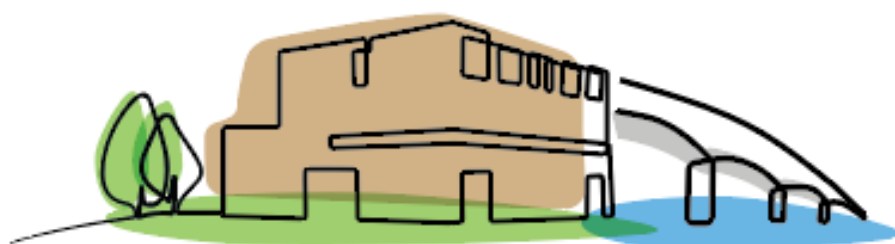


Valentine Primary School



VALENTINE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pupil Attendance Policy

Pupil Attendance Policy

Approved by: Governing Body

Approval date: September 2023

Last review date: July 2023

Contact:

Next review date: September 2024

Approvers signature: Chair of Governors

Valentine Primary School's mission statement:

Valentine Primary School is devoted to nurturing each child's ability to articulate ideas and understanding, through oracy, instilling a lifelong skill for success. Our curriculum extends beyond the academic, fostering the talents of the whole child. We have created an environment that enables focused learning, free from distraction. With a commitment to communication, holistic growth, and intellectual stimulation, we empower pupils to express themselves confidently, embrace diverse challenges, and thrive as well-rounded individuals. Our mission is to prepare them for a dynamic world by providing a platform for their character, emotional, and social development.

Our 'I DREAM' values:

I		Independent Being independent learners empowers us to explore, discover, and solve problems, fostering lifelong skills for personal growth.
D		Determined Being determined learners fuels our resilience, pushing us to overcome obstacles and achieve goals with unwavering dedication and success.
R		Reflective Being reflective learners allows us to learn from experiences, to make better choices and continuously improve.
E		Enquiring Being enquiring learners' sparks curiosity, driving us to ask questions, seek knowledge, and develop critical thinking skills.
A		Ambitious Cultivating ambition in class ignites a desire for mastery, pushing us to pursue excellence, take risks, and to be the best we possibly can be.
M		Motivated Being motivated is essential for success, it fuels perseverance, focus, and the drive to overcome setbacks on the path to achievement.

Every child deserves a champion. An adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and who insists that they become the best they can possibly be.

1. Aims of the Pupil Attendance Policy

At Valentine Primary School, we aim to meet our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Complying with government regulations on attendance
- Ensuring that regular attendance and punctuality are given a high priority by all staff throughout the school
- Acting early to address patterns of unauthorized absence
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Providing a clear message to parents and pupils that regular attendance and being punctual is vital
- Keep records of all absences (authorised and unauthorised)
- Establish clear communications with external agencies

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

Parents, schools and Local Authorities share legal responsibility for school attendance.

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2023-2024](#)

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the morning and afternoon session of each school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See [appendix 1](#) for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school at 8.40am each school day through the playground, except Year 6 who go straight into the Year 6 building. Registers are started at 8.45am.

Children arriving in school after 8.50am must enter the school through the school office. They will then be marked late on the register. **The registers officially close at 9.00am.**

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health.

The school office should be contacted by telephone on **02380 223930** from 8.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). There is an option to record absence on a voice mail system before 8.00am.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Parents should inform the school office as soon as possible if their child is to attend a medical or dental appointment. We require evidence of the appointment such as a doctor/hospital appointment letter, email or dental appointment card.

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

Children arriving in school after 8.50am must enter the school through the school office. They will then be marked late on the register, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Therefore, the attendance mark will be lost for this session.

If in a school year, a child is late every day by:	They would have lost approximately:	Or they would have missed approximately:
5 minutes	3.5 days from school	20 lessons
10 minutes	7 days from school	41 lessons
15 minutes	10 days from school	55 lessons
20 minutes	14.5 days from school	82 lessons
30 minutes	22 days from school	123 lessons

We aim to encourage punctuality at school through:

- Holding regular meetings between the school attendance officer and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to discuss support and concerns.
- Phoning parents as necessary.
- Meeting with parents and children to discuss concerns.
- Sending letters from either the school or EWO.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If you do not call the school with a reason for absence, the school will either telephone to find out why the child is absent or an automated call will be made from the school system which needs to be responded to.

Parents will be asked to supply the school with an emergency contact number which the school will use to enquire about a pupil's absence.

In certain circumstances home visits may be necessary to check on the welfare of the child.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will be given information on their child's attendance during termly parents' evenings and in the child's annual school report.

If a letter is sent home to parents due to a concern, details of the child's attendance will be provided. Similarly, this will be on the Executive Headteacher's response to a leave of absence request (see section 4.1).

3.7 Education Welfare Officer

The school works with an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from Southampton City Council.

The EWO's role is to contact parents by letter, meeting with them or visiting the home when there are concerns related to a child's attendance or punctuality.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised.

Parents will be made aware of actions which the school will take to follow up absences. The first steps are monitoring, sending a letter (see appendix 4), followed up by a meeting if improvements are not seen. The child may be referred to Education Welfare.

Whilst it is not compulsory for children below statutory school age (five years old) to attend school, it is important that parents understand the need to establish good routines with children at a young age. The school encourages all pupils at non-statutory age in Reception to attend every day.

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

A Leave of Absence Form should be completed if parents request a child to be absent from school (see appendix 2). The Executive Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Executive Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. We limit this to one day per year.
- Educational activities outside of school such as a music exam or school visit.
- Traveller pupils travelling for exceptional purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground related families) and Circus troupes, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling

for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Unauthorised absences include:

- Any holidays taken during term time
- Visits to relatives – even if stating that they are unwell
- Travelling for weddings
- Other travel which is regarded as non-essential

The attendance officer monitors attendance regularly. **The following action will be taken if attendance falls below the school target of 96%:**

- Attendance at 94%-95% – This is below the school average and a letter will be sent home to parents to highlight concerns.
- Attendance at 91%-93% – Absence is a concern and the school will set a target for improvement. A meeting will be held with the Executive Headteacher.
- Attendance at 90% or below – Absence is a serious concern and very likely to affect attainment and progress. Referral will be made to EWO which leads to a formal meeting. A meeting will be made to meet the Executive Headteacher and Deputy Executive Headteacher to sign an 'Acceptable Attendance Contract'.
(see appendix 3)

4.2 What your child's attendance figure means as learning time lost

Attendance figure	Days absent by the end of the school year	School time missed by the end of Year 11
100%	0	0
95%	10	$\frac{1}{4}$ of the year
90%	20	$\frac{1}{2}$ of the year
85%	30	$\frac{3}{4}$ of the year
80%	40	1 whole year

4.3 Legal sanctions

Schools can request the issue of a Penalty Notice (fine) to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Southampton City Council.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Executive Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- When a child has been late after register closes on a number of occasions.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Schools can request the issue of a Penalty Notice (fine) to parents for the persistent lateness of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

These are issued for late arrival, after the close of registration, on 10 occasions or more during any 80 possible school sessions (within 8 school weeks). School registers will be closed after the registration period in accordance with the School's Attendance Policy. A "U" code will then be used which denotes an unauthorised absence. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

To promote and reward good attendance we:

- Have an attendance officer, Sue Reeves, who manages this aspect of pupil wellbeing.
- Monitor attendance regularly.
- Hold regular meetings with the EWO to identify further support needed for families to improve attendance.
- Communicate early issues/concerns with parents.
- Invite parents in for meetings with the Executive Headteacher.
- Hold celebration assemblies weekly where class attendance is shared and celebrated with the children.
- Run workshops for parents with the EWO.
- Raffle away a bike per term – for those with 100% attendance.
- Host 100% Attendance Parties for those with 100% attendance.
- Hold certificate assemblies at the end of term to celebrate attendance and improvements.
- Open doors at 8.40am to allow pupils into school to begin morning tasks – this also promotes punctual arrival for the register.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to call the school each day their child is ill and will not be attending school.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer (EWO).

The persistent absence threshold is 7%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 7%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Pupils' daily attendance is recorded on a paper register and recorded on a secure school system. This information is used to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Create a weekly report for class attendance
- Identify particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.
- Create a half termly report on pupils with persistent absence (7% or more)
- Inform half termly discussions with the EWO.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Governing body

- The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher and Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Executive Headteacher / The Headteacher

- The Executive Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- The Executive Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- The Executive Headteacher works alongside leaders to ensure that attendance is monitored well and appropriate strategies are in place to promote attendance at Valentine.
- The Executive Headteacher holds monthly 'Acceptable Attendance Contract' meetings with parents of children who have dropped below 90% attendance.

7.3 The attendance officer

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Executive Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Executive Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

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

7.5 Office and Reception staff

- Office and reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Executive Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

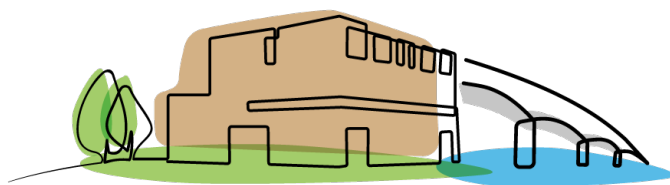
Appendix 1: attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



VALENTINE

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Application for leave of absence from school – Valentine Primary School Primary School

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. This form should be used to request leave of absence for Religious Observance or for other circumstances, including holidays that require a child to be absent from school. Please note that the school does not authorise absence for holidays.

The application should be made **well in advance** and parents are strongly advised to apply for leave of absence before they confirm any arrangements. Under no circumstances will absences be authorised after they have happened. **Unauthorised absence may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice fine to each parent, for each child absent, for children who miss more than 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) in one ½ term. Any holidays which are taken during term time could also lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.**

The Executive Headteacher will notify you of the decision within ten days of the receipt of the form.

Child's name:

Class:

Child's name:

Class:

I apply for leave of absence for my child from school.

Dates for which leave of absence is requested:

From: 20..... (First day of absence)

To: 20..... (Last day of absence)

Total number of school days:

Have you previously had leave of absence for this child in the current school year? YES/NO

If 'YES' please give dates:

Please give the reasons which prevent this absence being taken during a school holiday period:

.....

.....

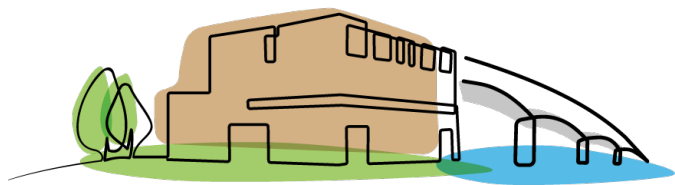
Signed: (parent)

Date:

PLEASE RETURN TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE WITH EVIDENCE OF RETURN DATE (E.G. FLIGHT DETAILS, BOOKING CONFIRMATION ETC.)

Office Use Only:

Reason given:		Evidence of travel details, including return date obtained:	
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VALENTINE

PRIMARY SCHOOL

To the Parents/Carers of

Thank you for your application for 'Leave of Absence' from school for (number of days)

From To

Having considered your application carefully, my decision is:

☐
☐

Leave of Absence is **APPROVED** (absence will be recorded as authorised)

Leave of Absence is **NOT APPROVED** (absence will be recorded as unauthorized)

- Holidays in term time are not authorised in accordance with our Attendance Policy
- Other requests for travel purposes during term time will not be authorised in accordance with our Attendance Policy.
- Visits to relatives are not authorised during term time.
- Our Attendance Policy states that only one day per major religious festival will be authorised.

PLEASE NOTE

- If your child does not return by your child may be taken off the school roll and you will need to apply to the Admissions Team for a place on your return.
- Unauthorised absence could mean that you are liable to pay a Penalty Notice fine on your return.
- Absences have to be recorded as authorised or unauthorised on the school register and the child's annual report. The school is required to publish annual statistics on authorised and unauthorised absence.

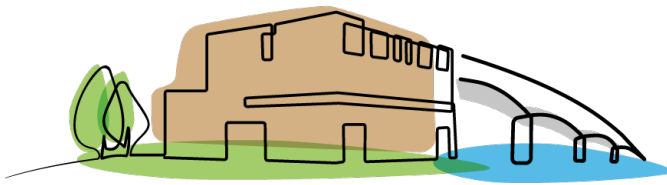
THIS YEAR:	
Attendance	%
Authorised Absence	%
Unauthorised Absence	%

LAST YEAR:	
Attendance	%
Authorised Absence	%
Unauthorised Absence	%

Signed Head Teacher Date

<p>100%</p> <p>Achieve a certificate at termly celebration assembly parents invited.</p>	<p>98%+</p> <p>Good attendance</p>	<p>96%+</p> <p>Expected attendance</p>	<p>95%</p> <p>Below school average</p> <p>Letter home to highlight concerns with parents</p>	<p>93%</p> <p>Absence is causing concern</p> <p>School sets internal school target</p> <p>Meeting for parents face to face with Executive Headteacher.</p>	<p><90%</p> <p>Absence is causing a serious concern and very likely affecting attainment and progress.</p> <p>Continued poor attendance and/or unauthorised absences.</p> <p>Referral to EWO which usually leads to a formal pre legal meeting.</p> <p>Pupils in this category are classed as 'Persistent Absentees'.</p>
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First letter sent home for attendance concerns:



VALENTINE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear *Parent/Carers name*

Re: *Child's name*

Your child's level of attendance currently stands at _____ which is below our school target of 96%.

I would just kindly like to remind you that it is very important that your child attends school regularly, to ensure they do not miss out on their education.

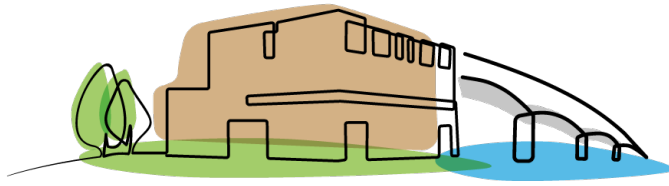
Please avoid taking your child out of school or keeping him/her at home unless he or she is poorly. If your child is too poorly to attend school or unable to for another reason, it is important that you let the school office know.

A Leave of Absence form must be completed for requesting time away from school for any other reason. Please note that our school policy states that holidays in term time will not be authorised.

It is vital that we work together in order to improve attendance. Poor attendance means that your child will not make the progress expected.

Yours sincerely

Mr D. Constable-Phelps
Executive Headteacher



VALENTINE

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear *Parent/Carers name*

Re: *Child's name*

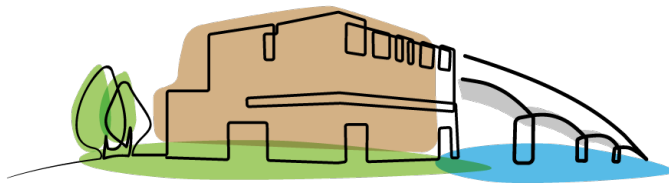
Your child's level of attendance currently stands at _____ which is below our school target of 96%.

Following the letter dated _____, their attendance has been monitored; however, there has been no improvement. An appointment has therefore been made for you on _____ **at** _____ to discuss your child's attendance.

It is vital that we work together in order to improve attendance. Poor attendance means that your child will not make the progress expected.

Yours sincerely

Mr D. Constable-Phelps
Executive Headteacher



VALENTINE

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear *Parent/Carers name*

Re: *Child's name*

As part of our ongoing work to improve attendance across the school we have been monitoring reasons for absence in children whose attendance is less than 90%. Any child whose attendance is below 90% is classed as a Persistent Absentee and as a school we have to report to the Local Authority on their attendance.

From looking at *child's name* registration certificate, it can be seen that since (insert date) xx days have been missed due to illness. In line with local authority guidance we are therefore asking you to provide a form of medical evidence to support illnesses. This may take the form of an appointment card, notes from the medical practitioners' reception, copy of a prescription or information relating to any prescribed medication.

All schools have to make difficult decisions when authorising absences and sometimes an explanation given by the parent is not always sufficient for us to authorise an absence.

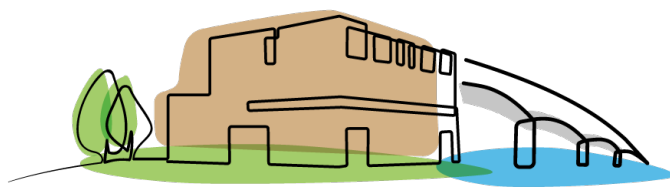
Please note that we do not require a medical certificate.

I must also advise you that the decision to authorise any absence due to illness is the school's decision. If we are not satisfied with the authenticity of any illness or medical evidence is not being provided, we will mark the absence as unauthorised. If we decide not to authorise the absence, we will inform you.

We do, of course, want to continue to work in partnership with you in order to ensure your child attends school on a regular basis and receives the maximum benefit from the education we provide. If you have any questions regarding this letter, then please do get in contact with us.

Yours sincerely

Mr D. Constable-Phelps
Executive Headteacher



VALENTINE

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Parent

Attendance in Foundation Stage

We are working hard to improve the attendance of children throughout our school.

Now that _____ is 5 years old, the statutory agreement is that your child must attend full time schooling. Our school target is 96%; currently your child's attendance is ____%.

Please avoid taking your child out of school or keeping him/her at home unless he or she is poorly. If your child is too poorly to attend school or unable to for another reason, it is important that you let the school office know.

A Leave of Absence form must be completed for requesting time away from school for any other reason. Please note that our school policy states that holidays in term time will not be authorised.

Yours sincerely

Mr D. Constable-Phelps

Executive Headteacher