

# Attendance Connections

## Capturing the Whole Picture

Fliss Falconer

Lead Officer for Legal Intervention in Education (Attendance)

[Fliss.Falconer@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Fliss.Falconer@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Living our values *every day*



Accountable

Integrity

Empower

Respect

Excellence





# Welcome

Cover Letters when declining requests  
and Attendance Policies

How do you show your consideration for the  
request, and legal requirements as of October  
half term

**Who said what now?**

Accurate capture of absence information

**Witness Statement Witnesses**

Writing about yourself and others;  
expectations of you in court

Living our values *every day*



# Deciding to unauthorise an absence

A designated staff member can decide to unauthorise an absence if they are named as having the authority in the attendance policy

The Headteacher (or Acting Head for the day) should sign attendance certificates

Exceptional circumstances should be investigated and be included in the decision and letter to the parents



[Attendance Matters –](#)  
[Accompanying Letters](#)  
[Required for](#)  
[Unauthorised Absences](#)

Ensure all written records are accurate, fair, transparent, and detailed, as they may be shared with parents and enter the public domain

All documents must be accurate to meet legal requirements; your proof-reading is essential and appreciated

Living our values every day



Accountable

Integrity

Empower

Respect

Excellence



# Attendance Matters – Accompanying Letters Required for Unauthorised Absences

Published

06.08.2025

Please note the following important updates regarding the handling of term-time holiday requests and unauthorised absences.

## 1. Accompanying Letter for Unauthorised Requests

When responding to a parental request for leave of absence that is not authorised ([skeleton-holiday-request-letter.docx](#)), schools must now include an accompanying cover letter alongside the back page of the holiday request form as per the legal requirements.

This letter should:

- Confirm that the absence has not been authorised.
- Inform parents that a Penalty Notice may be requested from the Local Authority.
- Outline the legal consequences of non-payment, including potential prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A model letter template is available to support this process and ensure consistency across settings: [Information on all Legal Proceedings](#)

We ask that all schools send the accompanying cover letter with the absence request form response by 31/10/2025 in line with the Attendance Policy review and update requested at the Attendance Network Meetings in July: [Attendance Network Meetings](#)

## 2. Absence Taken Without Prior Request

Where a pupil is absent during term time and no prior request has been submitted by the parent/carer, schools do not need to ask parents to complete a request form retrospectively.

Instead, please use the following template letter: [skeleton-letter-leave-of-absence-without-request.docx](#)

This letter allows schools to formally acknowledge the absence, record it as unauthorised, and inform parents of the potential for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in promoting regular school attendance.

Living our values **every day**  




From Autumn Term 2:

- IO notified that the school's attendance policy has been checked against the '[Paperwork Checklist for all Legal Disposals](#)'
- A cover letter should accompany the 'request form' to notify the parents of the decision to unauthorise and a warning that the absence may lead to a penalty notice being requested and issued ([template available on Schoolsnet](#))



# Who is taking notes?

When the morning rush is on, who is recording those school gate or form time messages?



How do you  
capture the  
information  
when it's not on the  
absence request  
form?



Living our values every day



Accountable

Integrity

Empower

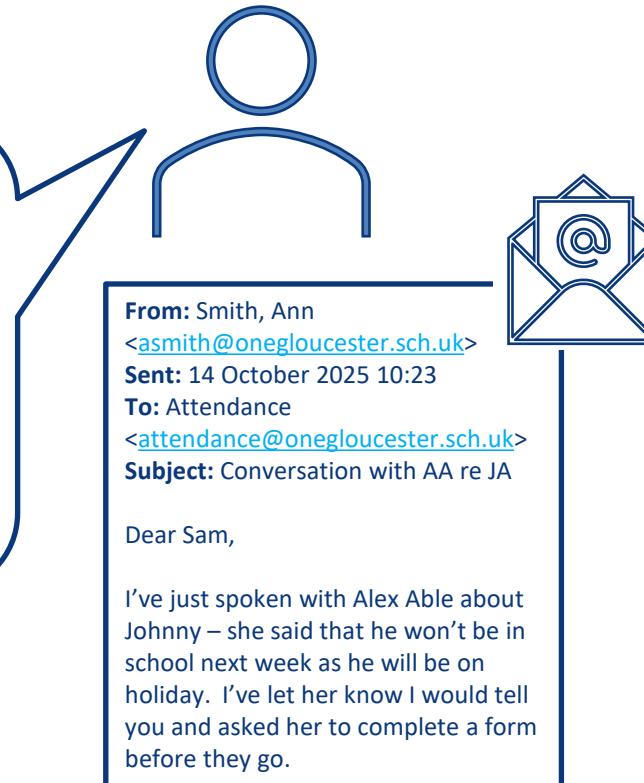
Respect

Excellence



*“Johnny won’t be in next week because we are on holiday...”*

Thanks for letting me know.  
I’m going to make a note of  
what you’ve said and email  
it to the central office.  
Please can you check our  
website and fill out a  
request form?



From our records, on 14/10/2025, Ann Smith sent an email to the attendance inbox at One Gloucester School to say she had spoken to Alex Able, who told her that Johnny Able would not be in school for 20/10/2025 to 24/10/2025 as he would be on holiday. Ann Smith asked Alex Able to complete a request form and this was sent in to the attendance inbox on 15/10/2025, see exhibits SN03 and SN04.

# The Witness

I am the Headteacher...

On 23/10/2025, the absence request was declined by me.



I am the Attendance Officer...

On 23/10/2025, the absence request was declined by the Headteacher, Adam Person.



## If a Parent Pleads Not Guilty

- You may be required to attend court as a witness.
- In court, you might be asked to confirm your witness statement.
- You could be questioned about the events by the parent (defendant) or their legal representative.

Training and support will be made available for this

Living our values every day



# Autumn Term 2

06/11/2025 | 20/11/2025 | 04/12/2025

Answering your queries

# Spring Term 1

15/01/2026 | 29/01/2026 | 12/02/2026

Answering your queries

If you have no specific queries, please use this time to acquaint yourself with the [Legal Information page](#) and its Useful Documents or our previous [Attendance Connections](#) videos and handouts

Living our values every day  




Accountable

Integrity

Empower

Respect

Excellence





# Any questions?

Living our values *every day*  




Accountable

Integrity

Empower

Respect

Excellence

