

COLDFAIR GREEN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Adopted: February 2018
Approved by : Governors

Date of Next Review: September 2020

Signed:

(Chair of Governors/Committee)

1. Introduction

This document outlines the policy of Coldfair Green Primary School on attendance and punctuality. It is the aim of the school to work with our pupils, parents, carers, our inclusion team and the Education Welfare Service to ensure that every child achieves the best possible attendance and punctuality at all times throughout the year.

- 1.1 This policy reflects our aims and recognises that regular, punctual attendance has a positive impact on learning, attainment and progress of all learners. High attainment and progress is dependent on good, punctual attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and punctual arrival to school and everybody has an important role to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

2. School's Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations

The objectives of this attendance and punctuality policy are :

- To provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure parents and carers understand their obligations with regards to ensuring attendance and punctuality and the impact of these on the attainment and progress of their children.
- To recognise the external factors which can influence punctual attendance at school and to work with parents and carers to address barriers to attendance and punctuality and to reduce persistent absence.
- To ensure the children understand the importance of being at school on time and ready to learn so that they are able to make the most of all educational opportunities offered to them.
- To make clear the roles and responsibilities of staff, children, outside agencies and parents and carers with regard attendance and punctuality.

This policy is underpinned by the school's expectations:

- It is our aim for all children to achieve 100% attendance at school and to arrive on time and ready to learn.
- For the children to understand the importance of attendance and punctuality and how these will support them in preparing for life after school.
- Attendance monitoring is part of the work of the school and forms part of our self-assessment of how effective the school is.
- Any pupil absence will be clarified on the first day of absence and all absence will be carefully monitored.
- There are clear actions that will be taken to address regular absence and late attendance which falls after the close of the register and is recorded as an unauthorised late attendance.
- 100% attendance will be recognised on a weekly basis through the 'ten ticks for a ticket' raffle rewards system and through the half termly certificates and 'attendance bricks' as part of celebrating 100% attendance. There will also be an annual 100% attendance reward.
- Children are expected to arrive at school before the bell at 8.45am and remain at school for the whole day (except in specific circumstances, such as educational visits or emergency dental or urgent medical appointments. All regular dental and medical appointments should take place outside the school day.)

Processes and Procedures

2.1 Attendance and Punctuality

- i) Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).
- ii) Children will be registered at **8.45 am** and **straight after the lunch break** by each class teacher and a mark will be made in the register for each child.
- iii) The registers will close at **8.55 am** and **10 mins after lunch break ends**. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as an **unauthorised late which counts as an absence**. Pupils arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness).

- iv) On the first day of an absence parents are expected to telephone the school office before 10am to inform them of the reason for the absence. The office staff are unable to grant any absence but will pass messages on to the Headteacher who is able to authorise absence. Where a child is absent for longer than one day a written note explaining the absence is required when the child returns to school. If no explanation for an absence is received **within two weeks** of the absence **it will remain unauthorised**.
- v) Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis by the Headteacher and the Inclusion Team. Class teachers will talk to children about any absence and support them in catching up on work they have missed to ensure they do not lose opportunities to learn and succeed.
- vi) Where children do not achieve **95%** by the end of term an **amber letter** is sent home with an attendance print out expressing concern about attendance and offering an opportunity to meet the Inclusion Lead or Headteacher to discuss barriers to attendance and offer support for raising attendance. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored.
- vii) Where attendance falls beneath 85% by the end of term a red letter will be sent and a discussion will be held with the educational Welfare Officer. A letter may also come home from the Educational Welfare Officer and could lead to an attendance agreement being implemented and 100% attendance being required over a six week period to avoid potential court proceedings. Parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss their child's attendance and any absences may have to be medically authenticated before they are authorised by the school.
- viii) In cases of persistent absence or more than six sessions (three full days) of unauthorised absence or six sessions of unauthorised lateness after the close of the register (or any combination of these) the school will support the Educational Welfare Officer in the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.
- ix) Post-registration truancy
Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Coldfair Green Primary School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately; may call the police and where possible will conduct a search of the local area.

2.2 Authorised Absence

- i) Absence will only be authorised in the following circumstances
 - (a) where leave has been granted by the school **in advance**, for example –
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;
 - (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
 - (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand), the school will ask parents for proof of attendance at medical appointments;
 - (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
 - (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
 - (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;

- (g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.
- ii) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- no explanation has been given by the parent;
 - the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
 - the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
 - the pupil is shopping during school hours;
 - the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
 - the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday

2.3 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

2.4 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. **Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by class, year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE via the Local Authority on a half termly basis.

4. **Term-time Holidays**

Coldfair Green Primary school will not authorise leave of absence for any term-time holiday.

5. **Extended leave of absence**

In considering absence for extended trips overseas the school will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents are encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit may be more difficult where huge distances and high costs are involved (this may be particularly pertinent to minority ethnic group families);
- where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period;
- the pupil's overall attendance record;
- any previous extended holidays.

7. **Parents'/carers' responsibilities**

7.1 The school expects that parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly and are punctual;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

9. **Governors' responsibilities**

9.1 The Governing Body will ensure children are safeguarded and any absence from school is investigated and authenticated to ensure children are able to make the most of all opportunities offered to them by the school.

10. **Conclusion**

10.1 Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the outcomes of *Every Child Matters*:

Be healthy

- attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy

Stay safe

- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly

Enjoy and achieve

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings

Make a positive contribution

- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others

Achieve economic well-being

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy biannually.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CARERS at Coldfair Green Primary School

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **8.45am** and the afternoon register **after the lunch break ends**.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at **8.55am** in the morning and **10 minutes after lunch break ends**.

If your child arrives between **8.55am** and **9.05am** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **9.05am** he/she will be marked as **an unauthorised absence due to lateness**.

If your child arrives within 10 minutes after the lunch break ends he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives later than 10 minutes after the lunch break ends he/she will be marked as **an unauthorised absence due to lateness**.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office with their parent, where they will be signed into the Late Book and a reason for the lateness recorded. If a pupil is late on five or more occasions then a letter will be sent home to you. If lateness continues you will be required to meet with a member of staff to discuss the reasons for the lateness and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed. **Six unauthorised late arrivals will trigger the issue of a fixed penalty notice** due to being counted as unauthorised absences. **We would always rather work with you to avoid getting to this point and there is a range of support we can offer to parents who are struggling to get children to school on time.**

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We expect a parent/carer to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. Reasons for absence that are given over the telephone will be recorded by the Office Administrator. If we have not made contact by telephone we will need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report and the Education Welfare Officer may be informed.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details – an *Absence Request Form* is available for this purpose. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for holidays, day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

6. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you by 10.00am. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If after three days of absence contact has not been made a letter will be sent to the parent/carer. If the school still do not hear from the parent/carer the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. If you are planning to make such a visit you must contact the headteacher to discuss arrangements and complete an Absence Request form. The school is only able to authorise such absence under exceptional circumstances and not more than once in any academic year. The school will set work for your child to complete while they are away. As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

The school will not authorise absence during SATs examinations or phonics weeks (during May and June) and will take account of general school attendance and length of the extended absence before authorisation is given.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher or Mrs Duggan the Inclusion Lead and Family Support Worker immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.