



Robert Miles
Infant School

Attendance Policy

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AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Meet the government attendance target set for us for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and support services so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law.

Robert Miles Infant School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Although good attendance is deemed to be 95% and above, we have set an overall attendance target of 97%, reflecting the high aspirations we have of all our pupils.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the head teacher, the executive team at Nova Education Trust and governors at our school work together with other professionals and outside agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two thirds of a year of learning.

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the school's governing body, the local authority (LA) and the Department for Education (DfE).

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved. Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Undertaking regular 6 weekly monitoring of all pupils' attendance and addressing concerns as required.
- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.
- Recognising and rewarding good attendance.

DEFINITIONS

There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to investigate further and you may be asked to obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery.

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school and the local authority.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Informing the leadership team where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at parents' evenings, or earlier, where necessary.

Head Teacher and Senior Leaders

The head teacher and senior leaders are responsible for:

- Communicating clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintaining appropriate attendance data.
- Having appropriate registration processes in place.
- Reporting to the local authority on attendance.
- Monitoring attendance across the school.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Reporting to support services and supporting their work with pupils as necessary.
- Promoting good attendance.

Governors

- It is the governors' legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.
- It is the governors' responsibility to be involved in the review and effective implementation of this policy.

Administration staff

Staff in the school office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head Teacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school daily and punctually for registration, unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Informing the school on **every** day of any absence, unless otherwise agreed with the Head Teacher.
- Making applications for absence from school, in exceptional circumstances, in writing on the school's '**Leave Of Absence Form**', giving detailed reasons for the request at least 4 weeks in advance of the absence period.
- Working with the school and support services to improve lateness and attendance.
- Avoiding medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Registration

School starts at **8:45am** each morning.

The children will be collected by a member of staff from their class lines on the main playground. Pupils can enter the school doors from the playground until 8:50am when the school gates and doors are shut and locked. Access into school after this time will be via the main school entrance only.

Teachers have a responsibility to keep an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by **9am** and by **1:15pm** using attendance codes / and \ for pupils who are present. The registers are then returned to the school office. The school office staff will document attendance using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority (see appendix 1 for an explanation of codes used).

Lateness

Once the school gates and doors are closed at **8:50am** the only way to gain access to the school is via the main entrance and school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8:50am is deemed late and must be signed into the school late book. A mark code of L will be recorded in the registers.

Lateness will be monitored. If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at **9am**, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an unauthorised absence.

If we have been informed of a pupil's medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. The head teacher will be informed of all late entries each day. Once pupils have 5 L codes or more, a more formal system of monitoring will be applied. This may include a letter home (see appendix 2), meetings with the head teacher or a senior leader, or a referral to support services.

Sickness

Please notify the school on **each day** of the absence, unless otherwise agreed with the head teacher. We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

Long-term illness or injury

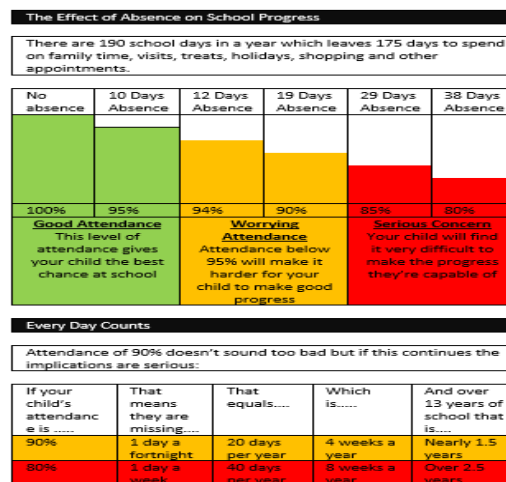
We acknowledge that, occasionally, there may be a child with a long-term illness or one-off injury which requires them to be absent from school for medical appointments or periods of time. In this case, we will endeavour to work alongside the parents to plan access to learning materials, where appropriate, in order to minimise disruption to the child's learning. It is important that parents keep in regular contact with school and inform them of absences and likely dates for return to school.

MONITORING OF ABSENCE

The senior leaders will monitor pupil absence across the school at 6 weekly points throughout the academic year. These monitoring point dates will be available via the newsletter each September of an academic cycle.

Parents of pupils who have been absent for 7 or more half days at each monitoring point will be contacted. For the first occurrence, a standard letter (see appendix 3) will be used outlining the need to improve attendance and offering support. These pupils will be monitored closely and, if attendance does not improve significantly (i.e. less than 7 half days absence) within the next six-week period, a more formal system of monitoring will be applied.

Pupils parents who fall into the poor attendance category (below 95%) will also be contacted by standard letter (see appendix 3a) to ensure families are aware and to encourage them to engage with us as a school to make sure attainment levels are not affected.



Support will be offered by the school in all cases.

FORMAL MONITORING PERIODS

During a formal monitoring period:

- No absences will be authorised in the six-week period, unless a medical certificate is provided.
- You may receive a home visit from a school representative and we would ask you to provide a medical certificate from a doctor on any second day of any absence.
- You will be requested to attend a formal meeting where investigation to the reasons the absence is below acceptable levels will be explored and support will be offered.
- If there is no significant improvement after the six week period and the pupil still has 7 or more half day absences, the head teacher may refer the case to the support services or may invoke fine procedures.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

It is the duty of the school to investigate absence from school if the whereabouts is unknown. Absence without explanation will be reported to the head teacher daily. On the third day of absence contact will try to be established via all contact details provided and home visits.

If no contact can be established the Local Authority's missing from education department will be notified and their procedures followed.

REWARDS FOR PUPILS WITH GOOD ATTENDANCE

Children who have good attendance and meet our school target of 97% at each monitoring will receive recognition from the Head Teacher. Examples may include; a certificate, personal letter home to parents, a mention in the newsletter or a special treat such as lunch with the Head Teacher etc.

Each week attendance levels of each class is celebrated and shared via our school newsletter.

REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Please note that our school also adheres to the Nottinghamshire County Council code of conduct (available on our website).

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the local authority. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine.

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made **at least 4 weeks** in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time' (see appendix 4). These may be obtained from the school office. Any request for absence with **less than this notice period will not be authorised** except in 'exceptional circumstances'.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the head teacher, or the deputy head teacher in her absence, considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

Absence for holidays will not be authorised at our school. **Any absence after a rejected application, if still taken, will be referred to Nottinghamshire County Council for consideration of a penalty. Penalties will be applied after the absence has completed if more than 7 half days absence has occurred in a six week period.**

If a child's attendance is below 90% at the time of any leave of absence request, absence will not be authorised, even in exceptional circumstances. The only exception that will be made is for pupils with chronic medical conditions.

The school will only authorise **one** exceptional circumstance leave of absence in a 12 month period. Any further requests will be unauthorised within this period of time.

There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Governing Body recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Consequently, this policy will be applied to staff to ensure equality and fairness regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, disability or age.

The Governing Body is also aware of its responsibilities and those of the LA in respect of the Equal Pay Act 1970 which requires that men and women have a right to equal treatment and equal pay for work of equal value.

The Governing Body is aware of its responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to make available this policy to all staff at the school.

BRITISH VALUES STATEMENT

The governors recognise their responsibility under the Prevent Duty Guidance 2016 to ensure that any extremist views or materials are not promoted in school. Any such activity will be challenged and reported as required to ensure that our pupils are educated to develop mutual respect and acceptance of everyone.

The operation of this policy is monitored and reviewed periodically. If any employee considers that she or he is the subject of unequal treatment on any of the above grounds, a complaint may be made through the agreed procedures for dealing with grievances.

APPENDIX

- 1 Explanation of registration codes used
- 2 Example letter regarding lateness
- 3 Example letter to parents - below 90% first letter
- 3a Example worrying attendance letter below 95%
- 4 Leave of absence request form

APPENDIX 1 - Codes Used in Registers

Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher

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.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

APPENDIX 2 – Example letter regarding lateness

Bingham Robert Miles Infant School

Head Teacher Mrs H Greensmith
School Lane, Bingham
Nottinghamshire NG13 8FE
Telephone (01949) 837422
Fax (01949) 836909

«date_of_printing»
«salutation»
«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

Arrival at school

It is extremely important that «chosen_forename» arrive at school for an 8.45am start. If «he_she» is late «he_she» misses valuable learning and teaching as well as time for social interaction. Over time this would impact on attainment and progression.

I have been keeping records of the arrival times of all children who arrive late and «chosen_forename» has been late on «total_lates_both» occasions.

It is important that we work together to find ways that the school can support you in your punctuality. I will be happy to talk with you and if required, arrange a meeting in school should you need further support.

Please can you ensure that «chosen_forename» arrives on time every day in the future.

Yours sincerely

H Greensmith
Head Teacher

APPENDIX 3 – Example letter – Below 90% attendance

Bingham Robert Miles Infant School

Head Teacher Mrs H Greensmith

School Lane, Bingham

Nottinghamshire NG13 8FE

Telephone (01949) 837422

Fax (01949) 836909

<<Date>>

Dear <<Parent name>>

Attendance

I am writing to inform you that in accordance with our attendance policy, we regularly monitor attendance at our school to highlight pupils who may have attendance or punctuality issues.

Our records show that at the last monitoring period your child was absent for 7 or more half day sessions. This is well below the schools target and is deemed to be persistent absence according to the DFE's threshold levels. To put this into perspective this attendance is equivalent to missing at least half a day of school each week.

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of attainment. Many pupils have difficulty maintaining friendships if they have long or numerous periods of absence. It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school. I am duty bound to inform you that regular unauthorised absence could lead to a Penalty Notice. An unpaid fine can lead to prosecution.

We wish to help your child improve his/her attendance. If you would like to discuss your child's attendance please contact me at the school and I will be happy to talk with you and if required arrange a meeting in school.

We would appreciate your support to make sure your child's attendance now improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and will contact you again if your child is absent for a further 7 or more half day sessions during the next monitoring period.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX 3a – Example letter – Below 95% attendance

Bingham Robert Miles Infant School

Head Teacher Mrs H Greensmith
 School Lane, Bingham
 Nottinghamshire NG13 8FE
 Telephone (01949) 837422
 Fax (01949) 836909

<<date>>

<<Address>>

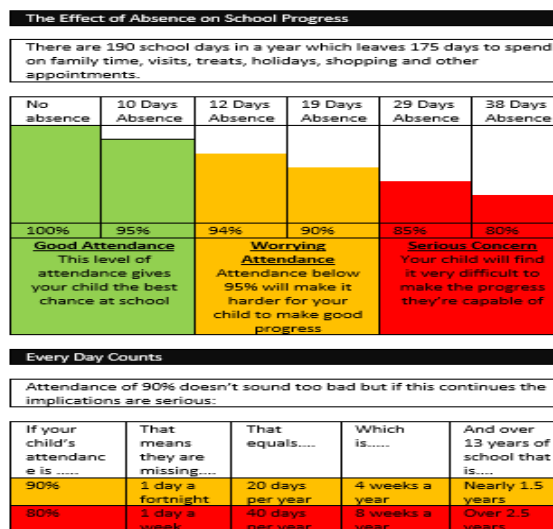
Dear <<Parent names>>

Attendance: <<child's name>>

I am writing to inform you that in accordance with our attendance policy, we regularly monitor attendance at our school to highlight pupils who may have attendance or punctuality issues.

Our records show that at the last monitoring period from <<date>>, your child, <<name>>, had an attendance of <<data>>%.

Please be aware that this level of attendance is deemed to be worrying and your child's learning may have been affected.



Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of attainment. Many pupils have difficulty maintaining friendships if they have long or numerous periods of absence.

We wish to help your child improve his/her attendance and would appreciate your support to ensure your child's learning has not been affected. Please contact your child's class teacher to obtain any work that is needed to support your child's learning resulting from this level of absence. Alternatively, if you would like to discuss your child's attendance please contact me at the school and I will be happy to talk with you and if required arrange a meeting in school.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Robert Miles Infant School Attendance Policy

APPENDIX 4 – Example of Leave of Absence Form

Bingham Robert Miles Infant School

Head Teacher Mrs H Greensmith

School Lane, Bingham

Nottinghamshire NG13 8FE

Telephone (01949) 837422

Fax (01949) 836909

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, you must apply for permission in writing using this form. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully:

The Government made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 1st September 2013. **These state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances;** in these cases it is the head teacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

As a consequence of these changes, school will no longer be able to approve requests for leave of absence for reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements;
- day trips;
- sporting fixtures and shows;
- birthday treats.

There are certain times of the year when a child may experience particular problems because of missing school. These include assessment and examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term. In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence, school will take these and other factors into account.

If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. **Unauthorised absences may lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or a Summons being issued against you for irregular school attendance.**

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to school **at least 4 weeks** in advance of the proposed absence. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Please note that requests received with less than this notice period will not be authorised unless exceptional circumstances are granted by the Head Teacher.

Once the school receives the completed form your request will be considered and a written response will be sent home.

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name:..... Class:

Date of application:.....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of last day at school Date of return to school

Total number of school days missed

Please explain the **exceptional circumstances** that make it necessary to request a leave of absence and provide evidence to support the request:

.....
.....
.....

I make application for my child named above to have an authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and will be recorded as such. Parents could then be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action once the absence has been taken.

Name of Parent/Carer making request

Signed

For Office use only

Date received: Date reply sent:.....

% attendance at the time of receipt:

On this occasion days have been authorised for the following reasons:

.....
.....

Signed:.....