

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY



AT CLAINES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, WE HAVE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO ENSURING CHILDREN FLOURISH AND SUCCEED TOGETHER AS PART OF A STRONG SCHOOL COMMUNITY. DRIVEN BY SOME OF OUR KEY VALUES OF RESPECT AND COMPASSION, WE ARE INCLUSIVE AND COMMITTED TO THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD. WE AIM FOR A SCHOOL WHERE EVERYONE IS TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND VALUED FOR THEIR PLACE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND THE WIDER WORLD. AT THE HEART OF OUR LEARNING, ARE THE VALUES OF PERSEVERANCE AND COURAGE. WE STRIVE FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE GREAT ASPIRATIONS: ENSURING NEW CHALLENGES ARE MET WITH CONFIDENCE AND 'NO ONE SETTLES FOR LESS THAN THEIR BEST'.

WE DO ALL OF THIS WHILST FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHRIST.

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: 11.11.19
Last reviewed on:	30.11.20	
Next review due by:	November 2021	



ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

There is a strong link between good school attendance and the achievement of good results. Pupils who frequently miss school are likely to fall behind in their work which may affect their future prospects. Good attendance also shows future employers that a young person is reliable, more likely to achieve well and play a positive role in their community.

At Claines CE Primary School we aim to ensure that all our pupils take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils. To ensure this, our aims are to:

- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure attendance meets, and aims to exceed, government and local authority targets
- Create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm by all within the school
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality are valued by the school
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school
- Have in place procedures to prevent truancy

Our Expectations

To ensure that pupils are in school for the maximum number of days, our expectations are that parents/carers will:

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, ready to begin learning at 8.55 am
- Inform the school on **every day** of any absence
- Request leave as far in advance as possible, noting that parents are not encouraged to take family holidays in term time. In exceptional circumstances, parents are asked to complete a holiday form requesting permission
- For **religious observance**, a maximum of **three days' absence only** is allowed
- Make applications for leave of any kind in writing on the school's leave of absence form, giving the reason for the request, which will be granted **only in exceptional circumstances**
- Work with the school to improve lateness and attendance
- Avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day
- Inform the school of any changes to their contact details
- Collect their pupils on time

Actions taken by Claines CE Primary School

These procedures are in place and are closely observed. The School will at all times:

- Maintain appropriate attendance data
- Have appropriate registration processes in place
- Follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school **on each day of absence**
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes **authorised** and **unauthorised absences**
- Have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness
- Report to the governors and the local authority on attendance
- Ensure that registers are taken twice each day, at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Promote good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition

Promoting good attendance

At Claines CE Primary School, we celebrate good attendance by:

- Displaying class attendance on the school's website and highlighting it in assemblies
- Recognising the class with the highest attendance in the weekly newsletter and sharing our whole school target
- Awarding 100% attendance certificates for pupils at the end of the academic year

Sickness

Parents/carers must notify the school on **each day of absence**. The Headteacher reserves the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils in the class. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence.

Pupils in Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 **must** be in class by **8.55 am** each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that. Pupils will be marked as late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. The school gates will be secured and locked by 9 am. Pupils who arrive after that time must come into school via the main office, where they will be registered as late. At 9.30 am the registers will be closed.

In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time, he/she will receive a mark that shows her/him to be on site. However, this will not count as being present and will mean that an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Should this problem persist, the parent/carer could face the possibility of a penalty notice.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, he/she will receive an authorised absence if this is supported by documentation, such as an appointment card or similar. Where possible such appointments should be arranged out of school hours or during school holidays.

Early Intervention

The school promotes early intervention to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle lateness:

- A letter will be sent to parents/carers if a child is late for school twice or more in a week
- If the problem persists, the parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher.

Truancy

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant, then the school will immediately inform:

- The parents/carers
- The police

Outcome

All truants will receive:

- Sanctions
- Support
- Discussions with the Education Welfare Officer to understand the seriousness of the matter
- A programme of monitoring and support

Responsibilities of our pupils

- To arrive at school on time
- To know the value of good attendance
- To be aware of the school attendance and truancy policy, knowing the seriousness of truancy and attending classes during the school day

Responsibility of the Headteacher

- To ensure that all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of, and comply with, this policy
- To undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance by using an appropriate and effective registration system
- To monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees
- Target intervention and support to those pupils who have been highlighted as poor attenders
- Have in place a comprehensive system for parents to report a child's absence and remind parents of their commitment to this policy
- Meet with parents if they have applied for holiday leave during term time

- Promote the importance of attendance during assemblies and award certificates for 100% attendance, publicising achievements in newsletters and in the termly report to the governing body
- Organise home tuition with the local support services for pupils with long term illness provided they are well enough to undertake the work
- Strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families

Responsibility of the Governing Body

- Delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy
- Comply with pupil registration regulations
- Ensure that the attendance policy is carried out
- Ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders
- Monitor progress towards these targets
- Be responsible for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy

Raising Awareness of This Policy

The school will raise awareness of this policy via:

- The school website
- The staff handbook
- Meetings with parents, such as introductory, transition, parent/teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- School events
- Meetings with school personnel
- Communications with home, such as newsletters
- Reports, such as annual reports to parents and to the governing body

Staff Training

Induction training covers:

- The importance of good attendance and punctuality
- All aspects of this policy
- The use and understanding of attendance codes
- Authorised and unauthorised attendance
- Looking at trends and patterns
- Bullying
- The needs of vulnerable groups
- Periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- Equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve the understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and the Governing Body annually, or when the need arises.

Following a review, statement of the policy's effectiveness and any necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.

APPENDICES

1. The Law Relating to Attendance

Section 7 of The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the School's Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations came into force on 1 September 2013 and reduced the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions. If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents/carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

2. Authorised Absence & Unauthorised Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the School has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request and when a child is late after the register has closed

Please be aware that when a parent/carer telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and, as a result, the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

Please note that your child will risk being removed from the School Roll for consecutive unauthorised absences of 20 days.

3. Attendance Monitoring

Absences and Lateness are logged by the School. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to your child's educational prospects and we need the parent's/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and the parent/carer will be informed immediately. Pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we combine academic monitoring where absence affects attainment using our PA three tier framework noted below.

Stage 1: If the attendance falls **below 90 %**, the school will formally write to advise the parent/carers;

Stage 2: If the concerns persist and attendance does not improve, the school will write advising the parent that unless attendance improves within two weeks, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO);

Stage 3: If the concerns persist and attendance does not improve, the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues. Should concerns persist, the EWO will agree action and where necessary meet with the parents/carers.

Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action.

****Please note that attendance will still be monitored closely throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, but special consideration will be given to reasons for absence, e.g. self-isolation, clinically vulnerable.***

4. Absences During Term Time (only in exceptional circumstances)

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time'. These may be obtained from the School Office.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. The parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

There are approximately 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. **Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period. There is no automatic entitlement in Law to time off in term time to go on holiday. Unauthorised leave taken in term time may result in the issuing of a fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution.**

5. Work of the Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer will:

- Promote good attendance in schools
- Establish effective working relationships with schools
- Ensure pupils attend school regularly
- Investigate reasons for a pupil's poor attendance
- Provide support for children and their families
- Work with disaffected pupils
- Work with pupils who may be excluded
- Find alternative educational provision for excluded pupils
- Support schools at Single Agency Referral meetings

The Education Welfare Officer supports the School, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that “if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence.”

A Fixed Penalty Notice, **when requested by a Headteacher**, can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

- ***At least 20 sessions (equivalent to 10 school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, in the previous 6 school weeks***
- ***Other than in specific circumstances, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement. Within the 15-day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning***
- ***No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year. Fixed Penalty Notices will be charged at £60 per parent per child***

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- Issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence
- Issue a Penalty Notice without warning

For further information on legal action to enforce School attendance, please refer to: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>.

6. Role of the Local Authority in regard to Attendance

The Local Authority should:

- Provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes
- Analyse attendance patterns in order to improve pupil attendance especially those from vulnerable groups
- Make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve pupil attendance
- Try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools
- Share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good practice in other Local Authorities