

Courthouse Green Primary School



Attendance Policy and Strategy 2021

Attendance Policy and Strategy *'pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education'*

Vision

Every child in our school will receive the very best of learning opportunities to enable them to achieve academic excellence and personal growth.

Rationale

We believe that ensuring the best possible school attendance for all pupils is a school priority in order to enable children to achieve their best. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Our aims

- All children achieve the Government minimum target of 96% attendance in an academic year.
- Reduce the percentage of authorised absences to below 4%
- Support parents in performing their legal duty by ensuring that their children attend school regularly (96%+)
- Follow the Government guidance (July 2019) to not authorise any request of leave of absence during term time for holiday purposes
- Reduce the percentage of persistent absences

Objectives

In order to achieve our aims the following objectives have to be put into practice: -

- Work in partnership with parents to ensure that education and school attendance is valued.
- Maintain an up to date admission and attendance register.
- Keep parents informed at all stages of attendance.
- Ensure that school procedures are in place for the monitoring of pupil absence to keep parents informed.
- Ensure that school procedures are in place and reflect those of Government guidance (July 2019).
- Ensure that the school procedures are in place for working with the Health Service when a pupil has been identified as having persistent absences due to illness.
- Ensure that all attendance is above the Government threshold for being persistently absent from school (attendance must be 90% and above).

School Procedures to celebrate and encourage high attendance

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality, striving to be in line or exceeding national attendance figures, through:

- All children earn **collaboration cup** points for their class for being in school each day and for being on time.
- Classes who achieve 100% attendance are rewarded weekly with additional **collaboration cup** points.
- Children who have 100% attendance each term are rewarded in assembly with a 100% attendance certificate.
- Each classroom has an attendance display and a Bingo card (1st term 10 full houses earns 50 Collaboration points) and class teachers refer to them daily to motivate and engage the children to achieve the school's target. Each class will come up with a chant/celebration to do every morning that they have a full house. The weekly winner sits on the bench in assembly.
- The class with the highest attendance is announced in assembly and that class gets Five Minute Friday- 5 minutes extra playtime on a Friday.

The following procedures outline the **strategies** that our school uses to improve and monitor attendance as well as how we keep parents informed of their child's attendance. This is in accordance with guidelines from the Government Guidance (July 2019). At all times parents will be kept informed of any concerns regarding attendance and will be given every opportunity to have help and support in getting their child to school regularly and on time. Every child's attendance is reported termly to Governors and at the end of each academic year in the Headteachers Report to Governors.

1. Reporting absence – we expect all parents/carers to notify school on the first day of absence and continue to keep school informed for the duration of the absence (speak in person or by phone to a member of office staff or leave message on school’s answer phone).
2. First day calling – we call all parents on a daily basis if we have not been given a reason for a child’s non-attendance, when we get no response from parents, we complete a home visit to ensure proper safeguarding action can be taken if required.
3. Monitor attendance weekly – The Pastoral senior leader (Kate Halfpenny) and our Learning Mentor Team meet weekly to discuss attendance records, concerns and agree any action to be taken. This is to ensure that our school’s attendance figures are in line with and are meeting school’s target for attendance (2020-21) it is 96%+). The Pastoral lead /Attendance lead meet with external agencies on a half termly basis to discuss ongoing concerns.
4. Weekly reports are provided to Senior Leaders of each class’s attendance, individual pupil attendance is also closely monitored by senior leaders.
5. Letters to inform parents of their child’s attendance:
 - All parents receive a termly letter which updates them on their child’s attendance
 - Learning Mentors support children in school when their attendance falls below 94% through the use of an attendance reward chart
 - When a child's attendance falls below 92% a letter will be sent to parents requesting a further meeting with them to inform them that all future absences will require medical evidence. Failure to provide medical evidence may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
 - When attendance drops below 90% we refer to Early Help to address or improve attendance
 - 85% Attendance – informs parents that the Early Help team will be making contact with them to discuss/offer further support – this is in the form of a Parent Contract agreed by all parties to bring improvement in attendance and to avoid prosecution.
 - Chronic illness/special circumstances letter recognises that there are exceptional circumstances for a child’s poor attendance whilst informing parents of their child’s percentage attendance it also offers support and a link with the Learning Mentor.

Support for families to improve attendance

- All communication sent home will have a solution focussed “Top Tip” included
- All attendance letters and information sent home will be on postcards and focus on key messages
- Attendance figures sent out each half term will be clear and simple to read
- Failure to improve attendance will lead to an invite to Parent Workshops

Stage 1	
Lates Postcard invite sent to meeting Establish difficulties Offer Courthouse Green alarm clock Postcard sent to celebrate change once improved	Low Attendance Postcard invite sent to meeting Establish difficulties “Staying Healthy” pack Postcard sent to celebrate change once improved
Stage 2	
Lates Postcard invite sent to meeting U Code Letter Improving Attendance/Lates parent workshop Postcard sent to celebrate change once improved	Low Attendance Postcard invite sent to meeting Medical Evidence letter Improving Attendance/Lates parent workshop Postcard sent to celebrate change once improved
Stage 3	
<u>Lates</u> Postcard invite sent to meeting Routine tick chart for home Individual sticker chart in school Attendance session with child Postcard sent celebrate change once improved	Postcard invite sent to meeting Individual Attendance Chart School Nurse Referral In school “Attendance Buddy” Postcard sent to celebrate change once improved

Children educated off site

When children are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school, they will be given code B, as we are certifying that the education is supervised and appropriate, the alternative provider notifies us of the child’s non-attendance and our procedures are then followed.

Term Time Leave of Absence

We aim to work with parents to ensure that all parents understand the importance of uninterrupted education. A leave of absence request during term time will only be authorised if deemed to be in exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher. Amendments to The Education (Pupil registration) (England) 2006 regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We do not believe holidays during term constitute as exceptional circumstance.

Parents are required to complete a form notifying the reason for the absence from school and the dates, including the expected date of return. The Headteacher will consider all requests on an individual basis. If a child has more than 10 days absence from school, any further unreasonable absences will be recorded as unauthorised. All absences authorised and unauthorised will go on a child's record. Long term absences due to visits overseas will require a letter to the Chair of Governors as well as a completed Leave of Absence Form. All absence due to holiday will incur a fine per pupil once the absence is over 5 days.

Safeguarding Procedures and Attendance

Courthouse Green sets high expectations for attendance at school. As a result of this, we monitor carefully any period of absence and visit the family home of any child whose parent or carer has not contacted the school to explain the absence. After three days absence we will visit the family home regardless of contact made. If we are unable to locate a child, we will contact the police to complete safe and well checks. We will undertake every reasonable task to find a child and support them back into school, including - using all contact details supplied to us by parents and carers, asking friends and their parents for information and asking neighbours or siblings/relatives' schools or workplaces for further information. Should we have further concerns, and a child is absent for 20 days, we will complete the CME documentation as set out in DfE guidance - Children Missing Education 2016 DfE

Where we have concerns that children and their families have moved out of the area, or are unable to attend school for reasons that cause concern – fleeing DV; FGM; criminal behaviour; substance misuse; poor mental health etc, then we will refer to MASH as appropriate. Staff are fully aware of all concerns that may lead to absences from school and receive regular updates on the various issues during staff training. These additional measures were added to our policies following a serious case review in 2019.

Children missing in education

Where the parent of a child notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address and will move to a new school, we will record in the admission register the new address, and the date from when it is expected the child will attend this new school. The child will only be removed from register once the new school has confirmed their attendance. If we receive no such confirmation, we will continue to complete safe and well checks and will inform the local authority that the child is missing.

Home Educated Children

On receipt of written notification to home educate, we will inform the local authority that the child is to be deleted from the admission register.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed penalty notices will be applied for in the following circumstances –

- A child has a period of ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a 25-day period (5 school weeks)
- If a parent takes a child out of school for a holiday that will incur 5 days absence from school
- If a pupil has not returned to school after a school holiday within 5 days

Remember – lateness after 9.15 a.m. will incur an unauthorised absence mark in the register and therefore count towards any fixed penalty application. The current fine for fixed penalty notices is £60 per parent, per child. Non payment of this amount within 21 days will lead to the fine doubling in amount. Non payment at this point will lead to prosecution.

Partnerships

Our school values working in partnership with parents/carers and with the wider school community and sees this as an essential part of promoting good attendance. Partnership working will be promoted through discussion

with the parents/carers, working with professionals e.g. Early Help Team, School Nurse etc; liaising with parents and organizing termly attendance awards for classes and individuals with the highest percentage of attendance.

Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

Procedures and strategies used to promote and encourage good attendance in our school will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Pastoral Manager with the support of Learning Mentor, Admin staff and Governors. Actual attendance figures will be reported to the authority through SIMs on a weekly basis and biannually through the PLASC.

Policy details

Date of policy: March 2021

Date of next Review: July 2022