



## Attendance Policy 2022-23

### **1. Aims**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education where possible
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

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

Students who attend LWS Academy have often been identified as having phobias, lacking routine, poor confidence within social settings, low self-esteem and limited previous academic or social success. As a result students often require more flexible, positive and realistic support packages in order to encourage them to take advantage of academic studies, work related learning packages and social skills development programmes on offer.

Data analysis of SEMH secondary schools nationally indicate the average attendance rate for the academic year ranges between 80 – 90% (Data Analysis from DfE school comparison website). LWS recognises that regular attendance for students with SEMH can be challenging, however we continue to expect students to be attending at least 85-90% of the time as a minimum.

The Academy acknowledges that students are entitled to 25 hours education provision a week. When a student is placed on a personalised education pathway, factors which may be considered within the 25 hours include: life skills, VLE, flexible school hours, work experience, social care and Psychologists interventions.

### **2. Legislation and guidance**

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 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 3. **School procedures**

#### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) 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 first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

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 by 9.10 a.m. on each school day. Morning registration is between 09.10 a.m. and 09.30 a.m. with afternoon registration being 2.10 p.m. and 2.20 p.m. The register for the first session will be taken at 9.30 a.m. and will be kept open until 10.15 a.m. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.45 p.m. and will be kept open until 1.15 p.m.

#### 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 – by 9.45 a.m. or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Emails can be sent to [enquiries@lws.gfmat.org](mailto:enquiries@lws.gfmat.org). The contact number for the school is 01489 582684. There is the facility to leave a message if the office is not manned when you call.

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



Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please telephone or email the school with details of your son's appointment in advance of the appointment. Emails can be sent to [enquiries@lws.gfmat.org](mailto:enquiries@lws.gfmat.org). The contact number for the school is 01489 582684. There is the facility to leave a message if the office is not manned when you call. The school will ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

If a medical appointment is necessary then we encourage parents to arrange for their son to come to school either before or after. Students will be expected to log into our online registration during any missed sessions for example, AM or PM.

### 3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Almost all students are provided with taxis/school transport, therefore we would rarely expect students to be late. We acknowledge that many students travel significant distances in the taxis and there may be occasions when they are held up by traffic. The students this affects will not be marked as late.

### 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.

In the event of an absence not being notified to the school, the Admin team will attempt to contact parents/carers by telephone/text/email on the same day. If unauthorised absence continues for more than one day without contact from the family, arrangements will be made to visit the student at home without notice. These visits can be completed by any members of school staff.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents

Letters are sent to all parents on a half termly basis informing them of the current attendance of the student, and inviting them to contact the school for support if they have any issues regarding attendance. For those students who achieve attendance at 95%+, they are rewarded with additional Vivo points, and this information is also recorded in the letter.

### 3.7 Exceptional Circumstances and enforced school closures

Absence due to Enforced Closures:

This may occur when:

The school site or part of it is closed due to an unavoidable cause at a time when students are required to attend;

OR



A student for whom transport is provided is unable to attend because the transport is unavailable;

OR

A student is placed in a temporary placement more than 30 miles from the school.

In all the circumstances above, the academy will make attempts where feasible to provide education usually via online live learning.

#### **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

##### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Due to the complex challenges for students with SEMH, we do not have a standardised approach to what defines 'exceptional circumstances' as these may vary according to needs and context. Please contact the school to discuss the situation and gain clarification.

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 head teacher'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
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, 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 student is attending educational provision.

In an effort to support students with extreme difficulties including disaffected students, the school has developed staff with the specific roles to support students and families with persistent issues with attendance. This includes working with the student, their families/guardians and any outside agencies involved to provide flexible supportive individualised packages to meet their needs at that moment in time. The school acknowledges that students are entitled to 25 hours education provision a week. When a student is placed on a personalised education, pathway factors which may be considered within the 25 hours include: life skills, VLE, flexible Academy hours, work experience, social care and appropriate interventions.

LWS Academy has a staged approach to persistent absence – please see LWS Academy Attendance Protocol (Appendix A).

In cases of persistent student non-attendance with no valid reason given, before taking the case to the monthly Attendance Legal Panel (ALP), the Academy will attempt to engage the student and parents/carers by a number of strategies including but not limited to:

- Telephone calls, texts and emails;

- Letters;
- Arranged and unarranged home visits;
- Meetings including TAC/TAF if appropriate;
- Referral to support agencies as relevant;
- Individual Support Packages;
- Use of alternative providers including online live learning;
- Reintegration support.

If the student and/or parents/carers continue to disengage from statutory education or enter into communication regarding the non-attendance, the Academy may issue a warning of a Penalty Notice. If absence continues despite the warning the Penalty Notice will be issued without further warning. The case may then be referred to the LA Attendance Legal Panel where a decision may be made to proceed with legal action. Criteria for referral to the ALP is unauthorised absence of 20 sessions out of a possible 100. There is one session in the morning and one session in the afternoon.

#### 4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine 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 local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the 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
- 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.

#### 5. **Strategies for promoting attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

- Research shows a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

To help us all to focus on promoting good attendance, we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance on a regular basis;
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements/award additional VIVO points;



- reward good or improving attendance through certificates, activities, and additional Vivo points;
- have regular attendance who school focus events during the school year;
- refer to Home School Link Worker for additional support where appropriate;
- liaise with partner support agencies to ensure additional needs are met which may impact on attendance.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

The Leadership Team, Tutors and the admin team monitor student attendance on a daily basis.

Parents/carers 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/carers are expected to contact the school on each day of absence.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, 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.

The academy monitors all students' attendance on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, and regularly analyses data which is presented using a RAG process, to ensure appropriate support is offered in a timely fashion for those students and families struggling with attendance.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The Board**

The local governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the leadership team to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The Leadership Team**

The Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trust colleagues.

The Leadership Team also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 Tutors**

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

Tutors have the most important role to play in monitoring student attendance. They see the students who are members of their tutor group more regularly than any other member of staff. The obvious advantage of this is that tutors get to know these students on a more personal level, they are able to focus on social skills development and mentor/counsel if and when necessary as they are able to recognise when things are not right.

Tutors should, therefore, seek to:



- encourage a positive approach to school and involvement in all its activities and opportunities;
- explain the benefits of good attendance for the rest of the student's life and work;
- promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities;
- find out if a student is worried about something and, as a result, reluctant to attend the Academy;
- recognise a regular pattern of non-attendance;
- insist that notes are brought after each absence, unless a telephone message has been received;

#### 7.4 Admin/Reception staff

Admin/Reception staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence, record it on the school system and make all staff aware via CPOMs/email. If no contact is made by parents/carers, admin/reception will telephone and/or text parents/carers each day of absence until contact has been made.

#### 7.5 Parents and Carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents/carers should:

- inform the school on the first day of absence;
- discuss with the tutor any planned absences well in advance;
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year;
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter/email;
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments where possible;
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

#### 7.6 Students

Students must attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence, arrive in school on time, go to all their registrations and lessons on time. Students must also take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours. Mobile phones are not permitted in school. If they are accidentally brought to school then they should be handed to a staff member at the start of each lesson.

### 8. **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Leadership Team. .

### 9. **Links with other policies**

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

### 10. **Looked After Children**

For all looked after students, the Virtual School Officer responsible for attendance will be notified of any issues with attendance. A meeting will be arranged with all relevant parties to address the absence. The VS Officer will support the student/carers in establishing regular attendance to educational provision, and keep the Virtual School/Academy updated on a regular basis. As before in continued situations of non-attendance, the Academy will follow the same procedures as they would if the student was not looked after.



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
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

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





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<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



## **LWS Academy**

### **First Day Absence Protocol**

**8.30 - 9.00am**

Any overnight absence messages to be taken off the machine and circulated to all staff.

**9.15am**

SLT to return AM gate registers and confirm any non-attendance/ arrival. A list is generated for all first day absence students.

**9.30am**

Texts to be sent to all parents of students who are not in school. These texts are added to CPOMS, assigning to year leads.

**9.45am**

All AM bubble registers to be checked against intelligence gathered before e.g. illness etc.

**By 11.00am**

All first day absence phone calls to be completed.

**By 12.00pm each day**

Admin to raise attendance concerns/ lack of contact with parents to SLT. Cold calls will then be arranged and completed.

**3.00pm onwards**

Year leads to make further contact with parents if there are no updates from student absence throughout the day.  
The AM register will be used as an exemplar for information.

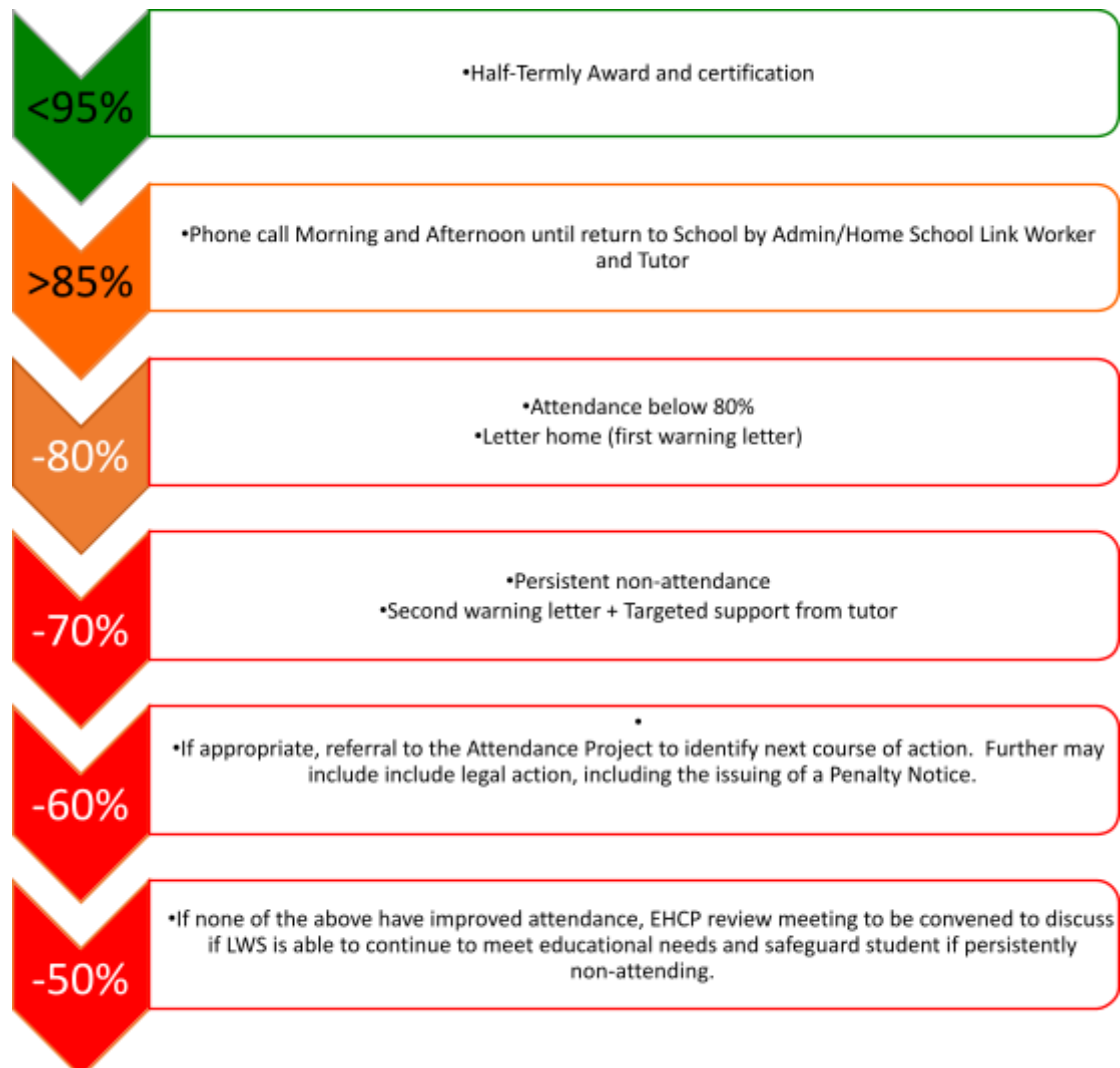
Appendix A:

**LWS Academy - Attendance and Absence Protocol**

The flowchart below outlines the protocol to be followed when addressing Academy Attendance. **Consideration will be given to the nature and reason for non-attendance;** this is imperative due to the Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs of our students. However, it is important to remember that LWS has a duty to safeguard our students and must consider the potential impact of non-attendance.

**90% attendance looks like**= ½ day a week missed / 4 weeks missed every year / ½ a school year missed every 5 years

**All absences will follow the first day of absence procedure – Contact made from Academy to Home. No contact established then home visit to be arranged ASAP.**

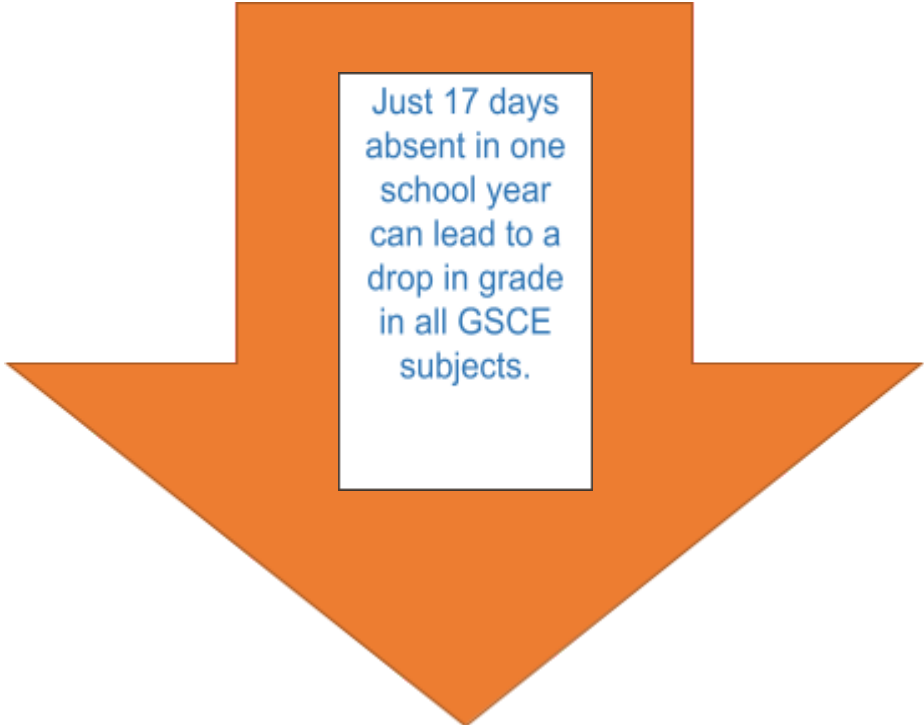




## LWS Academy

### Appendix 2:

<b><i>Attendance during one school year – 190 school days</i></b>	<b><i>Equivalent days</i></b>	<b><i>Equivalent sessions</i></b>	<b><i>Equivalent weeks</i></b>
95%	9 days	18 sessions	2 weeks
90%	19 days	38 sessions	4 weeks
85%	29 days	58 sessions	6 weeks
80%	38 days	72 sessions	8 weeks
75%	48 days	96 sessions	10 weeks
70%	57 days	114 sessions	11.5 weeks
65%	67 days	134 sessions	13.5 weeks



Just 17 days  
absent in one  
school year  
can lead to a  
drop in grade  
in all GCSE  
subjects.