FENLAND
SCHOOLS FEDERATION

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Maria-Anne Higgins
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POLICY DOCUMENT	Attendance
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Chair of Governing Body signature	
Date	

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Attendance Policy

Why we have this policy.

High attendance at school is important for children to do well in their learning. Children need to be on time and here every day. We need you to work with us to help make that happen. We expect children to be at school unless there is an unavoidable or exceptional reason, or unless there is a health problem that happens for a long time and means they cannot come. Children from Reception to Year 6 are all part of this policy.
This is the Government's information about how children must attend school: Working Together to Improve School Attendance. August 2024.
We have this policy so we can try to:

- Support children and their parents/carers to be at school every day and on time.
- Make sure all children can access school.
- Make sure that parents/carers know about the laws to do with attendance.

At school, we know that attendance is important and we will do all we can to support parents/carers to get children into school every day. Making sure children attend school is part of the work we do to make sure children are safe – called **safeguarding.**

What Everyone Must Do

Parents/carers:

- Make sure your child comes to school, and know that you have a legal responsibility to make this happen.
- Make sure your child is on time for school with all the things they need in time for the register. If your child is late, it might be marked as an 'unauthorised' absence.
- Tell school if your child has a medical appointment during the school day. We would like appointments to be after school if possible please. We might ask to see the text message, email or appointment card just to check that the appointment is happening.
- Make sure you contact school before 08:45 am if your child cannot attend school, telling school the reason.
- Tell school if your child is unhappy coming to school, so that we can help you and your child solve the problem that is making them unhappy.
- Fill out the form if you need to take your child out of school during term time. We won't authorise the absence unless it is for an exceptional reason. This means it has to be unavoidable and really important. If you take your child out of school even when school have said it will be unauthorised, you might be given either a penalty notice (which is a fine you have to pay) or a prosecution.
- Tell school if your phone number, email address or home address changes. Make sure we have more than one person's details in case we need to ring someone for your child in an emergency.
- If we suggest some things to help your child with attendance or problems, try and work with us to let them happen.
- Talk to us about any problems with attendance. This could be face to face or on the phone or email. It's better face to face if you can.

A child registered with a school has to attend school in the term after they are 5 years old. This is called 'statutory school age'. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to make sure their child comes to school.

School:

- Be a safe place to learn.
- Keep regular and accurate records of when your child is in school and if they are on time.
- Check children's attendance and do something if they are not in school regularly.
- Contact parents/carers when a child is not in school if we have not had a message to say why from a parent/carer.
- Find out why a child is not in school if you have not given us a reason. Your reason may not mean we authorise the absence. If your child is off school for a long time or lots of times because of a medical condition, we might ask you for some information from a doctor to help us support your child.
- Celebrate when children come to school every day. This can be in assemblies, on social media, on displays or by telling you your child is doing well.
- Meet with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council (AIO) to help us check attendance and see what else we need to do.
- Tell Cambridgeshire County Council if a child is not attending school enough.
- Decide what we think will help a child who is not attending school, and put that help and support in place.
- Work with other services to help a child's attendance. E.g. other schools, Cambridgeshire County Council, Social Care, Early Help, and the local community.
- Share the information about how much your child is coming to school with you and explain what good attendance is.
- Have the same rules for everyone about coming to school every day and on time.
- Have special support and follow the Local Authority Medical Needs Policy for children who cannot come to school because of medical or behaviour needs. This follows Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
- Think about having an Individual Healthcare Plan if a child has medical needs.
- Work with the Access and Inclusion team at Cambridgeshire County Council to support children with medical needs who cannot come to school every day.

The Attendance Champion for our school is Mrs Higgins, she is the headteacher and can be contacted via the school office –
Townley – 01354 638229 office@townley.cambs.sch.uk
Friday Bridge – 01945 860229 office@fridaybridge.cambs.sch.uk

All staff at school have to work hard to make sure attendance is good. The Headteacher is in charge of it. If we are worried about your child, we will tell you on the phone or by letter and you will be invited into school to talk to us about it.

Children:

- Come to school every day.
- Be here on time every morning.
- Have what they need for a day in school.
- Talk to their teacher about any problems they have that make them want to stay at home.

Governors:

- Look at the information about attendance every term.
- Make sure the Headteacher does everything in this policy.

The Local Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council):

- Support school and give us information and guidance by having meetings with us about attendance.
- Work with us when a child misses a lot of school.
- Work with schools to decide what legal sanctions (penalty notice or prosecution) would be appropriate.
- Work out what support a child needs to be able to access education if they have medical needs.

What School Does for Attendance

Mrs Higgins is our Senior Attendance Champion, but for day-to-day attendance issues, please contact the school office.
Townley – 01354 638229 office@townley.cambs.sch.uk
Friday Bridge – 01945 860229 office@fridaybridge.cambs.sch.uk

We make sure all children can come to school every day, and other services help us to offer support. Some children, e.g. Young Carers, might need more help to be able to come to school. We show families where they can get extra help if they struggle with coming to school. Sometimes Social Care help us to decide if a child needs support. We will work with families in many different ways to help them come to school every day. We have a special person for safeguarding called a Designated Safeguarding Lead. Anyone can talk to that person at school if they need help.

School has to look at all pupils' information and see who is coming to school every day. We use this information to see what we need to do to help groups of children. We share this information with different staff to make sure everyone knows how to support the children.

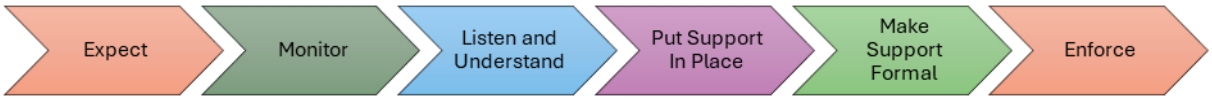
We have to share our attendance information with the Department for Education (DfE) so that we can see whether our children's attendance is as good as other schools, both nearby and in the whole UK.

We look at the information and if a child is not coming to school regularly, we will work with them to help it get better and we will contact you directly. Children who miss 10% of time at school might get a fine or penalty notice and we call them **'persistently absent'** (absent a lot of the time). Children who miss half their time at school (50%) are called **'severely persistently absent'** and if this happens, we will ask parents/carers to do lots of work with us to help and support the child.

We train every staff member to understand attendance so that everyone knows how to support children to come to school, and everyone knows who can help. We train, remind and support all staff to follow this policy. Good attendance is celebrated with children and families and reported to parents/carers at Parents Evenings and in end of year reports.

Part of our work means we decide how to spend school money and how we use our staff to support attendance. We check how this is going by looking at our data to make sure the money we spend has a good effect and is helping to improve attendance.

<u>Supporting Attendance</u>



As a school, we try to work together with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will **listen to you and support you. However, if this doesn't work, we may think about using the legal options below:**

When we need to, we will put support in place to help improve a child's attendance or lateness. If this doesn't work, and your child doesn't meet a target for attendance set by school, we will send your details to the Local Authority Attendance Team. This might mean you get a Penalty Notice/fine, or may be prosecuted by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This could be a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Lateness and attendance are checked every day by the **school attendance officer** who will:

- Look at pupil attendance for certain groups in school.
- Look at pupil attendance for children with medical needs.
- Check for pupils who are 'Children Missing in Education' and tell the Local Authority about them.
- Follow certain actions for parents who have requested to home educate their child.
- Follow certain actions to take children off the school roll if they need to.
- Look at the registers every day, checking authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons parents/carers have given for pupils who are not in school.
- Send a 'Late Letter' to parents/carers when their child is late a number of times.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to find out why a pupil is not in school.
- Tell parents/carers if their child's attendance is too low.
- Offer support or tell you where you can find support in the community.

Early Intervention Process

- Step One. Send a letter to parents/carers and tell them that we are worried about a child's attendance/lateness and offer Early Support.
- Step Two. Send a letter to offer support and explain the effect the absence/lateness is having on the child.
- Step Three. Send an invitation to attend a meeting to make an **Attendance Contract**. This is a supportive meeting, that you choose to agree to. We discuss the needs of a pupil and family and find ways to support you so your child can attend school.
- Step Four. If the Attendance Contract does not improve attendance, or if the parents/carers do not work with the support even when the school asks them to, then we will ask the Local Authority to decide if a penalty notice/fine or prosecution can be used.
- At Step Three or Four, school might choose to use a **Notice To Improve** letter. This is sent by the school and the Local Authority. It is a final try to improve attendance before using fines and prosecutions. It is used when parents/carers do not engage with us to support the child.
- After using an Attendance Contract or a Notice To Improve, if attendance does not get better, school will refer to the Local Authority for a penalty notice/fine or prosecution.
- Report pupils to the Local Authority when they have 10 'O' coded (unauthorised absence) sessions in school in a row. 10 *sessions* in a row = 5 days.
- Report pupils who have been off for 10 *sessions* of 'G' codes (meaning they asked for leave but the Headteacher did not agree to it) in a row to the Local Authority. We will ask them to use a penalty notice/fine or prosecution (it depends on how many times your child has had unauthorised term time leave – we explain this later on).
- Report pupils with 15 *days* of 'I' (illness) codes in a row to the Local Authority.

Registers

Reception to Year 6:

- Townley - the door is opened at 08:41 am and closes at 08:44.
- Friday Bridge – the gate is opened at 08:45 and closes at 08:49
- At Townley the registers are open at 08:45 am and close at 09:00am.
- At Friday Bridge the registers are open at 08:50 am and close at 09:05am.
- Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be marked as 'L' - late on the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close, without an unavoidable reason, will be marked as 'U' - unauthorised late. This affects their attendance level.

	Classroom door open	**Register is being taken**	**Outside classroom door locked**	**Register has been taken**	**Register closes**
Townley	08:41 am	08:45 am	08:44 am	09:00am	09:00 am
Friday Bridge	08:45 am	08:50 am	08:49 am	09:05am	09:05 am
	On time 😊	**On time** 😊		**Late** ☹️	**Unauthorised** ☹️ ☹️

It is the law that we do the register every morning and afternoon at school. If we don't know why a child is late, we have to mark it as unauthorised until a parent/carer gives us a reason. This must be no later than 5 days after the mark is made. Only the Headteacher may authorise or unauthorise an absence. The register can only be changed when we don't know the reason but then a parent/carer gives us the reason. If we make a change, the register has to show the original mark, the changed mark, the reason for the change, the date the change was made, and the name of the person who made the change. Registers are kept for six years as a record.

Lateness

When children arrive late at school, it means the child, the teacher and other children are disturbed and miss learning. Where pupils start to be late a lot, we will phone, email or write a letter to you to explain what is happening and offer you support. If the lateness continues, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If the lateness still does not get better, even with the school's support, we may ask the Local Authority to use one of the legal options.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parents/carers must contact school on the first day their child is not in school by 08:45am. You must ring again every day that the child is not in school.

For any pupil not in school when the register closes and school does not know the reason, a member of staff will try and get hold of the parent/carer.

The member of staff will ring every person on your child's record, starting with the first one, until we find out why the child is not in school. We will leave a message on voicemail if you do not answer. We will make a note of any conversations. Staff will mark the registers using one of the codes (see appendix 1 at the end of this policy).

If a parent/carer does not tell us why a child is absent, we will mark it as unauthorised. If we do not know where a child is, we might come to your house and knock on the door to see if your child is safe.

Illness

If your child has had sickness or diarrhoea, they can return after they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for 48 hours.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezes and runny noses can come to school. However, if they have a temperature over 37.5 degrees, they should stay at home until their temperature has come down and they are well enough. This is a good website that the NHS and Government has made which tells you if your child is well enough to go to school or not: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

Children should come to school unless they are too unwell to do basic things. We will ring you if they need to go home.

Medical Needs and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

If a child cannot go to school because they are physically or mentally unwell, we will offer support to try and make it possible for the child to attend. The support starts with what is available for all children and goes up in levels if children's needs get more complicated.
If a child needs things that are a little bit different with their uniform, transport, timetable or at lunchtime, we will consider that. If a child cannot come to school at all because of their medical needs, then we will work with the Local Authority **Access and Inclusion Team** to work out what can be provided. We might need medical information from your doctor to do this but we will talk to you about that if we do.

If a child has an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), we will work closely with the child's SEN Caseworker to support them with coming to school.
We can make changes to our policies and the way we do things in school to help meet the needs of pupils who find it hard to attend school, under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 (where a pupil has a disability). We will do this together with parents/carers.

General Non-Attendance

This is different to being absent due to illness or other authorised reasons, or for unauthorised term-time leave. General non-attendance is when a pupil is absent from school, without it being exceptional circumstances and without it being authorised by school. If your child does not attend school regularly, the school will work with you to find out why it is happening, and how school can help. If your child continues to be absent without authorisation from the school, then we may send your details to the Local Authority to consider a penalty notice or a prosecution. A pupil would need to be absent for 10 sessions (a morning or afternoon mark in the register is one session) over a period of 10 or more school weeks. Before school refer to the Local Authority for non-attendance, we will work with you and offer support. We may offer you an Attendance Contract Meeting where we discuss the barriers to attendance and try to break them down. If you do not join in with the support from school, we may choose to set targets for your child's attendance instead. We do this together with the Local Authority. This is called a Notice to Improve and is a last try at improving attendance before fines or a prosecution is asked for.

The Different Types of Leave

Authorised leave

This is if a child has been off school for a reason that we agree with. For example:

- Illness or a medical appointment. If they are well enough, children should be at school for the rest of the day if they go to an appointment.
- Religious Observance – official religious days which are decided by the religion. E.g. Eid.
- The absence has been authorised by the Headteacher because it is short, exceptional and unavoidable.

Unauthorised leave:

This is when a child is away from school when school would say no. E.g.

- Shopping, hair appointments, visiting family, taking part in a protest or birthdays.
- A parent/carer has not given a reason for the child not being in school.
- A parent/carer has not completed an Absence Request Form.
- Being off school for something that the Headteacher does not think is exceptional.

The code given to a child in the register is the Headteacher's decision. They will use guidance from the Government (DfE) to make their decision.

Term-Time Leave

Parents may not take their child out of school for a term-time holiday. If you want to ask for time off school, you must fill in a Term-Time Leave Request Form (Appendix 2). This has to be filled in **before** you take your child out of school and no later than one days before.

If school think you have taken your child out for term time leave, we will write to you and ask you to explain why your child was not in school. If you can't give school a reason, then the absence may be recorded as unauthorised, and we may send your details to the Local Authority for a penalty notice/fine.

Exceptional circumstances (*this means **rare, unavoidable, short***) will be looked at by the Headteacher.

If you request term time leave for any of these, they will **not** be allowed. We would send details to the Local Authority for a penalty notice/fine:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extending the time off if a pupil has not come back to school after an agreed absence.
- Leave taken because some transport might be affected by things and might not run.
- Leave taken to try and relieve travel distress for family members with additional needs (please decide if you feel this is appropriate for your cohort).

Penalty Notices and Prosecution

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 sessions in a row or more (normally 5 days or more) they will receive a penalty notice.

The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer. If you haven't paid after 21 days, it goes up to £160. If you haven't paid after 28 days, you may be prosecuted in court. This could mean a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison for up to 3 months per parent.

If you take **another** term time leave of 10 sessions (5 days) or more with the same child, in a three-year rolling period, the fine is £160 per parent, per child and you have 28 days to pay it. If you do it a third time, in a three-year rolling period for the same child, your details will be sent to the Local Authority for a prosecution (Section 444 Education Act 1996).

Three-Year Period		
First Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more.	**Second** Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more.	**Third** Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more.
£80 for each child per parent. If you don't pay after 28 days = a prosecution.	**£160** for each child per parent. If you don't pay after 28 days = a prosecution.	Prosecution.

E.g. if two parents take 3 children away, the fine would be £80 x 3 = £240 per parent.
The total would be £480.
If you pay after 21 days it rises to **£960.**

E.g. if two parents take 3 children away, the fine would be £160 x 3 = £480 per parent.
The total would be £960.

If a child is absent for term time leave for 20 school days or more not authorised by the school, we may refer the parents for prosecution rather than a fine (Section 444 Education Act 1996).

Children Missing in Education

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, and the school does not know where the pupil is, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, your child is at risk of losing their school place with us. During this 20-day period, school will continue to try and contact you and will liaise with any other services that your child is open to. The Local Authority will conduct investigations into the location and educational provision of the child.

Appendices

Register Coding:

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.

The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.

Term-time Leave Request Form:

REQUEST FORM FOR PLANNED ABSENCE OF PUPIL FROM SCHOOL

Important
This form should be completed and signed by the parent or person having parental responsibility for the pupil. It should be returned to the Headteacher BEFORE the commencement of the period of absence and BEFORE making any bookings regarding the absence.

Please note that Regulation 12 of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981 (S.1. 1981 No. 1086) states:-

"In pursuance of arrangements made by the Governing Body of a school, on application made by the parent or other person having charge of a pupil he/she may be granted leave of absence from the school". The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 was amended in September 2013. The amendments made clear that Head teachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a referral to the Local Authority for enforcement actions to be considered. The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice fine or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren). This could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

If a second penalty notice is issued for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine is automatically £160. For a third penalty notice within a three-year rolling period, the parent will automatically be listed for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996. Where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered.

(Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act)
Penalty Notices can only be served in accordance with Cambridgeshire County Council's code of conduct. A copy is kept in school. Further advice and guidance for parents is available on the Department of Education website under the heading "Advice on school matters".
A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted. Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

I hereby request that (name/s of pupil/s):

1……Class…….

2…… Class …….

3…… Class …….

be granted leave of absence from school,

From:…….……..……..…… To: ……..……..…..…… (days/dates)

The exceptional circumstances for this request are -

……

……

……

……

……

……

It is expected that my child/children will catch up with any work missed during this absence from school, however work will not be provided by the school prior to the absence.

Signed: ……...

Print Name: ……

Date: ……...

Please state your relationship to the pupil: ……Contact Tel No. ……..

(Please return this form to the School Office for the attention of the Attendance Officer).

Response to Request for Leave of Absence

[ ] The school will authorise this leave of absence as above.

Or

[ ] We have considered your application carefully and the reasons for the absence you have highlighted, however on this occasion we do not believe that the explanation provided can be justified as "exceptional circumstances". Should you still decide to continue to take your child out of school during term time, then please note that the absence will be recorded as 'G' denoting an unauthorised term time leave. If unauthorised absences are recorded, a Penalty Notice Fine can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carer in respect of each child who is absent from school. **The amount of the penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 22 to 28 days.** Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings being initiated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Head Teacher …… Date ……..……