

# **Cornholme School**

## **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

The aim of the school policy is to develop good attendance and punctuality to give the children the best chances in their education and welfare at school in the highly formative years of their life. It is designed to recognise where attendance is good (i.e. above 95%) and where improvement is required or school action needs to be taken.

The staff and governors of Cornholme's regard good attendance and punctuality as high priority. We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and punctuality. We regard Education as of the greatest importance and also acknowledge that it is not only the right of a child to receive a good education, it is also a legal requirement for all parents/ carers to ensure their child is in school and on time for all children of statutory school age. Our aim is to ensure our school works in partnership with parents, our local community and the Local Authority to support and promote good attendance and punctuality.

### **In order to achieve this the school will:**

- Offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration.
- Foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/ carers, governors and pupils value attendance and punctuality.
- Comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and/ or punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.
- Have systems in place offering rewards and incentives for regular attendance and punctuality.
- Keep parents/ carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures.
- Support governors in taking an active role in promoting good attendance.
- Work in partnerships with parents/ carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies.

### **Expectations**

The school expects its pupils:

- To attend regularly and on time.
- To be prepared adequately for the school day.
- To comply with the school policies and procedures.

The school expects its parents/ carers:

- To ensure their children are ready for school, in a clean uniform, having had a breakfast (unless provided by the before school club);
- To encourage their children to attend school every day, on time.
- To contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- To arrange holidays and medical appointments outside school hours.
- To regularly update emergency contact details.

### **Registration**

The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law (e.g. to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a precise day).

The registers are marked at the beginning of each session, morning and afternoon. Registers are marked in the first 10 minutes of the start of the school day. Registers are submitted to the office (Saved) at 9.10 am.

The school day formally commences for all children at 9 am and this is the time by which children are expected to have come into class. The school bell will ring at 8.50 at which point the children can enter the building.

Pupils arriving after the start of the school day must enter the school, accompanied by their parent/ carer, via the main entrance at the front of the building where they will be met by the Admin Staff.

The registers are closed at 9.20 am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be regarded as absent for the full morning session even though they are present in school. This will be coded as an unauthorised absence (U) in the register. This is in line with all schools and based on Local Authority and national guidance. Registration will be taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session 1 pm Foundation; 1.10 pm for KS2 & 1.30pm for KS1 pupils.

We all have a responsibility to encourage punctuality. It is important that every child arrives in school on time as Literacy and Numeracy are taught at the beginning of the school day and are fundamental to a pupil's educational needs.

### **Authorised Absence**

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Religious Observance in accordance with Local Authority guidelines.
- Medical or Dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours. (Where possible parents/ carers should try to arrange these appointments for out-of-school hours).
- Special circumstances (authorised by the Headteacher)
- Permanent or fixed term exclusions.

Note: From the 1st September 2013, the new law gives **no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time**. Any application for leave will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave (bereavement of a close family member/ relative may be an example of exceptional circumstances). Headteachers would not be expected to classify any term-time holiday as exceptional. Parents will be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from school.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy – a pupil is away from school without authority from the Headteacher. This includes parentally condoned absences.
- Late arrival after registration is closed i.e. after 9-20 a.m. (unless the pupil or parent provides a legitimate reason or evidence for the absence).
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone.
- Staying at home to look after a siblings or sick relatives.
- Going to the airport to meet relatives, shopping, or having hair cut etc.
- Any family holiday that has not been authorised by the Headteacher. Any absence due to the taking of a holiday will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

### **Patterns of Absence**

First day of absence:

If a child is absent from school, the parent/ carer must contact the school as soon as possible. If a parent/ carer does not inform the school the Family Worker/ Admin staff will ring the parental home early on the first day of absence, send a text message or undertake a home visit to ascertain why the child is absent.

The school is aiming to achieve an attendance target of a minimum of 95%. If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, and a parent/ carer fails to inform school, a clear strategy of intervention will be implemented.

### **Escalation of Intervention**

If a pupil's attendance falls **below 95% (GREEN STAGE)**

- A letter is sent home raising the concern that the child's attendance dipping.
- The pupil's percentage attendance will be monitored.

If a pupil's attendance falls **below 90% (AMBER STAGE)**

- A letter will be sent home to the parents and they will be invited in to the school to discuss their child's attendance with the Family Worker, Headteacher or School Attendance Officer (who may conduct a home visit).
- The Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- Targets will be set to improve the attendance and the attendance will be monitored over a two-week period.
- A *'School Attendance Contract'* will be agreed with both the parent/ carer and pupil.
- A *'Fixed Penalty Notice'* warning may be given.

If a pupil's attendance falls below **85% (RED STAGE)**

- Parents will be invited in to school to an Attendance Panel meeting together with the Family Worker, Education Welfare Officer and Headteacher.
- An *'Action Plan'* will be set up.
- A *'School Attendance Contract'* and *'Support Plan'* will be incorporated and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be discussed.
- Other outside agencies may be involved.
- If there is no significant improvement in attendance over a 4-week period, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be served.
- Further absences may only be authorised if satisfactory evidence is provided.

### **FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

In law, an offence occurs if a parent/ carer fails to secure a child's attendance at a school at which they are registered. Fixed Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Sec 444 of the Education Act 1996 or Sec 36 of The Children Act 1989, to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence would result in consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice. The circumstances will be considered on an individual basis. However, if there is no improvement after a period of 20 sessions (10 days), and the child has any further absences, then a Fixed Penalty Notice will be definitely be issued.

Fines for Fixed Penalty Notices are £50 per child, to be paid within 28 days. Failure to pay within this period will result in the fine being increased to £100 per child.

There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/ carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- The child has been absent from school for more than 10 unauthorised sessions in any term.
- The child has been stopped during an attendance & exclusion sweep, (accompanied or unaccompanied).
- Holidays in term-time without prior school agreement.
- Failure to return a child to school following a fixed-term exclusion.
- General poor school attendance.
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement.

- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Failure to ensure attendance at any alternative educational provision.
- Where a parent fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion from school.

#### **Procedure for Withdrawing Fixed Penalty Notices:**

Once issued, a Fixed Penalty Notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances;

- The Fixed Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- The use of a Fixed Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this Code of Practice.
- When it becomes apparent that no offence has been committed.
- It contains a material error.

#### **Payments of Fixed Penalty Notices**

Arrangements for payments will be detailed on the Fixed Penalty Notice.

Payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice discharges the parent/ carer of liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Fixed Penalty Notice.

Payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice within 28 days is £50.

Payment after this time, but within 42 days, is £100.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from Fixed Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs; (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).

#### **Non-Payment of Fixed Penalty Notices**

Non-payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice will result either in withdrawal of the Notice or will trigger the prosecution process under the provisions of Sec 444 of the Education Act 1996.

#### **The School's Approach to Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**

- Best class Weekly Attendance Trophy for good attendance; the best class receives a cup to display in their classroom.
- Each Class attendance is displayed in the entrance hall.
- At the end of every term, every child achieving 100% attendance receives a certificate and their name is read out in assembly. The children may also receive an additional activity/ reward. All pupils with good attendance at 95% + will go into an end of term draw to win, for example, cinema tickets.
- A list of school holidays is sent home at the start of every year. It is also recorded on the school website.
- The Local Authority requires the school to monitor attendance and have regular contact with the Education Welfare Officer, to enable us to keep on target for our school end of year percentage.
- Yearly rewards are given for children with 100% attendance; prize draws will also take place for children who have achieved 95% to 100%;