

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Catherine Infant School

Introduction:

Catherine Infant school is a good, successful school and your child plays his or her part in making it so. Our school environment enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly, on time and every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and meet the target set for us and this Policy sets out how together, we will achieve this.

The Attendance target for the school is 95% or above.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect his / her learning.

Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

Our school Attendance Welfare Officer will:

- Give you information on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Provide you with reports once a year on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is, and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.
- Contact parents when a pupil fails to attend without a good reason
- Contact parents when there is a pattern of absences or an excessive number of absences or lateness
- Monitor attendance regularly
- Monitor pupils arriving late

Understanding types of absence:

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (ie condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when he or she misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all pupil absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you either then or at a later point.

NB Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence (and on subsequent days) if we have not heard from you;
- Write to you to if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Welfare Officer and Head teacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern.
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken to establish that your child is safe. This could be by a Police Officer.

Telephone / mobile numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Changes to the Law Regarding Term Time Holiday

From 1st September 2013, the new change in **law** is that parents **will not** be given permission by the school to take their child on holiday during term time. This law now comes into line with our policy that we have had since the start of the year at Catherine Infants School. The new policy now states that schools **should not authorise** leave of absence unless:

- The Head Teacher considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application AND
- An application has been made in advance by the parent.

Leave of absence during term time may not also be authorized due to the following reasons:-

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Before and during assessment periods (SATS) examinations.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below **95 %** or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Penalty notices will be issued for parents who take their children on holiday in term time if the holiday has been unauthorised. Penalty notices:

- £120 per parent, per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days)

There is no automatic entitlement in law to have time off in school time to go on holiday.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking them away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to parents.

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. (Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school.)

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority on 0116 2211260. They can also be reached by e-mailing education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. registers are marked by **9 am** and your child will receive a late mark if he/she is not in by that time.

At **9.05am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and /or the Education welfare Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The Attendance target for the school is 95% or above.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our letters/newsletter, school assemblies, parents meetings and we ask for your full support.

Health & Safety

Parents

- to ensure children are accompanied/collected by a responsible adult over the age of 18 years
- to ensure children are personally escorted to their relevant classroom
- to inform school as soon as possible, if children are to be picked up by someone other than designated adult
- to ensure that children's emergency contact numbers are kept up to date and that the school has a least one number that is not a mobile phone number
- to ensure that children do not leave the school premises unless accompanied by a responsible adult known to them over the age of 18 years
- To ensure that children are picked up on time

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Headteacher and the Governing Body will:

- Monitor attendance
- Monitor lateness
- Evaluate attendance and lateness in conjunction with the Education Welfare Officer
- Request reasons for absenteeism and lateness
- Observe patterns of attendance and lateness
- If concerns/issues are apparent school will speak to parents prior to Education Welfare Officer
- Education Welfare Officer will contact Parents if there are any concerns/issues to be raised

We must share our enthusiasm for the best possible education for our pupils, so for all our pupils and your children to achieve a high standard in their education, it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that children attend school regularly. In order for this policy to be successful every member of the school community must make attendance a high priority. The Governing Body will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

The registration system

The school uses a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. National codes are used to record attendance information.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Harrold Head teacher
 Mr J Taylor Attendance Welfare Officer
 Mr T Bott Business Manager

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

September 2016

**Catherine Infant School
Attendance Policy**

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the Attendance Policy at Catherine Infant School.

Parent/s'/Carer's Name/s:

Signed:

CHILD's Name:

Class:

Catherine Infant School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed yearly by

Chair of Governors
Headteacher
Resources Committee

September 2016