

Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School Attendance Policy

The Education Act 1944 placed a duty on parents to ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in condition to learn. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: "If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parents are guilty of an offence."

We believe that children who are frequently absent from school or arrive late are being denied the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

If children are regularly absent or late then they jeopardise not only their own futures but that of their peers if teachers have to repeat work for them or restart lessons to accommodate late comers. The demands of the national Curriculum make this extremely difficult for teachers and children.

At Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School we believe that the duty to ensure regular and punctual attendance lies with the parents of our children and where necessary we will work with parents in order to improve this. In the first instance the Senior Learning Mentor will engage with individual families and act accordingly. In the case of persistent or regular non-attendance or lateness, then we will call upon the support and advice of the Legal Intervention Team and where necessary take action against parents.

Aims

- To ensure that all children have equal access to the school curriculum
- To ensure that parents understand and meet their legal obligations to ensure that children attend school regularly, on time and in a condition to learn
- To ensure that children are enabled to develop good habits in attendance and punctuality
- To discourage parents from taking holidays in school time
- To ensure that on return to school following a period of absence children are helped to catch up missed work wherever possible through differentiation or other appropriate means

In Practice

Admission and Attendance registers are kept on computer and the Governing Body is registered under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for holding such information.

Class teachers record all attendance via e portal.

The Senior Learning Mentor receives an absence sheet at the start of each day. The Senior Learning Mentor either:

- Suggests an absence is authorised (given prior knowledge of reason/reason reported by parents) or
- Contacts parents to establish why children are absent and where necessary takes action to address any concerns

- Suggests an absence is unauthorised due to the current circumstances

The Senior Learning Mentor then reports to the Head Teacher who determines whether these should be authorised/unauthorised on behalf of the Governing Body

Authorised Absence

There are two main categories of authorised absence:

- When the pupil is prevented from attending by sickness or any unavoidable cause related to medical issues e.g. hospital appointment (evidence may be requested)
- If a day is set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which their parents belong

Other categories of authorised absence:

- The child is taking part in a public performance approved by the LA and agreed in advance by the Head teacher
- Leave has been granted in exceptional circumstances by the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors

The Head Teacher, acting for the Governing Body, may wish to exercise their discretion to authorise absence on the grounds of:

- On rare occasions when there are genuine and exceptional circumstances e.g. domestic circumstances which would include the death of a close member of the child's family or when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Medical or dental appointments if such appointments cannot be made outside of school
- Exclusions being of fixed periods
- Up to 10 consecutive days in one year where parents are prevented from taking holidays outside term time due working for the armed forces (confirmation is required from parent's employer)

Unauthorised Absences

A note or 'phone call from a parent does not authorise a pupil's absence.

Only the Head Teacher can authorise any absence. Reasons given by the parents/carers are considered carefully but need not be accepted as authorising the pupil's non attendance.

Following consultation with the Governors, the Head Teacher will not authorise any holidays during term time with the exception of the above circumstances.

The Senior Learning Mentor monitors unauthorised absence and acts accordingly.

Truancy

It is very unlikely that children of our age will be truanting; however, we will remain vigilant at all times for the possibility.

Lateness

Persistent lateness can have a cumulative effect and deny full access to the national Curriculum. It can be classed as a failure to attend regularly under section 39 Education Act 1944.

The Senior Learning Mentor monitors lateness and acts accordingly. The close of register is 9.30 am and children are recorded as late if they arrive after 8.55 but before 9.30 am. Regular late arrivals after 9.30 am are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Birmingham Children's Trust

The Birmingham Children's Trust can be expected to be involved in the following situations:

- Child protection
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Children who have offended
- Children experiencing family/financial difficulties

Birmingham Local Authority

The Birmingham Local Authority can be expected to be involved in the following situations:

- Taking children off roll
- Elective Home Education
- Child employment
- Children in entertainment
- Non-attendance/unsatisfactory attendance
- Persistent lateness

Role of the Senior Learning Mentor

The Senior Learning Mentor will be responsible for:

- Monitoring daily/weekly attendance and lateness
- Working with families and outside agencies where necessary
- First day calling/chasing absences
- Setting up 'campaigns' and 'attendance initiatives'
- Co-ordinating rewards for good attendance including maintenance of the 100% chart
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance including all new parents
- Meet new parents and pupils and advising them of the school's policy and procedures on attendance
- Liaising with the Legal Intervention Team and development of the Individual School Plan for attendance
- Liaising with feeder schools on transfer
- Analysis of attendance data with the Head Teacher
- Liaison with class teachers
- Attendance at the Every Child Matters group meeting to receive/report on attendance concerns
- Provide staff with attendance printouts for parents evening and special needs review meetings where appropriate
- Keep a log of all extended holidays and keep official registers for a minimum of three years

Role of the Class Teacher

In accordance with legislation, the class teacher must take the register at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions. Children not present when the register is taken will be recorded as absent (N) for the session or late (L) if they arrive by 9.30 am (1.30 pm) unless parents have notified school that they will be arriving later due to a medical appointment.

Any child failing to return after having attended in the morning will be reported to the Head Teacher immediately.

Registration times are used as a friendly, welcoming time and teachers may have a variety of ways for taking the register however each child must be seen by the person taking the register.

Each class teacher has a folder which is delivered to class each morning. Absence notes for the week are kept in the attendance folder and this is sent back to the office following completion of the register.

A copy of the whole school absence record for the day is retained in the office in case of fire or other need to evacuate the building. Class Teachers keep a daily record of pupil numbers for such purposes and record the total number of pupils present on a sheet displayed in the classroom.

When a child has been absent and subsequently returns to school, the Class Teacher welcomes that child and any missed work is caught up where possible.

Class Teachers will regularly inform the Senior Learning Mentor of any child whose attendance is causing concern and class teachers can at any time request a printout of individual children's attendance.

Class Teachers are in the position of meeting with parents at the door and where appropriate will use these opportunities to follow up absences with parents. Class Teachers will also use the occasion of parents' evening to raise concerns over attendance.

The Role of the SENCo

The SENCo will use the occasion of any special needs review/LAC review meetings to target attendance with parents where this is an issue, liaising with Class Teachers and the Senior Learning Mentor as necessary.

The Role of the Office Manager

The Office manager is responsible for all the work related to inputting the admissions and attendance information onto the CMIS system, keeping all pupil information up to date and correct.

The Role of the Head Teacher/Deputy Head

The Head Teacher will be responsible for ensuring that all new members of staff including temporary members and supply teachers are advised of the policy and procedures for recording attendance.

The Head will liaise with the Senior Learning Mentor, Class Teachers and Office Manager to monitor attendance and to raise concerns about particular children. Where issues of child protection are concerned they may contact the Legal Intervention Team for advice or action.

The Head Teacher is the only person who can authorise an absence and any queries regarding this should be referred to them and will meet with individual parents to discuss requests for leave of absence.

It is accepted that it will be desirable for some parents to take extended holidays to visit families abroad. Only in exceptional circumstances will these be authorised by the Head Teacher.

Parents are encouraged to take such leave in order to coincide with school holidays and parents will complete a Leave of Absence form detailing a likely return date.

Where a child does not return on the agreed date the school will make reasonable enquires of the whereabouts of the pupil before contacting the Legal Intervention Team.

Parents will be informed during the initial application that they may be fined

The Role of Parents

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure that their children arrive on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn.

Parents will ensure that their children arrive at school in plenty of time and are collected on time in order to benefit from the school's full curriculum.

Parents will notify the school in advance of any known absence for whatever reason.

Parents will ensure that wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of school time.

Parents will ensure that their children return to school as soon as possible after illness when they are fit and able to do so. If special measures are required in order that they can return early (e.g. in the case of a broken arm or if medicine is required during the school day) they will contact the Head Teacher.

In case of a longer absence, a written letter is required to explain the absence or a medical note. This will be sent into school with the child on their return.

Parents will not leave children unattended in the playground before school. If it is absolutely necessary to bring children to school early or collect them late, prior permission will be obtained from the Head Teacher and suitable arrangements will be made for them to be supervised e.g. in the Before and After School Club.

Parents will complete a Leave of Absence request form for any absence other than illness and may make an appointment to see the Head Teacher to discuss this.

Parents of children who are regularly late or absent will attend a School Action Review meeting with the Senior Learning Mentor section to discuss the situation and if necessary the ultimate sanction of legal action will be considered.

The Role of the Pupil

Children will be taught the importance of attending school regularly and on time. They can, and do, have an influence on their parents and will be encouraged to relay suitable 'messages' of high standards of attendance and punctuality back to the home.

The Role of the Governors

The Governing Body have delegated responsibility for day to day management of attendance and for authorising absences to the Head Teacher.

Governors will be kept informed of the rates of absence and will help and support the school in efforts made to improve these. A designated governor has been appointed for attendance and regularly meets with the SLM.

Rewards

At Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School, we believe that it is the responsibility of the parents to ensure regular attendance on time, and that whilst children of this age will be taught to understand the need to develop good habits in this area, they should not be punished for the attendance issues caused by their parents.

Rewards include:

- At Family Assemblies the class with the highest attendance each week will be given a certificate, stickers and an extra session on the climbing frame. A display in the entrance hall celebrates the class attendance of the week.
- Classes with daily 100% attendance will report to the Senior Learning Mentor who will reward the class with a sticker on the school chart. When a class reaches 15 100% attendance they will be rewarded with a bouncy castle party.
- A campaign known as The 20 Day Challenge runs a number of times per year. Children who come to school for 20 consecutive days are rewarded with a certificate and a bouncy castle party
- Termly certificates are presented to each child achieving 95% and above attendance in the previous term. Gold badges are also presented to those children achieving 100% for the term.
- At the end of the school year attendance certificates are awarded for annual attendance of 95% and above and children with 100% attendance for the year are rewarded with a prize.
- Full attendance for 3 years is rewarded as a major event

FAST-Track

The SLM and Head Teacher regularly meet to discuss attendance and persistent absentees. Where a child has more than 20 unauthorised sessions, the parents may be subject to a fine by the Local Authority. A School Action Review Meeting (SARM) will take place before the legal paperwork is completed to try to improve the attendance through support.

Early Help

Where parents are having difficulties with their child's attendance, the school has an open door policy whereby parents can raise any issues that they are facing and request support and the school will endeavour to provide that support. This may be through school resources or liaison with outside agencies. Generally this support has been proved to increase attendance and prevent persistent absenteeism. In the first instance please speak to the Senior Learning Mentor.

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