



Archdiocese of Birmingham
ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Vivian Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 0DN
Telephone: 0121- 464 2141 Fax: 0121-464 8312
Email: enquiry@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk
www.stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk
Headteacher: Miss H.M. Cusack M.Ed.



Whole School Attendance Policy

Principles

St. Mary's Catholic Primary believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

Our Rationale

- To demonstrate a strong whole school attendance ethos
- To have a clear known policy on absence
- To have effective systems in place for monitoring attendance
- Use attendance data and other information to improve school and student performance
- To promote the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents and carers
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- To have support systems in place for vulnerable pupils
- To reward and celebrate good and improved attendance
- Make best use of additional support for pupils and parents with greatest need
- To have a system in place for registration in the event of an emergency evacuation

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child. The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Registration

School begins at 8:45am pupils are electronically registered via SIMS.

Lateness

Any student arriving after 8:45 will be recorded as late unless an explanation given is accepted as grounds for authorising the late arrival. Pupils who are late can only enter school via the main door due to the closure of security gates. Until such time as the electronic entrance system is set up for pupil registration, the children will be recorded in the school's 'late book'.

All children who have a pattern of lateness will meet with a member of SMT (attendance lead) who will remind them about the importance of being early or provide some advice on how to get to school earlier. Failure to improve attendance patterns will result in the school Attendance Lead meeting with parents – normally during parent consultations.



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Procedures for Challenging Attendance

Any child who is absent from school must have their absence recorded as being Authorised or Unauthorised. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence (see attendance registration codes).

First Day Absence

For the first day of absence parents are requested to inform the school by telephone or letter. If a letter or phone call is not received, then the administrative officer responsible for attendance will contact the parents by telephone to request the reason or to verify that they are aware of the absence. The subsequent information is then transferred to the register by the administrative officer.

Fifth Day Absence

If there has still been no contact from parents then Mr Blaney (SMT: attendance lead) will alert the Headteacher who will decide a course of action.

Ten Days Absence

It is good practice for schools to inform their local authority of patterns of absence where they have concerns or feel it is appropriate regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Regular patterns or long periods of absence can identify that a child has other needs which would benefit from the authority's intervention. For example, schools and local authorities have a duty to provide education for children with medical needs.

Any student who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Team (this is a legal requirement). The school will include details of action that they have taken. They must also inform the authority of every student who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 days continuous absence.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of all staff to notify SMT of any emerging attendance concerns. All staff members can access student's attendance data on SIMS.

Attendance data is reported at Full Governing Body meetings as part of our Safeguarding report. Data for children's attendance falling below 87% is highlighted. Data may be highlighted, if there is a significant cause for concern, for such groups as: Gender, SEN, 'Looked after Children', Free School Meals, and English as an Additional Language.

The Attendance Lead is responsible for following BCC Missing in Education Procedures.

Truancy

Although rare, truancy should be picked up on immediately via electronic registration. If a member of staff has concerns regarding an absent student they need to contact the Attendance Officer. Parents will be informed and if appropriate the Police informed.



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Medical / Illness

If a child is sent home during the school day (after lunchtime registration) due to illness, that day shall not be counted as a statistical absence; however, if a child leaves before the afternoon registration, that afternoon is recorded as 'I' (illness) as are any consecutive days off following this (which need to be confirmed by the parent daily) and is included in the statistical absence record.

Pupils who are persistently absent may be asked to provide medical evidence when absent through illness. If evidence in form of a doctor's note, an appointment card or a copy of the prescription is not provided then the school will mark all further absence as unauthorised.

Holidays in Term Time

Holidays taken during term time are discouraged. They will be unauthorised except in exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider individual requests and check whether pupils are meeting their academic targets and also their attendance record to date. Where absence has been granted, the absence will be recorded as authorised absence – all others will be recorded as unauthorised absence using the registration code 'G'.

Attendance Rewards

Pupils who achieve 100% attendance, up to and including the last day of term, will be rewarded with a certificate. No exceptions will be made for known long term health conditions.

Safeguarding Procedures

All staff must be alert to pupils at risk who are missing in education. Concerns should be immediately directed to the Designated Senior Lead (DSL). No child should be removed from the school roll until they are registered with another education establishment OR parents/guardians have officially taken the alternative route of Home Education OR the family are re-locating abroad. Parents are required to meet with the Headteacher stating their intention to re-locate abroad. For children who are going to be educated within the UK the *Pupil Movement Form/In-Year Notification of Pupil Movement* form is completed and sent into the LA – School Admissions Dept.

This policy was adopted by Governors in October 2015
This policy is due to be reviewed in July 2017



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DfE ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated Off Site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or Dental etc appointments)	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical / Dental Appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (after registration closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances



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Appendix A: Attendance Monitoring and Sanctions

St. Mary's Catholic Primary has adopted the following attendance monitoring & sanctions, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Weekly, termly and annual attendance is monitored by SMT, via the School SIMS system. Any patterns of absence are identified. Lateness (recorded by Office Staff) is also reported and trends identified.
2. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed to the SMT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the member of SMT responsible for attendance.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to 90%, the member of SMT responsible for attendance speaks to the parent of the pupil to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance.
6. Consistent lateness is also discussed with the parent.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below 87%, for reasons other than acute illness (as known by the school) or authorised absence, parents are informed that their child's attendance is being monitored.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the member of SMT responsible for attendance and classroom teacher who set targets for the child.
9. The targets are monitored for a further two-week period and attendance is expected to stabilise at 94%.
10. However, if attendance does not improve, the school is responsible for referring the parents to the Local Authority which may prosecute parents in the Magistrates Court. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to such a prosecution.



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Appendix B: Outstanding unexplained absence letter

Dear

Student name and Form

It appears from our records that has been absent from school since We have not heard from you regarding this absence and have not been successful in contacting you to discover the reason why.

It is very important that parents inform the school by telephone, letter or personal visit, of any absence on the first and each subsequent day that your child is absent.

There is a twenty-four hour answer line available for all pupil absences to be recorded on. Please call the school number and LEAVE A MESSAGE so that Mrs Shepherd can pick it up and inform the class teacher and record officially.

I would also be obliged if you would complete the form below and return it as soon as possible to Mrs Shepherd in the school office.

Yours sincerely

HM Cusack

Miss Cusack
Headteacher

.....
Please Return to Mrs Shepherd via the School Office

Reply Slip

Reason for absence:

Parent's Signature



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Appendix C: Persistent Lateness

Dear

Student name and Form

Our records show that has been late for school on _____ occasions so far this term.

It really is most unacceptable that your child is learning poor habits as well as disrupting his/her own and his/her peers' education. Lateness after registration is marked as unauthorised absence for that session i.e. morning or afternoon. You should be aware that the LA has the power to prosecute parents for failing to ensure that their child attends school.

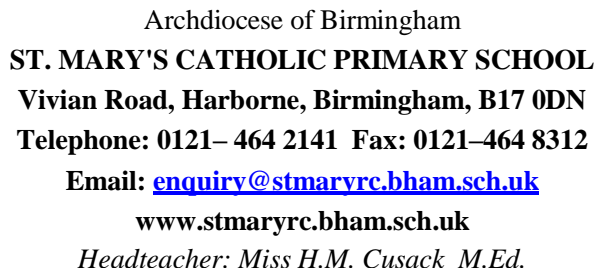
Please call the School Office to arrange to meet the member of SMT responsible for attendance, Mr. Blaney to discuss your child's lateness and what you can do to remedy this unacceptable situation.

Yours sincerely

HM Cusack

Miss Cusack
Headteacher

Parent's NamePlease Print



Appendix D: Request for Pupil Absence

Please complete and return this form to the school as soon as possible.

ELDEST CHILD'S NAME _____ Year _____

Date of absence: from _____ to _____

Reason for absence:

I recognise that this absence will seriously disrupt my child's education in school.

YES [] NO []

It is not possible for me to plan this absence during the school holidays because:

[illegible]

FOR SCHOOL RECORDS

THIS ABSENCE IS AUTHORIZED [] UNAUTHORIZED []

[illegible]

FOR THE PARENTS OF

Thank you for providing the information above. Your request for absence from school for your child has been considered and will be recorded as:

AUTHORISED [] UNAUTHORISED []

Signed HM Cusack Headteacher



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Appendix E **A very important message for all parents**

Date

Dear Parent,

St. Mary's wishes to work in partnership with parents to improve school attendance. We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.

**It is parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education.
Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.**

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work

Absence can only be authorised by the **Head Teacher**, within the boundaries set by the Education Act 1996.

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are **not acceptable reasons** to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, also if your child arrives at school after the close of registration. Leave in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

1. Legal action that may be taken include:

Issuing penalty notices: Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.

Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence: Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - magistrates can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, add costs and impose Parenting Orders.

Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence: Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - magistrates can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and/or impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.



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How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern you will receive another letter advising you about improving attendance. After this, any further unauthorised absence may result in the Local Authority taking legal action.

Please note – action will be triggered by any child's attendance falling below 95%, or 10 days, due to unauthorised absence, in any 12 month period.

We wish to improve upon our already good attendance by making it clear within the school and local community that unauthorised absence is not acceptable. You will be informed of the number of penalty notices issued, prosecutions and also of the percentage of improvement in attendance.

Yours sincerely,

HMCusack

Headteacher



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Appendix F

High Level of Absence due to medical reasons

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»
«AddressLine1»
«AddressLine2»
«City»
«PostCode»

Date _____

Dear Parent,

Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB» Yr «YearGroup»

Your child's poor attendance at school this year is causing serious concern as **he/she** has been absent for **number** of sessions out of a possible **number** of sessions and this will make it much harder for your child to achieve good results in their school work. **Most/ All** of the absence has been due to illness or for medical reasons.

It has been decided that due to the high level of your child's absence, **the Head Teacher will no longer authorise any absence for medical reasons unless supported by medical evidence.**

I have to advise you that we monitor all pupils with poor school attendance and will take action when absence is unauthorised; this may lead to prosecution.

Therefore should **Pupil's name** have any further sessions of absence because of illness or medical reasons you are strongly advised to provide one of the following which may enable the Head Teacher to authorise your child's absence:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- Letter from a professional
- Medical note
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes
- Letters concerning hospital appointments
- Slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist

Please be aware that telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent/carers are **not** acceptable as medical evidence when attendance is of serious concern.

I have to advise you as a parent/carers of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996 Section 444).



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We work with parents to improve school attendance. Good attendance will mean that your child is able to achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- miss out on social events
- are more likely to become involved in crime

If you feel that your child has ongoing or unresolved medical issues you are advised to approach your doctor urgently.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or your child's attendance please contact me. If you call and I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

HM Cusack

Headteacher



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Appendix G School Attendance Review Meeting Record Sheet

Meeting held on:
At:
Attended by:
.....
.....

Introduction

Thank you for attending this School Attendance Review Meeting. The meeting will provide you with the opportunity to explain why your child/ren has/have had unauthorised absence. *(if there is more than one child in the family, record information on separate sheets from page 2).*

Child Name DOB Address	Child Name DOB Address
Parent/Carer Name DOB Address Relationship to child/ren	Parent/Carer Name DOB Address Relationship to child/ren

If only one person invited to SARM:

Do you have a partner who lives at this address? If so what is their name?

Parent/Carer Name DOB.....

Relationship to child/ren:

For a parent who lives at a different address from child/ren describe all contact they have with child (how often/do they stay overnight/are they involved regarding their child/ren's education etc)



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..... "You

now have an opportunity to explain why your child has poor attendance. I am going to ask you some questions. Please answer them as fully as possible."

(Note that it is acceptable for staff to assist parents in answering the questions if necessary)

1. Has your child been too ill to attend School on some or all of these periods of

absence? (Show copy of attendance printout)

Y ☐ N ☐

If yes:

a) What illness has the child had?

.....

.....

b) Have you taken your child to a GP or Consultant?

Y ☐ N ☐

c) What advice did they give you?

.....

.....

Do you have medical evidence i.e. a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of a prescription, print screen of medical notes, letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence? **Handwritten notes or telephone calls from parents are not acceptable when attendance is of serious concern.**

Y ☐ N ☐

If a doctor has not been consulted, why not?

.....

.....

2. Are any other agencies or professionals (involved with) working with your family?

Y ☐ N ☐

If yes, who are they and what work are they doing with your family?

.....

.....

.....



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3. Has your child been bullied?

Y ☐ N ☐

If yes, who have you reported this to in School and what action was taken?

.....

.....

.....

If this has not been reported, why not?

.....

.....

.....

Is this matter now resolved?

Y ☐ N ☐

4. Are there **any other reasons at all** why your child is not attending School regularly?

.....

.....

.....

5. What actions have you taken to get your child to attend School?

.....

.....

.....

Action Plan

“We are now going to agree on an Action Plan.”

(All paperwork must be **legible** and **signed**, **photocopied** and a **copy given to each parent at the end of the meeting** - all 5 pages of this document. **Send a typed copy of the Action Plan** if writing is not easy to read and enclose with the Post SARM Letter).

Actions by parent

- Ensure your child attends school every day it is open, on time, escorting them into school and handing them over to a named person if necessary. **(If the parent is required to hand the child over to a member of staff / School Reception, please record arrangements here:)**

.....

.....



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- Contact school on the first day of every absence **before 9.30am** stating the reason for absence and the likely return date.
- Take your child to the doctor if unwell and provide the school with medical evidence i.e. an appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, hospital letter concerning appointments, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes or any other medical evidence which enables the Head Teacher to authorise the absence as illness or medical appointment. School will not authorise medical absence without this evidence. **Handwritten notes or telephone calls from parents are not acceptable when attendance is of serious concern.**
- Contact the school if your child is experiencing any difficulties preventing regular attendance.

Any other actions agreed:

.....
.....

Actions by School

- To respond to parental contact promptly.
- To continue to monitor attendance.
- To **only** authorise absence due to illness when provided with medical evidence. (Handwritten notes or telephone calls from parents are not acceptable when attendance is of serious concern).

Any other actions agreed:

.....
.....

"Is there any further support we can offer you?"

Y ☐ N ☐

.....
.....

Statement

I must advise you that any further unauthorised absence is likely to lead to legal action.

The law states that your child must attend school on every occasion that it is open unless there is a reason that enables the Head Teacher to authorise the absence under the Regulations. The law also states that it is parents' responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

Statement read to the parent(s)

Y ☐ N ☐

School representativeSigned.....Dated.....



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Parent Statement

I confirm that I have read these notes and understand the contents of this meeting.

Parent/Carer.....Signed..... Dated.....

Parent/Carer.....Signed..... Dated.....

'Parent', includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

Have copies of the School Attendance Review Meeting Record Sheet been given to the parent at the end of the meeting?

Y ☐ N ☐



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Appendix H

Letter regarding SARM meeting attended and monitoring

Ref:

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»
«AddressLine1»
«AddressLine2»
«City»
«PostCode»

Spotlight on Attendance

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB»
Yr «YearGroup» at «SchoolName»

Thank you for coming to the School Attendance Review Meeting on «AppointDate» regarding the poor attendance of your child, «ChildFirstName» at «SchoolName».

We were very pleased that you came to the meeting with «ChildFirstName» and hopefully your child's attendance will now improve.

As explained, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's regular school attendance.

I will continue to monitor «ChildFirstName»'s attendance. If there is further unauthorised absence; I will be submitting the paperwork to Court Section and this may result in legal action being taken against you and/or a penalty notice may be issued.

Please contact me if «ChildFirstName» is experiencing any difficulty preventing their attendance. If you call and I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely

2.

«School_Representative»
Job Title



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Appendix I - Letter regarding non-attendance at SARM meeting

Ref:

insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»
«AddressLine1»
«AddressLine2»
«City»
«PostCode»

Spotlight on Attendance

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB» Yr «YearGroup» at «SchoolName»

Unfortunately, you did not attend the School Attendance Review Meeting, arranged to take place on «**AppointDate**» at «**SchoolName**».

No contact was received either to give apologies or to request the meeting be rearranged.

You have been previously advised to:

Ensure your child attends school every day it is open, on time, **escorting them into school if necessary and handing them over to a member of staff.**

Please be aware your child **will** get an unauthorised absence mark when they arrive after registration closes.

Contact school on the first day of every absence by 9.30am stating the reason for absence and the likely return date.

Take your child to the doctor if unwell and provide the school with: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. The Head Teacher will not authorise medical absence without this. (Please be aware that as your child's attendance is of serious concern, telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent/carer are **not** acceptable as medical evidence)

I will continue to monitor «ChildFirstName»'s attendance. **If there is any further unauthorised absence; we will be submitting the paperwork to Court Section and this may result in legal action being taken against you and/or a penalty notice may be issued.**

Please contact me if «ChildFirstName» is experiencing any difficulties preventing their attendance. If you call and I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely

«School_Representative» Job Title