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The John Moore Primary School

Attendance

School Policy

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1 Introduction

At The John Moore Primary School, we expect every child to achieve 100% attendance.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Attendance is a key part of raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential.

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in school. (DfE School Attendance – November 2016)

The government expects that from September 2020, the usual rules on school attendance will apply:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school, and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

This policy should be considered alongside the latest DfE attendance guidance and guidance from Gloucestershire County Council's Education, Performance and Inclusion Team: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/18446/pdf-attendance-guidance-for-schools-updated-311017.pdf>

The school can be contacted on **01684 291661**.

In Education Law, (Section 576 of Education Act 1996), 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil.
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

2 Linked Policy: Children Missing Education

Refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity eg school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as 4 weeks)'

If a child is missing from education the following guidance will be followed: [Link](#)

3 The Value of Attendance

Central to our vision is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.

At The John Moore Primary School, regular attendance means that pupils attend school every day. As such, this policy details the procedures which the school follows to promote good attendance of pupils and all other matters relating to attendance/absence, registration and lateness.

4 Compulsory School Attendance

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March, they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August, they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until their 18th birthday.

School will enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

5 The School Day*

At The John Moore Primary School the school day starts at 8.45am until 3.10pm (EYFS) and 3:15pm (Infants) and 3.20pm (Juniors). However, we have a soft start to the school day so children can arrive at school from 8.30am. There are two sessions each day.

The morning session begins at 8.45am and the afternoon session begins at 1pm. Attendance is required for the duration of the school day, on any day that the school is open for learning.

6 Registration

The daily attendance register will be taken promptly once the school day starts between 8.45am – 9am or 1pm-1.15pm. This should give sufficient time for all pupils to enter into their classrooms.

The register will remain open for 15 minutes at the start of each session. If a child is not present in the classroom while the register is being taken, they will be marked as either late (L) or absent.

If a child arrives at school, after the Register is taken in class, but before it closes, they will be marked as late (L). If they arrive after the register has closed, they will be marked late after the register has closed (U).

Our registers are marked in a registration book by hand in accordance with legal requirements at the beginning of each session (am/pm).

The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent.

If a pupil is absent, the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

7 Authorised Absences

The following are legitimate reasons for absence that may be authorised by the Headteacher.

- Sickness. The Headteacher may authorise a child's absence for illness but may question too many absence days if a child or children are frequently absent for illness. If your child or children are absent for the reoccurrence of the same illness, then school would want to work with the family to see if further support and advice can be offered through the School Nurse to enable the ongoing illness to be supported within school. In all cases, the reason for the absence must be reported to the school by the parent or guardian of the child before the start of the school day.
- Medical or dental appointments. Where possible, parents should make every effort to make appointments outside of the school day.
- Days of religious observance.
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement; family members with terminal illness. School would advise that family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty. In exceptional circumstances, which have led to a request for leave in term time for a child/children, the requisite form, obtainable from the school office should be completed. The Headteacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.
- Visiting other educational settings (e.g. to prepare for transfer to secondary school).
- Participating in performances (in line with DFE guidance - see *Child Performance and Activities Licensing Legislation* section 3.2 (February 2015) which is available via this [Link](#)
- Educated elsewhere. On certain occasions if it is necessary for a child to be temporarily educated at another school or at a hospital school. This also applies to visits to prospective new schools.
- Serious disruption to travel arrangements and School closure. This has a distinct code and there are specific instances where this code will apply. The code should be used at the Headteacher's discretion and would apply to a weather-related emergency, such as snow or flooding. It would also apply to a natural disaster, such as the impact on air travel of a volcanic eruption.
- Exclusion. As exclusion for a fixed period results from a decision taken by the school, the absence should be treated as authorised.

Completion of an Absence Request Form or a letter from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide whether the explanation given justifies authorising the absence.

All leave of absence requests should be completed on the Absence Request Form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides.

This should be returned to the school at least seven days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken.

8 Unauthorised Absences

An absence will be deemed to be unauthorised (O) if a child is not present and school have not been informed by the close of the register on the first day of the absence.

Parents/carers can inform school by telephone (including leaving a message on the answerphone), by email, or direct contact with the school office or class teacher.

The following reasons will not be authorised by The John Moore Primary School:

- Looking after the house, or waiting for an appointment or delivery (e.g. a utility service)
- Looking after brothers and sisters or sick relatives
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Family Holidays or days out. "The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time" (DfE website May 2013)
- Lack of transport

The Education Regulations 2006 have been amended, and, as from 1st September 2013 no child may take holidays in term time, unless the Headteacher deems there to be exceptional circumstances.

Parents may consider that a holiday will be educational, but valuable teaching and learning time in school will be missed.

Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are often unprepared for lessons and struggle to catch up on missed work. Disruption to the continuity of teaching and learning is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

Exceptional circumstances are:

- Children whose parents/carers are in the armed forces.
- Children whose parents/carers are dictated by their employer as to when they can take holidays e.g police, fire service or working for a company that closes between certain dates. (These requests will however need to be accompanied by a letter from the employer as to why the family can only take a holiday during the school's term time)
- A child with a parent/carer or sibling who has a life-threatening illness. (This request will need to be accompanied by a letter from a medical professional working with the family, or the request will not be seen as exceptional. The request will not be deemed as exceptional if it is the illness of other extended family members)
- COVID-19 rules as explained above

Any parent taking a child on holiday that has not been deemed an exceptional circumstance may be referred to Gloucestershire’s Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team, who may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced the Penalty Notice as an alternative to prosecution. A Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.

The table below identifies the unauthorised codes used in the attendance register.

Code	Explanation	Additional notes
G	Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period	If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	All unexplained absences should be followed up. Once reason is established the register should be amended.
O	Absent from school without authorisation	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	After 9.05am or 1.15pm.

9 School Responsibilities

- Ensure that registers are marked accurately and promptly every day following the latest DFE guidance.
- Accurately differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contact parents on the first day of absence, if, school has not been notified as to why a child is absent. This means school will contact you regarding all your children if they are absent at the same time so you may receive multiple texts if you have more than one child absent.
- Endeavour to establish a reason for absence but if no valid reason is given the absence will be marked as unauthorised (O)
- Follow the guidelines set out by Gloucestershire County Council and report any absence that is unauthorised for 10 consecutive days and where a Part Time Timetable is used.
- Contact parents when the school is concerned about a pupil's absences and making a record of this.
- Ensure all staff are consistent in applying this policy.
- Advise parents about the adverse effects of absence and seek regular opportunities to promote good punctuality and attendance, for example through – Induction meetings, Parents evenings, Newsletters, Assemblies etc.
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance.
- Set attendance targets for the School and groups within the School.
- Keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance.
- Produce and analyse attendance reports with the aim of improving attendance (for either individuals or groups)
- Attendance targets may also be used for individual pupils who struggle with daily attendance.
- Work within a multi-agency approach in order to improve attendance and support pupils and families.
- Parents whose children's absence falls below 95% are monitored monthly. If there is no improvement then an AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting) is held followed by legal proceedings if necessary.
- Follow our Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and report any concerns through the correct procedure set out for schools.
- Follow the Gloucestershire County Council Guidelines and report any pupil who falls into the 'Child Missing in Education' category.
- Governors will review attendance on a regular basis and hold senior leaders to account for the level of attendance in school and have an overview of the policy and procedures in dealing with attendance.

10 Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

- It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to make sure their child gets enough sleep, gets up in plenty of time to get ready and eats a good breakfast.
- Children should arrive in the school classroom between 8.30am and 9am. Any child arriving after this time should enter the building via Reception and report to the school office as a late arrival.
- The child's name, class, arrival time and any reasons given will be recorded.
- It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to contact the school as soon as possible in the morning if their child will not be attending school.
- Parents/Carers should ensure that their child attends school wearing the correct uniform and brings appropriate equipment or kit and provision for lunch.
- The John Moore Primary School encourages parents to help their children by showing an interest in school life. Parents are invited to attend all parents'/carers' evenings, parent/carer information evenings, listen to reading and supervision of homework.
- If a child appears reluctant to attend school, parents/carers are encouraged to contact the child's class teacher immediately to discuss any concerns. There could be a number of reasons for this reluctance such as difficulties with school work, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important to identify any reasons for a reluctance to attend school quickly and before it becomes a more serious issue.

11 School Procedures to Encourage and Monitor Good Attendance

The important need for good attendance and punctuality will be regularly mentioned in newsletters and in discussions with parents and children.

12 Monitoring

School will regularly monitor attendance of children. Where attendance falls below 95% the Inclusion Manager will share this information with the Headteacher and class teachers.

The Headteacher/Inclusion Manager will raise the issue with the parents to establish a partnership to improve the attendance. If the attendance pattern continues, the Headteacher will write to warn the parent that their child's attendance is causing concern. This may also include an invitation to the parents/carers to a meeting to discuss how school can support improved attendance.

Through this monitoring, where school becomes aware of a more concerning pattern, they will also monitor more closely persistent lateness and absence.

13 Persistently Absent Pupils and Severely Absent Pupils

Pupils who are Persistently Absent/Severely Absent from School for whatever reason will be monitored on a week by week basis. Persistently Absent is a child who has a 90% attendance or lower at any given time during the academic year. Severely Absent is a child who has a 50% attendance or lower at any given time during the academic year.

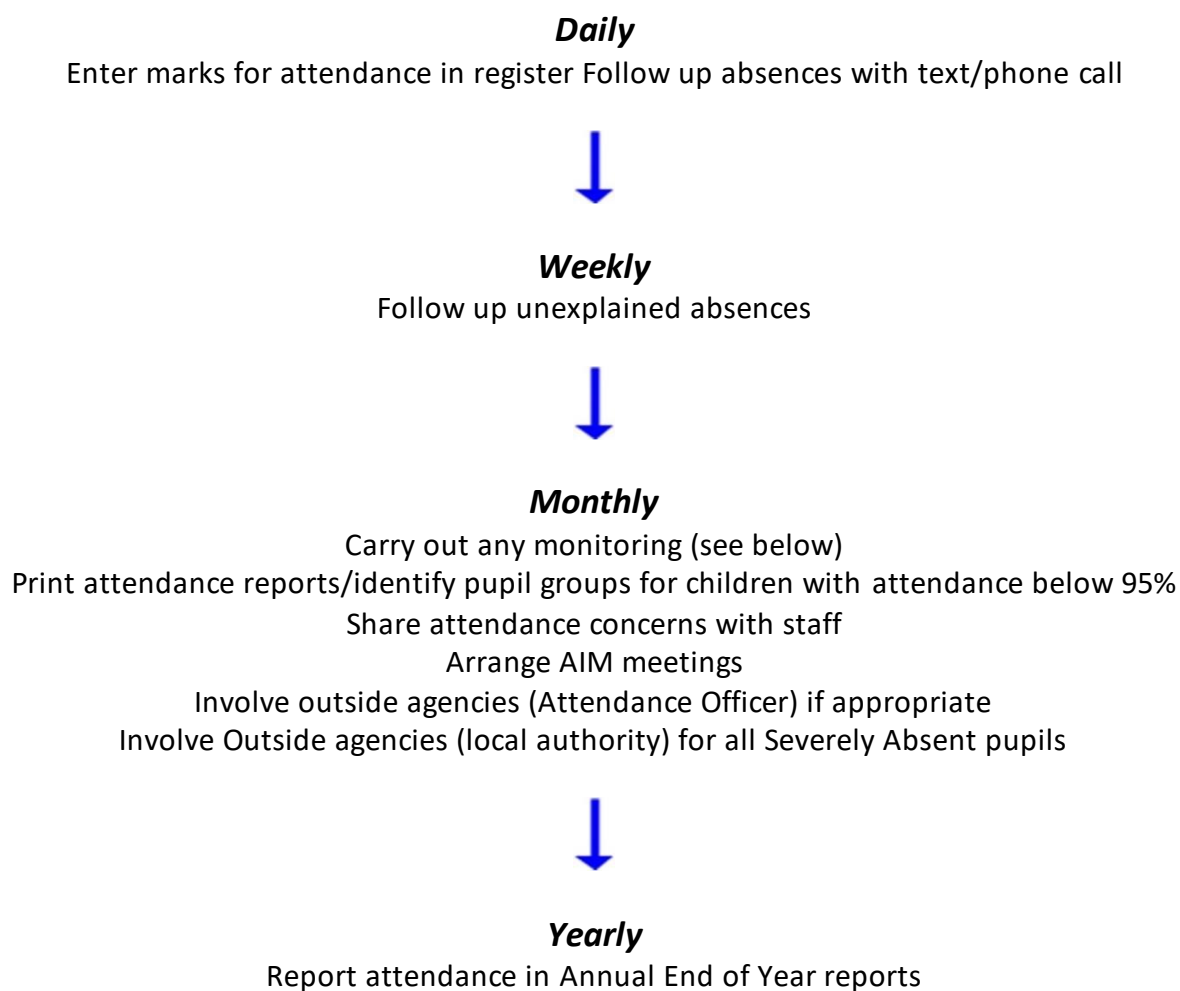
Parents/Carers of a child identified as a persistent absentee will be invited to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) where targets will be set to be achieved by an agreed date (usually 3-4 weeks). Other agencies could become involved in this process. Failure to meet the targets set could result in The John Moore Primary School following the guidance set out by Gloucestershire County Council and a referral made to the Local Authority. Legal Action for Non School Attendance could follow against parents/ carers.

14 Persistent Lateness

If a pupil is frequently late before registration closes, the matter will be discussed with the parent. The class or Headteacher will raise the issue with the parents to establish a partnership to improve punctuality. If the lateness continues, the Head Teacher will write to invite the parents/carers to a meeting to discuss how school can support improved punctuality.

When a pupil is repeatedly late after the close of the register (U). The school could follow the guidelines set out by Gloucestershire County Council. The Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice in due course for Lateness after the register is closed. A Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.

15 Flow Chart of Procedures



16 Useful links

- [Department for Education School Attendance Guidance](#)
- [Gloucestershire attendance and absence from school](#)
- [Leaflet for parents – school attendance](#)
- [Leaflet for parents – penalty notices](#)
- [Leaflet for parents – prosecution](#)

17 Other linked policies

- Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy
- Early Help Offer
- Behaviour in Schools Policy
- Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Policy (including JMPS Local Offer)
- School Exclusion Policy

18 Appendix 1 – Exceptional Absence Request

EXCEPTIONAL ABSENCE REQUEST

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Section 444 of the Education Act gives powers to the Local Authority (LA) to issue Penalty Notices when a parent or carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance and/or punctuality. Information on the Department for Education website states that **'Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless these are exceptional, e.g, serious family illness or bereavement.'** The vast majority of requests will therefore be refused and, if a holiday in term time is taken, this will constitute unauthorised absence which may result in the issue of a penalty notice to each parent in respect of each absent child. **A Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.**

Please refer to our Attendance Policy on our School website for more information.

Please complete the slip below, providing information as to why a leave of absence should be authorised.

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

I wish to apply for absence from: _____ to: _____

Reasons for absence: _____

Number of school days lost: _____

Parent/Guardian signature

1: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian signature

2: _____ Date: _____

On behalf of the Governing Body I **authorise/do not authorise** absence from school for:

_____ from _____ to _____

Headteacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Brief Statement by Headteacher: _____

19 Appendix 2, Sample Letter 1 – First

Date

Dear Parents/Carers

School Attendance

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware that your child's attendance is a potential cause for concern and that we need to work together to ensure that the situation improves and that absences from school are much less frequent.

In our continued drive to improve the attendance of all pupils at the school, I have recently been monitoring the attendance of all individual pupils.

I am currently writing to all parents of pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90%, as this is a cause for concern. The Government expectation is that pupils' attendance should be at least 96% or above.

I appreciate that you will have sent in notes or made phone calls to the school to explain these absences, but this amount of absence is still a concern.

I have attached your child's attendance certificate which records their absences from school and indicates your child's overall attendance percentage so far this year.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this situation with you and would encourage you to make an appointment to see me.

I will be monitoring attendance on a monthly basis and hope that the attendance of your child will improve over the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Ruth Laing
Headteacher

20 Appendix 3, Sample Letter 2 – Follow Up

Date

Dear Parents/Carers

School Attendance

Following my letter dated _____, I have continued to monitor the attendance of all individual pupils. Since alerting you to the fact that your child's attendance had fallen below 85%, this situation has not improved.

Your child's attendance at school since Sept _____, now stands at _____. This is well below the Government expectation of 96% attendance.

In this situation, I will now need to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service, in order that they can work with you and the school to improve the attendance of your child.

I have attached a copy of your child's attendance certificate recording their absences.

Please do not hesitate to come and discuss this situation with me, as it is important that we continue to work together to ensure that _____ receives the best education possible.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Ruth Laing
Headteacher

21 Appendix 4, Sample Letter 3 - Warning

Date

Dear Parents/Carers

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure that their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Practice the Local Authority can issue Penalty Notices to parents or carers where a child has missed 10 or more sessions over the previous 10 weeks without permission from the school.

_____ has been absent from school for ten or more sessions in the previous ten weeks without prior authorisation or an acceptable reason being given to the Head Teacher (please note there are normally two sessions in each school day). This absence has therefore been recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

I need to inform you that the level of _____ unauthorised absence places you at risk of a Penalty Notice and / or Court Action by the Local Authority.

Providing there are no further unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days of the receipt of this letter a Penalty Notice will not be issued on this occasion.

I must draw your attention to the fact that should _____ have more un-authorised absences within the next 12 months, you may receive a Penalty Notice without further warning.

A Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ruth Laing
Headteacher

22 Appendix 5, Sample Letter 4 - General lateness and absence

Date

Dear Parents/Carers

I am becoming increasingly concerned about the time at which _____ and _____ arrive at school on some mornings and the amount of time that they are absent from school.

As I'm sure that you are aware our school prospectus states that children should arrive at school each day between **8.30 and 8.45am**. On the following dates since September 2007 X and Y have arrived after 8.45am:

- 07/09/07 8.50 am X overslept
- 10/09/07 9.00 am Dad couldn't find the keys
- 27/09/07 9.00 am Running late
- 28/09/07 8.55 am Running late
- 1/10/07 9.10 am Running late

In addition to these dates, all three children have also had a considerable amount of time off school since September 2***.

X has been absent from school for 15 days since Sept 2*.**

17/9/07, 18/9/07, 19/9/07, 20/9/07, 21/9/07, 13/11/07, 26/11/07, 28/11/07, 29/11/07, 30/11/07, 1/12/07, 2/12/07, 14/12/07, 14/1/08, 15/1/08

Y has been absent from school for 11 days since Sept 2*.**

17/9/07, 18/9/07, 19/9/07, 20/9/07, 21/9/07, 17/10/07, 28/11/07, 29/11/07, 30/11/07, 14/12/07, 14/1/07

The reasons given for all the above absences are illness.

When a child is late once or twice, we are fairly unconcerned. However, the DfE now asks schools to follow up repeated lateness and investigate the reasons behind the issue.

X and Y often arrive when the other children are being given their instructions for the first activity of the day or later. When they arrive late, they then require instructions to be re-explained which wastes valuable teacher time. Arriving late gives the children a very unsettled start to the school day. Often the register and list of children wanting lunch have been taken to the relevant staff before the children arrive. Their late request for a lunch or mark in the register to show that they are in school disrupts the work of staff involved in those aspects of school administration.

The reasons for X and Y being late are above, as recorded in our “late” book. **However, I would be grateful if you would aim to ensure that they arrive punctually for school from now on.**

I am also concerned that both children have now had over 2 school weeks off sick since September 2007 and X over 3 weeks. This is a huge amount of learning time that has been lost. Both X and Y have Special Educational Needs issues and long periods of absence will increasingly limit progress with both their learning and behavioural issues.

The issue of lateness and long periods of absence was brought to your attention this time last year. If these long periods of absence and constant lateness for school do not improve in the next few weeks. I will need to ring the Educational Welfare Officer to ask her to look into this further and work with you and the school to ensure that these situations do not continue to happen.

If you wish to discuss any of the above issues with me further, please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see me. I hope that we can continue to work together to ensure that X and Y are able to learn as effectively as possible during their time at school.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ruth Laing
Headteacher