



Cliffe Hill Community Primary School

Attendance Policy

This policy was signed off by the Governing Body in November 2015

The policy will be reviewed in November 2017

Introduction

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. Cliffe Hill Community Primary 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.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and 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 whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.*
- Achieve our whole school target of 96% attendance.*
- 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.*
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.*
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.*
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel*

safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

- *Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.*
- *Recognise the key role of all staff, in promoting good attendance.*

We promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- *Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils, through weekly newsletters, displays in school and the school website.*
- *Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.*
- *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.*

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. The school have the authority to authorise any absences after looking at evidence for each individual case.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Persistent Absentees

Pupils with less than 90% attendance, where with no improvement, referrals will be made to the Education Welfare Service in order to issue a penalty notice.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- *To maintain appropriate registration processes.*

- *To maintain appropriate attendance data.*
- *To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.*
- *To have consistent and systematic records which give detail of any absence and lateness.*
- *To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.*
- *To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.*
- *To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.*
- *To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality*
- *To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.*

Registration

All the school doors are open from 8.50am until 9.00 am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. These registers are then returned to the school office.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9.00am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning. Where there are persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues. These letters are sent to parents at the end of each half term for those who have arrived late on 5 or more occasions during the half term.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. The Family Link Officer checks all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

Schools are not permitted to authorise holiday leave under any circumstances. School will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home.

There will be opportunities for the parent/ carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Education Welfare Service will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

Monitoring Attendance Procedures

The Head Teacher meets with the Family Link Officer at the start of every half term to consider:

- Whole school attendance percentage*
- Whole school figure for unauthorised absences*
- Whole school punctuality figure*

This is then broken into each class and individual pupils discussed.

From this meeting letters are sent out for the following:

- Below 90% attendance from September (PA Pupils)*
- Below 95% attendance from September*
- 5 or more occasions of arriving late to school*