



# **Attendance Policy**

**Policy Co-ordinator – Amelia Lomas**

**Approved by Governors**

**Next Review March 2023**

## **Rationale**

Good attendance and punctuality is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills to equip them for life. It is also important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The school aims to ensure good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), local community and the Local Authority can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and punctuality and ensure quick and early intervention and support if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance and good punctuality will be seen as an achievement in their own right and be recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. In the development of this policy, the school has taken account of <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

## **Aims**

- To improve the quality of school life.
- To create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is 'normality'.
- To demonstrate to pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and staff that the school values good attendance and punctuality and to recognise that good regular attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves.
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.

## **Objectives**

- To involve the children more in their school attendance and punctuality.
- To improve communication with parent(s)/carer(s) about regular school attendance and punctuality.
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children's attendance and punctuality.
- To recognise the important role of class teachers and learning mentors in promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure time and organisation within the school to enable the AIMS and OBJECTIVES to be met.

## **Targets**

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance and punctuality information.
- To maximise the percentage of children achieving attendance of 97% or above.
- To reduce absence percentage each year.
- To reduce 'Late' percentage each year.

- To continuously improve school attendance by agreeing new targets.
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the Local Authority.
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school where appropriate in a context of all known relevant factors and record these
- To target resources and implement where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame.
- To keep parent(s)/carer(s), pupils and governors informed of policy and practice.
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some

**The Headteacher will:**

- Monitor the attendance and punctuality throughout the school
- Support and initiate actions and interventions aimed at meeting or improving overall attendance and/or punctuality.
- Raise the level of attendance and punctuality of those children identified as being at risk.
- Be responsible for the welfare of children in school

**The School office will:**

- Support the Headteacher in her responsibility of the welfare of children in school.
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality situations of individual children.

**Governors will:**

- Monitor attendance and action being taken to promote good attendance on behalf of the Governing Body
- Inform Stakeholders

**Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised of our policy on attendance:**

- When their children first start at our school
- Home school agreement
- Through newsletters
- At parent(s)/carer(s) evenings
- On the school website

**Children will be advised of our policy on attendance:**

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum.

**Procedure**

- Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
- It is expected that parent(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation by 9.30 a.m. if their child is absent, on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by telephone or personally at the office or by appointment.
- If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s), then the school will contact the home by telephone on the initial day, following this with a home visit if no contact is made. This visit will be made by a member of the SLT to ensure the child's wellbeing. This contact is recorded in the attendance log and the class register folder.
- The school will keep in regular contact with parents/carers during an absence until their child's return to school. This helps us to work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure a positive return to school can be made at the earliest opportunity.
- The head teacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Class teachers will regularly remind their class of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Each teacher will find relevant ways to promote good attendance in their class.

### **Completing the Register**

- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils is perceived as an opportunity for the school to receive young people formally from home, and serve as an introduction to the session. The register is taken at 9.00am and 1:15pm each day.
- The marking of registers will be given high importance at all times within each classroom.
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.
- Registers are marked electronically on the Schools Information Management System, SIMS.
- If manual registers are required they are to be marked in ink. Any alterations should be visible and explained.
- Correcting fluid products may not be used.
- The register should be marked using the symbols advised by DfE and Cheshire East Council. The agreed symbols can be found in the class register folder.

### **Lateness**

- School begins at 8.50 am and all pupils are expected to be in line for this time. Registration will begin at 9.00 am and 1:15pm and registers close at 9.30 am and 1:30pm. Up until this time pupils are given a late code (L).
- Arrivals after close of register at 9.30 am and 1:30pm are given an unauthorised code (U) = 1 unauthorised session.
- Persistent lateness after close of register may be referred to the Local Authority for possible legal action.

- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.
- When a pupil is late (after 9:00) parents/carers will be required to sign in and give a reason for the lateness. These will be monitored on a half termly basis and discussed by the Head teacher, SLT and school office to see if any support or advice can be offered to families. If a child is late more than 5 times within a term, a letter will be shared (Appendix 2) and where appropriate, a meeting will be arranged to discuss lateness with the Head Teacher or SLT.

## **Absence during term time including holidays**

(Poynton Disley and Adlington Agreement)

In line with Department for Education policy, the school's position is that leave of absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, such as attendance at family weddings (immediate family), funerals, educational examinations or participation in religious observance or sporting events.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave of absence, the school will consider each case individually. The school will not authorise leave of absence during any examination periods.

Where an absence is authorised the appropriate code will be used in the register as follows:

- C: Leave of absence authorised by school
- H: Holiday authorised by the school
- M: Medical or dental appointment
- R: Religious observance
- T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Absence (Occupational purposes)

The school will fully implement amendments in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 from 1st September 2013. The head teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time. (Other exceptional circumstances may apply.)

There is no entitlement to leave during term time for the purpose of a holiday and parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis. Each Head teacher can determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance and authorise leave based on individual cases. Availability of cheap holidays and overlap with the beginning or end of a term will not be accepted as exceptional circumstances.

The school should be notified of all absence during term-time in writing by the parent/carer with whom the child resides. A 'request for leave of absence in term time' form (Appendix 3) should be completed and returned to school at least 2 weeks before the first day of absence. The form can be obtained from the School Office or on the school's website.

A written response from the Head teacher (or the Assistant Head) will be sent advising the parent/carer of the school's decision regarding the holiday request. In this situation, if the holiday goes ahead after the application has been declined the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents should be aware that if your child has 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of absence due to holiday in term time this will be referred to Cheshire East and may result in a school absence penalty notice (fine). Please see the table below.

<b>Penalties for unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>One child</b>	<b>Two children</b>
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds the parents have failed to secure their child's regular attendance	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds the parents have failed to secure their children's regular attendance

### **Absence due to illness**

Parents and carers are expected to provide a full explanation for any absence due to illness or a medical condition on the first day of absence. This is so the school register can be kept accurately. Any absences due to illness will be marked with an I code which is an authorised absence from school.

Where illness or a medical condition is impacting on school attendance, school will write to parent/carers and invite them in for a meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to:

- \*explore ways that absence due to illness can be reduced
- \*discuss any support needs for the child or family and if any other agencies need to be involved to offer help and support.
- \*reassure the school that the reasons for absence are authentic.
- \*agree a plan to reduce the impact of illness on education and school life.

If the school have cause for concern about the veracity of the illness, the school may request that medical evidence such as prescriptions, appointment cards etc will be required for future absence due to illness to be authorised.

## **School Actions Flow Chart for irregular (unauthorised) absence**

Child does not attend school as expected, if no reason to authorise the absence is established, then the child will be coded in the register with an unauthorised mark.

Step 1 - Each day of unauthorised absence - School make a telephone call to parents / carers, exploring barriers to attending and measures to support child back into school if fit and well. Where the child or parent has specific anxieties, this may highlight the need for a further discussion either face to face or remotely. If no contact can be made with the family then a home visit will be completed to ensure the child is safe and well.

Step 2 – Following 4-6 unauthorised absences (O code or U code) – school to invite parents in for a meeting / video meeting and or complete a home visit to discuss attendance, explore barriers and offer support to enable child to attend. School and parents will agree a plan to improve attendance and school will keep a record of the meeting. If mental health is identified as a barrier to attendance, school will consider a conversation with the Together in Education Lead.

Step 3 - At 6-8 unauthorised absences the school send a template letter to each parent / carer to advise that if there are 10 unauthorised absences an Attendance and Children Out of School Team (ACOOS) referral for a 15-day warning period will be made, resulting in penalty notice if there is any further unauthorised absence in the advised time period.

Step 4 - Following a series of 10 unauthorised absences, schools make a Penalty Notice Warning Period request to the Attendance and Children Out of School Team (ACOOS) alongside evidence of the contact made, notes of meeting held and support offered to family to increase attendance.

### **Attendance and Children Out of School Team process:**

The ACOOS team panel will review the request to decide whether a 15-day warning period will be issued. ACOOS panels meet on a weekly basis.

- If the panel feel a warning period is not appropriate and more support is required to the family to support the child into school, this recommendation will be made to the school. Recommendations could include: staff at gates to meet and greet, direct contact from a member of staff that has good relationship with the child, a package put in place to support transition back to school, a conversation with the Together in Education Lead or the school to lead on an Early Help to support the parent and child.
- If decided at the panel that a 15 day warning period is appropriate, parents / carers are issued with letter from the ACOOS team to advise them of the date the 15-day warning period commences and expectations in the period.
- School will be advised of the outcome of the panel by email within 2 working days. If there is unauthorised absence in the 15-day warning period, then the panel will look at the case and agree whether a penalty notice will be issued.

Penalty notice fines are £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days per parent. If the fine is not paid a request is sent to the ACOOS Team Manager, Head of Service and Legal team for authorisation for prosecution.

**Policy Date – March 2022**

**Review Date Annually**

**Ratified by Governors – March 2023**



Appendix 1 – Template Warning letter

**Appendix 1**  
**Template Warning Letter**

*Insert Date*

Dear Parent/ Carer

Attendance

I wanted to write to you to draw your attention to the fact your child has not been attending regularly at school. According to the Attendance Register, X's attendance is currently X% and this is below the school's target attendance of 97% or above.

X currently has xx unauthorised sessions, if this reaches 10 authorised sessions within 2 half terms then I am obliged to report this to the Governing Body and to apply to the Local Authority to issue you with a Penalty Notice warning period. This could result in each parent receiving a £60.00 fine, increasing to £120.00 if not paid within 21 days.

When children miss a day at school it can have a significant effect on their immediate and long term education. Many children find it difficult to catch up on the areas that they have missed. The children may have missed a one off lesson or opportunity that isn't readdressed until sometime in the future.

I must remind you that S.444, Education Act 1996 requires you to make sure that your child comes to school, on time, every time the school is open. I am writing this letter to flag this up and give you an opportunity to avoid Local Authority intervention.

If there are any issues that may be impacting on your child's attendance, please contact me to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

Amelia Lomas

Head Teacher

## Appendix 2

### Punctuality Letter

Dear Parent/Carer

As part of our attendance policy we also monitor punctuality. If a child is 'late' (i.e. arrives at school later than 9 a.m.) on 3 or more occasions within a term, we will inform the parents of this and encourage them to contact us to discuss ways we could work together to resolve this.

Your child has been late on 3 or more occasions in the last term.

As you will appreciate, arriving at school on time is essential to ensure that children do not miss out on the vital input at the start of lessons.

Attached is a breakdown of your child's attendance and punctuality for the X term XXXX.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If I can help in any way please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Yours Sincerely,

Amelia Lomas

### Appendix 3

#### REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

The 2013 regulation amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. The Head teacher and the Governing Body will determine whether the parent's reasons for requesting leave of absence in term time amount to exceptional circumstances.

#### FOR COMPLETION BY PARENT/CARER

You have requested the school's permission for leave of absence to be taken during term time. Before such authorisation is considered please complete the form below and return to the School Office. Completion of the form does not guarantee the leave of absence will be authorised.

Pupil's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

First day of absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Return to school on: \_\_\_\_\_

Please give full reason(s) for asking for leave of absence in term time

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Carer) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

It is important to have read and understood the school's policy on attendance. Parents should be aware that periods of 10 unauthorised sessions for a holiday will be referred to Cheshire East and may result in a ~~school absence~~ school absence penalty notice (fine)

You will get a separate penalty notice for each child who has been absent. The fine is £60 per child for each parent/carer with [parental responsibility](#) if you pay within 21 days from the date of the notice.

#### **For office use only**

G (unauthorised holiday)

H (authorised holiday)

**Signed:**

