

Cottesbrooke Infant School Attendance Policy

The 1944 Education Act placed a duty on parents to ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in condition to learn.

We believe that children who are frequently absent from school or arrive late are being denied their equal opportunities and 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 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 Home School Support Worker 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 Education Social Worker 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

Attendance at Cottesbrooke Infant School falls below the level expected by the government and has done so since the levels were moved from 90% to 95%. As such Attendance and Punctuality have been prioritised since 1999/2000. (See ISP)

In Practice

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

On receipt of a note from a parent or knowledge of a telephone call, class teachers may determine the code for each absence for routine non-attendance, such as illness but must refer to the head teacher for a ruling on non-routine cases.

Class teachers record all attendance via e portal.

The Home School Support Worker receives an absence sheet at the start of each day. The Home School Support Worker 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 Home School Support Worker 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 approved work experience
- The child is taking part in a public performance approved by the LA
- Leave has been granted in exceptional circumstances by the Chair of Governors or the Head Teacher

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

- Study leave immediately before an exam
- 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
- Attendance at an interview with a prospective employer or educational establishment
- An educational field study
- 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 to factory or workplace closedowns or inflexible allocation of parental leave (confirmation is required from parent's employer)

Unauthorised Absences

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

Only the Head Teacher except in cases where the pupil is sick, can authorise any absence. Reasons given by the parents/carers are considered carefully and need not be accepted as authorising the pupils 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 Home School Support Worker 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 Home School Support Worker monitors lateness and acts accordingly. The close of register is 9.30 and children are recorded as late if they arrive after 8.55 but before 9.30 a.m. Late arrivals after 9.30 are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The Role of the Education Social Worker

The school has an allocated Education Social Worker who has regular meetings in school with the Home School Support Worker and Head Teacher to discuss any child whose attendance is causing concern.

In the event of an emergency arising (e.g. a child protection issue) the Duty Education Social Worker may be contacted by the Head Teacher.

The Education Social Worker can be expected to be involved in the following situations:

- Non attendance/unsatisfactory attendance
- Persistent lateness
- Pre-exclusion
- Child employment
- Children in entertainment
- Child protection
- Education otherwise notifications
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Children who have offended
- Children experiencing family/financial difficulties
- Pupil parents
- Taking children off roll
- Common Assessment Framework

Role of the Home School Support Worker

The Home School Support Worker will be responsible for:

- Taking the role of lead practitioner for CAF (Common Assessment Framework)

- 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
- Publishing the parent handbook on attendance
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance including all new parents
- Liaison with Extended schools re. access to funding for attendance initiatives etc.
- Liaising with the ESW 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

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 a.m. (1.30 p.m.) 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 in early years, however, a formal roll call will be taken in years 1 and 2.

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

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 Home School Support Worker 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.

Children taking holidays/extended visits will be encouraged to complete some educational activities whilst away from school. The Class Teacher may provide some reading materials, practice worksheets and a small notebook to be kept as a simple diary. The child will be encouraged to collect photographs, postcards or small artefacts which can be shared with the class on their return. Class teachers will encourage children to talk and write about their experiences on return and a holiday pack for this purpose will be given to parents. (See appendix i)

The Role of the Inclusion Leader

The Inclusion Leader 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 Home School Support Worker 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 Office Manager will print a whole school absence sheet every morning in order that the Home School Support Worker can complete the first day calling/chasing of absences as required.

Following completion of the above the Office Manager will input any amendments to the register codes as necessary.

The Office Manager will keep a log of all extended holidays and will keep official registers for a minimum of three years.

Where rates of absence or lateness appear to be a cause for concern, the Office Manager will notify the Home School Support Worker immediately of anything she may have noted in the course of her work.

The Role of the Head Teacher/Deputy Head

The Head Teacher is responsible for meeting all new parents and pupils and advising them of the school's policy and procedures on attendance.

The Deputy 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 Home School Support Worker, Class Teachers, Office Manager and the ESW to monitor attendance and to raise concerns about particular children. Where issues of child protection are concerned she may contact the duty ESW 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 her 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 and only once in the pupil's primary phase of education. (See appendix ii)

Parents will be encouraged to take such leave in order to coincide with school holidays where possible 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 and ESW will make reasonable enquires within 10 days of the whereabouts of the pupil, before de-registration is considered.

Parents will be informed during the initial application that they may lose the child's school place if they do not return when agreed.

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 and the ESW will be informed if any child fails to return to school on the due date.

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 will make an appointment to see the Head Teacher to discuss this. (See appendix iii) The authority suggests that all requests should be made at least 6 weeks or a half term in advance.

In the case of a family holiday or extended leave where this has been granted parents will support their children in completing any homework set by the Head Teacher. A workbook entitled 'My Visit' has been designed especially for this purpose. (See appendix ii)

Parents of children who are regularly late or absent will attend a School Action Review meeting with the Home School Support Worker 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 Head Teacher.

Rewards

At Cottesbrooke Infant 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.

The school takes part in the LA initiatives to reward excellent attendance and encourage and praise those children who do attend on time and regularly. Teachers may also choose to reward special effort or achievement during Well Done Assembly.

Rewards include:

- At Friday Family Assemblies the classe with the highest attendance each week will be given a certificate, stickers and a 'box of play lions' to keep in their classroom until the following

week. A display in the entrance hall celebrates the class attendance of the week.

- Classes with daily 100% attendance will report to the Home School Support Worker who will reward the class with a sticker on the school chart. Each half term the class displaying the highest number of 100% days will receive a class reward or treat
- 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.
- Full attendance for 3 years is rewarded as a major event

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