

CATCOTT PRIMARY



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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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'...where learning takes you to greater heights...'

Approved by:

Lisa Carter

Date:

September 2023

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:

September 2024

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## Policy Statement

Catcott Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.

This is based on the belief that by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good and regular attendance.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate both.

All staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

We recognise that parents have a vital role and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems. We will provide effective and efficient communications with pupils, parents, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support to meet our objectives.

As a school, we will:

- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- ensure all staff, pupils and parents understand our expectations for attendance
- accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence
- regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place
- build strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

This policy is based on current government guidance, [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (May 2022) and other statutory regulations.

## Definitions

In this policy there are some key definitions which will be used. We have referenced the meaning of these terms below for ease of understanding:

### **Persistent Absence**

When a pupil's attendance figure reaches 90% or below, they are deemed as 'persistently absent' from school. Children whose attendance is below 90% are likely to achieve lower educational outcomes and are at increased risk of harm and exploitation. A pupil with 90% attendance will be absent for the equivalent of: one session per week, six sessions per six-week half term or 38 sessions per school year.

### **Severe Absence**

When a pupil is absent from school with an attendance figure of 50% or below, they are deemed as 'severely absent'. Children in this group are at increased risk of exploitation and education outcomes are poor. A pupil with 50% attendance will be absent for the equivalent of: five sessions per week, 30 sessions per six-week half term or 190 sessions per school year.

### **Parent**

Within this policy, a parent is defined as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not or any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e., lives with and looks after the child).

### **Vulnerable pupils**

Within this policy, vulnerable pupils are defined as those that: have a social worker or have previously had a social worker; are a Child Looked After (CLA); have an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan); are severely absent, as defined above.

### **Local Authority**

Within this policy the Local Authority refers to Somerset Council. From 1 April 2023, the Local Authority will refer to Somerset Council.

### **Session**

Schools are required to take attendance registers twice a day for all pupils. Each of these attendance marks counts for one session. Each day is made up of two sessions; morning and afternoon. In a typical school year, a pupil will can attend for a maximum of 190 days, or 380 sessions.

## Statutory and Legal Guidance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

When parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This policy aligns with the following statutory guidance and regulations:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations \(Amended\) 2013](#)
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 was amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations in 2013 only allowing head teachers to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

In line with these regulations, requests for term-time leave will not be granted.

Additional legal requirements relating to school attendance can be found in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

## Key Staff and Contacts

Role	Name	Contact details
Support for attendance PFSA	<b>Michelle Hobson</b>	<a href="mailto:mhobson@crispinschool.co.uk">mhobson@crispinschool.co.uk</a>
Headteacher	<b>Laura Constanza</b>	<a href="mailto:office@catcottprimary.co.uk">office@catcottprimary.co.uk</a>
Designated Safeguarding Lead		
Attendance Officer	<b>Lily Collins</b>	

The above can also be contacted via the school office by calling:  
**01278 722527**

## Safeguarding

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Absence can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. We will always contact parents when pupils are not at school to ensure their whereabouts are known. It is essential that we have a least two up-to-date contact numbers for each pupil.

Parents should remember to inform the school as soon as possible if their contact details change. This includes home addresses, email addresses and phone numbers.

Catcott Primary School recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence as it will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for absence is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm.

Where necessary, Catcott Primary School will challenge parents about the reasons for their child's absence and will always encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a parent does not guarantee that the absence will be authorised.

The decision to authorise absences rests with the Head Teacher and will be made depending on the reasons given. In some cases, evidence may be requested to support this decision. If no reason is given for an absence, it cannot be authorised.

## Children Missing Education

In line with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), school leaders have ensured that:

- all members of staff are aware of attendance guidance and expectations
- all members of school staff understand what to do when a child's attendance becomes a concern
- the school has in place required and appropriate policies, and robust procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions)
- all staff are aware of the risks of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the legal requirement to take immediate action if there is reason to believe a child is at risk or that it has taken place.

## Removing Pupils from the School Roll

Schools are required to inform their local authority when a pupil is removed from roll.

Procedures are in place to ensure this information is shared in a timely manner when we plan to take pupils off-roll, or when they:

- leave the school to be home educated
- move beyond a reasonable distance from the school
- remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards)
- are expelled (permanently excluded).

Pupils who are expected to start attending Catcott Primary School but fail to take up the place will be referred to the Local Authority.

When a pupil leaves Catcott Primary School, the pupil's new address, school, and expected started date will be recorded. This information will be passed to the Local Authority.

## The School's Responsibilities

All pupil attendance and absence levels are monitored on a regular basis. When a pupil's attendance becomes a concern, a graduated and supportive response will be put in place, to support improved attendance. In some cases, this may result in multi-agency support being requested, including the Education Safeguarding Service, who uphold the Local Authority's statutory duty to improve school attendance.

## Vulnerable Pupils

Catcott Primary School routinely monitors the attendance of vulnerable pupils. If we have concerns about a pupil, we work closely across our staff and with support services to ensure parents understand the importance of good attendance and attendance procedures.

Additional measures are in place to monitor the attendance of vulnerable pupils.

- Vulnerable pupils are included on the school's internal Attendance Monitoring List. The attendance of these pupils is monitored on a lesson-by-lesson basis and absences are reported to the appropriate staff member immediately to ensure contact is made with their parent as quickly as possible.
- Daily school contact with parents (and any external professionals such as social workers) in relation to absences of vulnerable pupils or those at risk of persistent or severe absence.
- Pupils with complex needs (including those with medical needs) will be supported to ensure their attendance is maximised and its improvement is planned for. The attendance of pupils in this group will be monitored daily.
- When a pupil is dual registered or accessing learning off-site, their attendance at that provision will be monitored daily. Catcott Primary School holds the legal responsibility for these pupils' attendance and safeguarding.
- Pupils with Special Education Needs or Disabilities (SEND) whose attendance is poor are monitored through the internal school processes and offered additional support in line with their needs.

The leadership and staff supporting attendance at school will hold regular meetings, where attendance is discussed and tracked, so that suitable support and interventions are put in place as quickly as possible.

Pupils whose attendance becomes a cause for concern will be supported by dedicated members of our staff who will make regular contact with them. This will support them to identify and remove any barriers, improve their attendance and to re-engage with learning. This work is robustly recorded and the impact of it is monitored regularly.

When a pupil's attendance continues to decline despite the support that is put in place, additional support may be requested from several support services. This may include the use of multi-agency work and support being discussed at a Team Around the School meeting. These discussions can lead to additional support being identified and support from the Education Engagement Service being agreed.

The Education Engagement Service (EES) forms part of the Local Authority's Early Help Framework. It supports schools and families to improve attendance and fulfils the Local Authority's statutory duties to improve and promote school attendance. The EES may consider legal action against parents in line with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.



How we monitor attendance and the support that is offered is determined on a case-by-case basis. These decisions are regularly reviewed between the attendance, safeguarding and pastoral teams in school. Support from the Education Engagement Service may also be requested and implemented.

## Celebrating Good Attendance

### Promoting and Celebrating Good Attendance and Punctuality

At Catcott Primary School, we understand the impact good attendance and punctuality has on our children's learning and we believe in rewarding good attendance and punctuality to engage and motivate our children. We have many initiatives to support and celebrate attendance and punctuality so that it remains a high profile in school and with our families.

#### Weekly

- Celebration Assembly,
- Attendance shared on our weekly newsletter and Class Dojo

#### Termly (Christmas, Easter and July)

- 100% attendance certificates

'Every Day Matters' awards for 100% attendance at the end of the year.

## Informing Parents about Attendance

#### Daily

- SIMs Parent App
- Families are invited to download the SIM's parent App. This provides daily updates of your child's attendance.

#### Monthly

- Attendance letters will be sent monthly where a child's attendance has fallen below 90% and is causing concern.
- SIMs registration certificates sent to families.

#### Annually

- Attendance is reported on end of year reports.

## Daily Attendance Procedures

Schools are required to take a register twice a day for every pupil. This happens at the beginning of our morning and afternoon sessions. These sessions form the basis of each pupil's attendance record.

Our registration periods are as follows:

	<b>Registers open</b>	<b>Registers close</b>
Morning session	9 am	9.10 am
Afternoon session	1.15 pm	1.25 pm

### Morning

The School day starts at 9am. Pupils who arrive after this time will be marked as late. Pupils who arrive after 9:10am will have an unauthorised late mark which will affect their attendance.

- Daily attendance report checked to identify any unexplained/missing marks for the day.
- Registers updated by Attendance Officer with marks from late arrival and absent sheet.
- Visits to classrooms to see if children with unexplained/missing absence have arrived.
- Phone call made to parents of absent children to ascertain reason for absence.
- Marks updated on (SIM's).

### Afternoon

- 1:25pm registers close.
- Marks updated SIM's.

### Monthly

- School Attendance Officer and Head Teacher meet to monitor and discuss children with under 96% attendance.
- Decisions are made on letters to be sent home, which parents need to meet with the head and who needs to be referred to the Somerset County Council Educational Engagement Officer.

Attendance concern letters and meeting procedure as follows:

- Letter 1 – first letter to inform parent of child's current attendance
- Letter 2 – second letter after attendance has not improved from first letter
- Medical letter – letter to ask parents to provide medical evidence for child's absences following repeated letters and absences related to illness
- School attendance meeting – parents contacted and asked to attend a meeting with the head teacher, following continued low attendance
- Somerset Council Educational Engagement Officer referral is then sent if no improvements are made; penalty notices can then be considered at this stage

### Unexplained absences:

Unexplained absences monitored by the school attendance officer. These absences will be marked as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

Late letters:

Late marks monitored and letters sent to those parents of children who are regularly late

## Absence and Punctuality

Parents are required to inform the school as soon as possible if their child is absent or due to be absent. This should be done on every day of absence.

Parents are asked to inform us of any absences as follows:

By phone	01278 722527
By email	<a href="mailto:office@catcottprimary.co.uk">office@catcottprimary.co.uk</a>
Online	Parentmail

Each school day is split into two sessions; morning and afternoon. Registers are opened at the beginning of each session and closed 15 minutes later, as shown in the table below:

<b>Morning session</b>	<b>Afternoon session</b>
Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 9am am.	Pupils are expected to attend registration by 1.15 pm.
Registers open at 9am am	Registers open at 1.15 pm
Pupils that arrive after 9am am will be recorded as late (L code).	Pupils that arrive after 1.15 pm will be recorded as late (L code).
Registers close at 9.10 am.	Registers close at 1.25 pm.
Pupils that arrive after 9.20 am will be marked as late after registers have closed (U code). This counts as an unauthorised absence.	Pupils that arrive after 1.25 pm will be marked as late after registers have closed (U code). This counts as an unauthorised absence.

Pupils' punctuality will be regularly monitored. Sanctions will be put in place when it is appropriate to do so. Parents will be contacted to discuss persistent lateness and lateness after the close of the registers could result in a request for support from the Education Safeguarding Service.

When parents make daily contact regarding their child's absence, that contact and the reasons for absence will be recorded. Absences will be coded on the child's register in line with the reason for that absence.

The decision about how absences are coded rests with the Head Teacher and in some cases, absences may not be authorised even when a reason is provided.

Additional information or evidence may be requested before an absence is authorised. This may occur when there are concerns about a pupil's attendance, even if it is related to illness, or when the reason provided is believed to be false.

Unexplained absences may result in contact being made with parents and a home visit being made to speak with the parent or the pupil and put support in place, as needed.

## Authorisation of Absence

In line with legislation and Local Authority guidance, pupil absences can only be authorised when:

- a pupil is too unwell to attend school
- a pupil is attending a medical appointment that is unavoidable
- a pupil is taking part in a recognised religious observance
- a pupil is prevented from attending due to school transport not being available (this only applies to transport that is arranged by the Local Authority or the school)

Absences may also be authorised at the discretion of the Head Teacher when:

- term-time leave is requested, and its circumstances are exceptional
- a pupil has one or more medical appointments
- the parent of a pupil is engaged in a trade that requires them to travel and they have previously attended school as often as the nature of that trade permits (this relates only to families with Traveller status)
- other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a close family bereavement)

## Medical Appointments

Where possible, medical appointments should be made outside school hours or in school holidays. However, we realise this is sometimes not possible. Pupils should come into school before and after appointments to ensure they miss as little lesson time as possible. Pupils should sign out before leaving for appointments and sign in when they return.

## Term-Time Leave

Arranging holidays or planned absence during term time causes issues for many reasons:

- the pupil's education suffers; lessons and extra-curricular activities are missed
- there is no opportunity for teachers to set additional work or to assist a child in catching up on their return from holiday
- parents may be in breach of their legal obligation to send their child to school.

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 that placed greater restrictions on families and schools in relation to planned term-time leave.

The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state:

***Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.***

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Requests for term-time leave will be considered on a case-by-case.

Term time leave must be requested in writing to the school at least 20 school days in advance of the leave via a term time leave request form.

Only requests with exceptional circumstances will be considered and children with poor attendance will not have requests approved.

Those parents who take their children out of school without prior consent put themselves at risk of receiving a penalty notice.

The Head Teacher will determine how many sessions may be authorised in cases where term-time leave is agreed.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent (the parent with whom the child normally resides).

Applications for term-time leave must be made in advance and in writing. Failure to do so will result in the absence the resulting absences being unauthorised.

When an application for term-time leave is declined, any resulting absences will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence relating to term-time leave being taken will be sent to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice when 10 or more sessions are unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences resulting from term-time leave being taken is likely to result in the Local Authority issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for each child absent from school.

The Education Engagement Service issues penalty notices on behalf of the Local Authority in line with the Somerset Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, which is available at [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk).

If a Penalty Notice is issued and not paid, the Local Authority will consider prosecuting parents in line with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This can result in a fine of up to £1,000 for each offence.

In exceptional cases, the Local Authority may seek to prosecute parents in line with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 without issuing a Penalty Notice.

## Attendance Support and Intervention

Catcott Primary School monitors the attendance of all pupils regularly and will put in place varying levels of support and intervention, as outlined below.

The strategies, support and interventions put in place and offered will vary depending on each pupil's attendance and the circumstances resulting in their absences.

Through regular attendance monitoring and scrutiny, Catcott Primary School is able to identify pupils that require support in relation to their attendance at the earliest possible stage.

Attendance Stage	Strategies, Support and Interventions
------------------	---------------------------------------

Stage 1	<p>Attendance monitored by class teacher</p> <p>Wellbeing calls made by Class teacher on day 3 of absence.</p> <p>Absences discussed upon return to school</p> <p>Termly attendance awards for pupils with 100% attendance or improved attendance</p>
Stage 2  Attendance below 90%	<p>Letter 1 –</p> <p>First letter to inform parent of child's current attendance.</p> <p>In-school support considered and offered.</p>
Stage 3  Attendance remains below 90%	<p>Letter 2 -</p> <p>Second letter after attendance has not improved from first letter</p> <p>Invitation to Attendance Liaison meeting with the Headteacher.</p> <p>Request for support from Parent and Family Support Advisor (PFSA).</p>
Stage 4  Attendance has not improved or has fallen below 90%	<p>Letter 3 -</p> <p>Issue a warning penalty notice for irregular attendance.</p> <p>Attendance support request submitted to the Education Engagement team.</p>
Stage 5  Attendance has not improved or has fallen further	<p>School attendance meeting</p> <p>Parents contacted and asked to attend a meeting with the head teacher, following continued low attendance.</p> <p>Request for attendance casework for an Attendance improvement plan meeting with the Education Engagement Officer.</p>
Stage 6	<p>Attendance Casework from the EES</p> <p>Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence.</p>
Stage 7	<p>Multi-agency support</p> <p>Possible legal interventions for unauthorised absences</p>

## Appendix A

### Declined Term-Time Leave Request

Dear

## **Request for Term-Time Leave Declined**

PUPILNAME (DOB)

You submitted a request for term-time leave to be taken between STARTDATE and ENDDATE.

Schools are expected to authorise term-time leave only in exceptional circumstances and where taking leave is unavoidable.

In line with current guidance and legislation, it is not possible to authorise your request for term-time leave, as detailed above.

Please be aware that if this leave is taken:

- the resulting NUMBER absences will not be authorised
- in line with our Attendance Policy, the Local Authority will be asked to issue a Penalty Notice to you
- Penalty notices can be issued to each parent for each child when authorised term-time leave is taken

Yours sincerely

## Approved Term-Time Leave Request

Dear

### **Request for Term-Time Leave Approved**

CHILDNAME (DOB)

You submitted a request for term-time leave to be taken between STARTDATE and ENDDATE.



Schools are expected to authorise term-time leave only in exceptional circumstances and where taking leave is unavoidable.

In line with current guidance and legislation, the decision has been made to authorise your request. **NUMBER** absences will be authorised between the dates outlined above.

Please be aware that delays to your child's return to school may result in those absences not being authorised unless they are unavoidable.

Yours sincerely

## Unauthorised Term-Time Leave Taken

Dear

### **Unauthorised Term-Time Leave**

PUPILNAME (DOB)

Your child was absent from school for NUMBER sessions between the dates of STARTDATE and ENDDATE.

It has come to our attention that these absences were due to term-time leave being taken. Our Attendance Policy outlines the expectation that any term-time leave is requested prior to it being taken.

As we do not have any record of this leave being requested, these sessions have been marked as unauthorised term-time leave.

In line with our Attendance Policy and Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a request will be made to the Local Authority to issue you with a Penalty Notice because of these unauthorised absences.

The Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent of each child when authorised term-time leave is taken.

Yours faithfully

Enc. Registration Certificate

## Appendix B

### Stage 1 Attendance Concern

Dear

School Attendance Concerns Stage 1

PUPILNAME (DOB)

I am writing to you in relation to your PUPILNAME's attendance, which is currently NUMBER per cent. They have been absent for NUMBER sessions.

Absence from school impacts significantly on children's academic progress and wellbeing.

The wellbeing and progress of our pupils is our priority, and we know that absence from school is often a sign that additional support may be needed.

I would like to invite you to contact us as soon as possible to discuss how we can work together to maximise PUPILNAME's attendance and ensure any support needed is put in place.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Enc. Registration Certificate

## Stage 2 Attendance Concern

Dear

School Attendance Concerns Stage 2  
PUPILNAME (DOB)

I am writing to you in relation to significant concerns about PUPILNAME's attendance, which is currently NUMBER per cent.

Each absence is recorded on your child's register, which current shows they have NUMBER authorised and NUMBER unauthorised absences.

Poor school attendance is often a sign that additional support is needed, and we would like to ensure that this is put in place to support PUPILNAME's improved attendance.

I would like to invite you to meet with me on DATE at TIME to discuss this matter and identify any support that may be required. This meeting may result in a Parenting Contract being agreed, which will aim to outline any support needed and how that will be put in place.

Please be aware that further unauthorised absences may result in you being issued with a Penalty Notice Warning or a request for support from the Local Authority.

You are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting so we can work together to ensure PUPILNAME's attendance improves, and such action is not necessary.

I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Yours sincerely

Enc. Registration Certificate

## Stage 3 Attendance Concern

Dear

School Attendance Concerns Stage 3

PUPILNAME (DOB)

I am writing to you in relation to ongoing, significant concerns about PUPILNAME's attendance, which is currently NUMBER per cent.

Each absence is recorded on your child's register, which currently shows they have NUMBER authorised and NUMBER unauthorised absences.

Because of the level of PUPILNAME's absence and the level of unauthorised absence, a request is now being made to the Education Engagement Service for Attendance Casework.

While poor school attendance is often a sign that additional support is needed, parents are required by law to ensure their child attends school regularly. Failing to do so is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The EES will work with us to support and promote good school attendance but may consider legal action against you if PUPILNAME's attendance does not improve and further unauthorised absences occur.

Legal action is always a last resort in relation to poor school attendance and may be prevented by us working together to improve attendance and ensure the right support is in place for PUPILNAME.

Yours sincerely

Enc. Registration Certificate

Penalty Notice Warning

**PENALTY NOTICE WARNING**

**Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**

Dear

**PENALTY NOTICE WARNING**

**PUPILNAME (DOB)**

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is an offence for a parent of a child not to ensure they attend their registered school regularly.

Between STARTDATE and ENDDATE, PUPILNAME has been absent from SCHOOLNAME for NUMBER sessions. NUMBER of these absences have been marked as unauthorised. Their attendance is currently NUMBER per cent.

**This is a formal warning that further unauthorised absences may result in the Local Authority issuing you with a Penalty Notice:**

If a Penalty Notice is issued, you will have the option of paying the fixed penalty of £120, payable within 28 days. This amount is reduced to £60, if paid within 21 days.

If a Penalty Notice is issued and not paid, the Local Authority may commence legal proceeding against you for the offence outlined above.

Support is available to ensure the regular attendance of our pupils. If this is something you wish to discuss, please contact me as soon as possible.

We will continue to monitor PUPILNAME's attendance and hope that further action will not be necessary.

Yours sincerely

Enc. Registration Certificate