per child if it is paid within 21 days. If it is not paid within 21 days, it advances to £160 per parent per child. If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action. More information can be found on the Department of Education's website ([click here](#)). Where there is reason to believe that a prolonged absence is the result of a holiday, the school will pursue it as it would if it was informed about the holiday in advance. Suspicion of prolonged absence due to a holiday in term time is enough to pursue a holiday penalty notice through the local authority.

4.5 Extreme/exceptional circumstances

Extreme or exceptional circumstances generally include situations that are rare, significant or unavoidable. The following scenarios illustrate what is meant by this term:

1. Bereavement: the death of a close family member.
2. Serious illness: when a child or close family member has a serious/critical illness that requires the child to be absent.
3. Family crisis: emergency situations involving members of the child's family that require immediate attention.
4. Religious observances: religious festivals or ceremonies.
5. Examinations: external examinations or assessments.
6. Legal requirements: attending a court hearing, being involved in a custody dispute or other legal obligations.
7. Unexpected travel disruptions: unforeseen travel disruptions that make it impossible for the child to attend school (eg. natural disasters).

These exceptional circumstances typically do not include:

- Holidays during term time.
- Family events like birthdays or weddings.
- Minor ailments (colds, headaches).

5. Identifying trends and patterns

It is important to note that consistent attendance is essential for a student's academic and social development. Vyners School will work with parents/carers and other professionals as needed to support students in attending school regularly and meeting their full potential. The school uses the following procedures for monitoring daily attendance and informing parents:

- daily attendance reminder messages are sent via text or email to all parents/carers who have not notified the school of their child's absence;
- letters sent home when attendance reaches concerning levels;
- parents/carers will be notified if their child's attendance becomes cause for concern and they will be invited in to meet with a member of the pastoral team to complete an IAP;
- school staff may undertake home visits if absences are not reported, to check that the child is safe and well; and

- if there is still no improvement, or parents do not respond to the school's letters, or if parents/carers fail to show up for arranged meetings, then the school will refer the family to the local authority's attendance team.

5.1 Monitoring attendance

The school's attendance monitoring procedure is designed to support students in attending school regularly and making the most of their educational opportunities. To ensure that attendance concerns are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, the following actions will be taken (letters referenced can be found in Appendix B):

- Where students are absent for more than 2 days the pastoral team will make a 'check in' phone call home;
- when attendance falls below 95% and/or students have multiple broken weeks Letter 1 will be sent home and the pastoral team will arrange a meeting with the student to complete an IAP;
- if attendance does not improve after a review period (3-6 weeks) Letter 2 will be sent home and the Year Leader will arrange a meeting with parents/carers;
- when attendance falls below 90% Letter 3 will be issued a member of SLT will meet the parents/carers alongside the year leader; and
- when attendance falls below 85% Letter 4 will be issued and a referral will be made to the local authority attendance team.

6. Celebrating good attendance

Vyners School recognises the importance of celebrating and incentivising good attendance to encourage students to maintain consistent and punctual attendance. As such, the school utilises a variety of strategies to reward students who demonstrate excellent and/or improved attendance. The school rewards good attendance in the following ways:

- the tutorial with the highest attendance each week is published in the newsletter and on screens around school;
- students with 100% attendance are celebrated and issued a certificate during the year group celebration assembly each half term; and
- certificates are awarded annually to students who achieve an annual attendance of above 95%.

By celebrating both outstanding attendance and meaningful improvements, the school aims to create a positive and motivating atmosphere that highlights the value of regular school attendance and supports students in their journey towards academic success.

6.1 Celebrating improved attendance

Vyners School recognises that celebrating and rewarding students for improving their attendance can be a great way to motivate them and reinforce positive behaviour. The methods of celebration taken by the school include acknowledging students during school assemblies, displaying their photos on a celebration board and communicating home. The school also rewards improving attendance through providing attendance certificates for achieving specific milestones and half termly awards for significantly improved attendance. Additionally, incentive programmes, such as queue jump passes, can be given to by students who have significantly improved their attendance.

7. Students who may need additional support

Vyners School is committed to providing tailored support to students facing various challenges that affect their attendance. The school recognises that certain groups of students may require additional assistance to overcome these barriers and ensure their regular participation in school. This may be on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.

7.1 Students with complex barriers to attendance

For students with complex barriers to attendance, Vyners School takes a comprehensive approach by closely collaborating with families and external agencies to address the root causes of absenteeism. The school conducts thorough assessments to identify specific challenges these students face, whether they stem from home, social or economic factors or a combination thereof. Working with families, the school develops individualised support plans that may include short term flexible timetables, pastoral support or access to community resources via a referral to local 'early help' services. The school also strives to remove barriers by providing a welcoming and inclusive environment, offering personalised learning plans and ensuring that these students have access to necessary support services such as counselling and mentoring where appropriate.

7.2 Students absent due to mental or physical ill health, or SEND

Students who are absent due to mental or physical ill health, or their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive targeted support to help them maintain their educational progress. The school's SEND co-ordinator (SENDCo) can liaise with a wide variety of specialists including counsellors and healthcare professionals, who work together to create and implement individualised education plans (IEPs) or health care plans. The school will maintain regular communication with these students and their families, providing necessary adjustments. The goal is to ensure that these students receive a continuous and supportive education, tailored to their unique needs and circumstances.

7.3 Students returning after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

When students return to Vyners School after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, the school implements a structured reintegration process to help them transition smoothly back into the school environment. This process includes an initial meeting with the student and their family to discuss any concerns and create a personalised reintegration plan. Key strategies may include a phased return to school, catch-up sessions and/or additional academic support to bridge any learning gaps. The school may also provide emotional and social support to help these students readjust and reconnect with their peers and teachers. By offering comprehensive reintegration support, the school aims to ensure that students feel welcomed, supported and ready to re-engage with their education.

8. Mental health

Vyners School recognises the critical importance of mental health and its impact on student attendance. In accordance with the Department for Education guidance '*Working together to improve school attendance*' (2024, [click here](#)), the school has established clear responsibilities and proactive measures to monitor, promote and support mental health within the community. To effectively support mental health, the school regularly monitors the well-being of students through various means, including surveys, wellbeing check-ins along with observations by teachers and staff. The school evaluates the effectiveness of mental health initiatives by gathering feedback from students, parents/carers and staff and by reviewing attendance data to identify patterns that may indicate underlying mental health issues. This ongoing assessment allows the school to adapt and refine its approach to ensure that the school's support for mental health is meeting the needs of all students.

8.1 Emotional resilience

Building emotional resilience is a key component of the school's long-term strategy and it is thoroughly integrated into the curriculum and provision of pastoral support. The school delivers a personal, health and social education (PSHE) programme that includes social and emotional learning activities, mindfulness exercises and resilience training. These programmes are designed to equip students with the skills they need to manage stress, build positive relationships and navigate challenges effectively. Additionally, the school's pastoral care team provides personalised support and mentoring to students who may need extra help in developing their emotional resilience.

8.2 A holistic approach

Vyners School takes a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and well-being, fostering a strong ethos and culture of care. This approach includes creating a safe and inclusive

environment where every student feels valued and supported. The school prioritises open communication, encouraging students to voice their concerns and seek help when needed. The school also collaborates with external mental health professionals and organisations to provide additional resources and support for students and their families. By integrating mental health awareness and support into all aspects of school life, the school aims to create a nurturing and resilient community that prioritises emotional well-being.

9. Feedback

Vyners School values the input of the whole community in helping to shape and refine the attendance policy. The school collects feedback through regular surveys distributed to students, parents/carers and staff, as well as during parent-teacher meetings and student voice sessions. This feedback is carefully reviewed and considered in policy evaluations to ensure it remains effective and responsive to the needs of the school community.

10. Further support

To provide comprehensive support for students, Vyners School actively engages with 'early help' services and other external agencies. These collaborations enable the school to access a wide range of resources and expertise in order to address the various challenges that may affect students and their attendance. Effective partnerships with local health services, social care and mental health organisations (such as CAMHS) ensures that students and families receive the necessary support and interventions promptly and effectively. For additional support, the school recommends the following helplines and websites:

- **Childline:** A free, confidential service for young people seeking help and support (website: <https://www.childline.org.uk>, phone: 0800 1111)
- **YoungMinds:** A mental health charity offering advice and support to young people and parents (website <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>, parent helpline: 0808 802 5544).
- **NSPCC:** Provides support and information for children and families (website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>, helpline: 0808 800 5000).
- **Samaritans:** Offers emotional support for anyone in distress (website: <https://www.samaritans.org>, phone or text: 116 123).

By continuously gathering feedback and leveraging external support, the school strives to create an effective and supportive attendance policy that promotes the well-being and success of all students.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Examples of home/school communication regarding attendance

Appendix B: Template letters to parents/carers

Appendix A: Examples of home/school communication regarding attendance

No reason for absence (daily):

{student First Name} is absent from school today. Please provide a reason for their absence. Absences must be reported each day before 8:25am via Edulink.

Appendix B: Template letters to parents/carers

Letter 1 - DfE recommended letter about the importance of attendance

Dear parent/carers,

{Name} has been absent for {#} days of school, which is equal to {#} lessons missed so far this school year. This has resulted in a cumulative attendance of [% figure]

We know that sometimes our students cannot come to school because they are really unwell, which is the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear, however, that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend, for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance '*Is my child too ill for school?*' ([click here](#)) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that students fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Vyners School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our students in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant impact on {Name} absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that {Name} comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this. [Year Leader Name] will be meeting with [Name] to create an Individual Attendance Plan (IAP), a copy of which will be sent home. If you wish to be present for this discussion, please contact [Year Leader name] as soon as possible.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have ongoing concerns about your child's attendance.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Senior lead for attendance

Letter 2 – Concerns about a students attendance

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Absences from school

[Name] has missed [insert number of days missed and over what time period]. This has resulted in a cumulative attendance of [% figure]. Since the IAP has been put in place there has not been an improvement in attendance.

We know that every family's circumstances are different and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child. We are aware of [insert known reasons for absence].

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including further looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

[Year Leader name] will be in contact with you shortly to arrange a meeting with you to discuss the reasons for absences, how we can support [name] to reduce these absences, as well as how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
School senior lead for attendance

Letter 3 – Invite parents/carers in to discuss attendance

Dear parent/carers,

Re: Invitation for a meeting to discuss attendance

Despite working with [name] to attempt to remove any barriers to attending school, their attendance has continued to decrease. We would like to invite you to come in to meet with [SLT link name] about [name]'s attendance at school. We would like to find out whether there is anything further we can do to support them in coming to school

[SLT link name] will be in contact shortly to arrange a suitable time to discuss the above, as well as how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed school work.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]

Senior lead for attendance

Letter 4 - Invitation to attendance panel meeting

Dear [parent/carer's name]

Re: Attendance Panel Meeting for [Child's Name]

We are writing to inform you that there continue to be concerns regarding [Name]'s school attendance. As a school, we are committed to ensuring that every student receives the best possible education and regular attendance is crucial to achieving this goal.

Over the past [insert time period], [Child's Name] has been absent for [insert number] days. These absences have accumulated to a point where it is affecting their academic progress and social development. We understand that there may be valid reasons for these absences and we wish to discuss how we can support [Child's Name] in improving their attendance.

To address these concerns, we would like to invite you to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting. The details of the meeting are as follows:

Date: [Insert Date]

Time: [Insert Time]

Location: [Insert Location]

During this meeting, we will review [Child's Name]'s attendance record, discuss any underlying issues contributing to their absences, and work together to develop a plan to improve their attendance. Your input and co-operation are vital in helping us to support [Child's Name] effectively.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting [attendance officer name] by [insert RSVP date]. If you are unable to attend on the scheduled date, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can arrange an alternative time that is convenient for you.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to support [Child's Name]'s education. Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Senior lead for attendance

Concerns about a student's unauthorised absence

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Unauthorised absence from school

We have noticed that [name] has recently taken an unauthorised [absence/absences] from school.

[Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] days on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

It is important that [name] attends regularly so that they can get the best out of their education.

We know that every family's circumstances are different and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child. Please let us know if there is anything going on at home or at school which might be making it difficult for [name] to attend regularly.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact [attendance officer] as soon as you can so that we can arrange a meeting to discuss any reasons for these absences, as well as how we can work together to help [name] catch up on any missed schoolwork.

Please note that the Department for Education ([click here](#)) states that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in Part A of our trust's attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Senior lead for attendance

Request for leave of absence during term time

Parents do not have the right to take their children out of school during term time. By law parents/carers must request permission from the headteacher for your child to miss school for any reason.

This form must be completed for any form of planned absence (with the exception of medical and dental appointments) and it should be submitted for authorisation at least 10 school days before the proposed absence. Copies of details relating to the request such as flight details or exam correspondence should be included in the request.

A request must be made for each individual child.

A request for leave of absence during term time for non-urgent medical and dental appointments does not require the completion of this form. However these appointments should be made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible the school must be informed in writing explaining the reason for absence and giving as much notice as possible.

–

FAO Headteacher

I/We request of the Headteacher that leave of absence be granted to:

Child's name:	
Tutorial:	
From:	
To:	
Reason for leave request:	
If the leave is for a holiday, please state why the holiday needs to be taken during term time:	
Parent/Carer Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	

Accepting a request for a leave of absence

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Your request for a leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application, I am able to agree to your request.

I have not come to this decision lightly. At Vyners School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We consider each request for a leave of absence on its merits and the family's specific circumstances.

Please be aware that the fact that I have agreed to this request does not mean I will necessarily be able to agree to any similar request from you, or other parents/carers, in the future.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Headteacher

Declining a request for a leave of absence

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Your request for a leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].
In this case I am afraid I cannot consent to your request.

At Vyners School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its specific circumstances and I have taken many factors into consideration.

As each request is different, this decision cannot be compared with decisions made by the school in the past and it will not affect any decisions made in the future.

I am sorry to have to disappoint you on this occasion.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Headteacher

After an unauthorised holiday

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Holiday absence

I am writing about your action in taking [name] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date]. We are treating this as an unauthorised absence because [explain the evidence you have].

At Vyners School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We have the power to grant leaves of absence under exceptional circumstances and a holiday is not generally considered to come under those circumstances. As outlined in the Trust's attendance policy, we expect parents/carers to consult the school before making any plans that will involve their child's absence from lessons or other commitments. Absences like these could have a detrimental effect on their education.

Insert the following if the child's absence has reached the threshold for a penalty notice and you have decided it's appropriate to issue one (see paragraph 181 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) for questions to consider when making this decision):

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will be issued with a penalty notice. When you receive the notice, you must pay:

- £80, if it's paid within 21 days
- £160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action. More information can be found on the Department of Education's website ([click here](#)).

Insert the following if the threshold for a penalty notice has not been reached:

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in the trust's Attendance Policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website and are available from the school office.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Headteacher

Congratulations for improving attendance rate

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Well done [name]!

I am writing to you to let you know that [name] should be very proud of improving their attendance rate. Since [date], their attendance rate has improved from [percentage] to [percentage]; this is equal to [number] days of education no longer being missed.

Well done to [name] and to you at home for your support.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]
Senior lead for attendance

Appendix C: Attendance ladder that is used to illustrate levels of good attendance

