



Cam Hopton Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Aided)

Attendance Policy

Life in all its Fullness

Document History

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This policy is to be reviewed annually, and in line with other related policies and any other documentation from the DfE, Ofsted and Gloucestershire Diocese.

Introduction

Regular attendance at school gives children the best possible start in life and preparation for the future. Not only will children learn subjects, but they will also learn new skills, including social skills. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to meet their full potential.

The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly, with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- attainment in school;
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships;
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

- 97+ - an excellent level of attendance, which will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This level of attendance will children with a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic;
- 95%-97% - a good level of attendance, but there is scope to make it better;
- 90-95% - absence might now be affecting attainment and progress at school and is therefore classified as a cause for concern;
- below 90% - absence is unsatisfactory. It may affect attainment and progress and disrupt a child's learning. The school will work with parents to improve attendance.
- below 85% - absence is a serious cause for concern. It is affecting attainment and progress by disrupting learning. The school will work with parents and the Local Authority to improve your child's attendance.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can authorise absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

In Cam Hopton C of E Primary School we aim to have a whole school attendance rate of a minimum of 96%, in line with DfE expectations. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case.

Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply:

- In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance;

- Prior to the engagement of external attendance support services, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for involvement.

Arrival and Registration

All children should be in the school ready to register at 8.45a.m. Children are entitled to enter the school gate from 8.30a.m. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as two attendances. Morning registration ends at 8:50 a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he/she must report to the school office and will be marked as 'Late'. Arrival after 9.10 a.m. is recorded as an unauthorised late mark.

Parental Responsibility

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent/both parents or carer with whom the child resides. Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly, in the school prospectus. Punctuality is essential to ensure that a child arrives at school, is settled and ready to learn. Children who are regularly late impacts on learning, for not only the individual, but also the class as a whole. Attendance, including lateness, may be discussed with parents during consultation evenings.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full time education. The school year includes 38 sessions or 190 days. For Key Stage 1 children, full time means a minimum of 21 taught hours a week. For Key Stage 2 children, full time means a minimum of 23.5 taught hours per week. This is achieved by regular attendance at school.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of absence to inform the school of the reason for absence. When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, and to check on the safety of the child, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence.

In the event of medical appointments:

- every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours;
- an appointment card or verification by the doctors/dentist/ hospital may be required;
- if it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment;
- if your child is absent due to vomiting, they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

School Responsibility – THE LAW and School Attendance

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, and subsequent amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, the governing

body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated, each regulation applies to all schools in England.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 restricts authorised leave of absence to be for families with exceptional circumstances. The decision rests with the school and all applications for absence requests must be made in advance by the parent the pupil normally resides with.

The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2006 require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set overall absence targets. School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006, which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.

The Senior Leadership Team and all staff work together to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning ensures that children are enthusiastic about school resulting in consistent regular attendance. The Headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Attendance Administration staff (Deputy Headteacher and Schools Administrator).

Attendance is recorded; data is stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module. It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class register twice per day at the start of each session.

The Headteacher, not parents, authorises absence; Cam Hopton C of E Primary School adhere to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

- illness;
- religious observance;
- attendance at medical appointments, which cannot be made outside school hours.

The local authority has full responsibility for prosecuting parents where absence continues to be problematic.

Family Holidays/Absence during Term Time

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning; therefore, parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in law, have to apply for permission in advance. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the Governing Body, and in line with the Department of Education's statutory guidance and department advice.

When an application is made for authorised absence during term time the Headteacher will give consideration to the following:

- nature of the proposed absence/is this an exceptional circumstance;
- age of the child;
- timing of the absence;
- attendance pattern in the present and previous academic years (absence will not be authorised where attendance is lower than 95%, or where the absence would take attendance below 95%);
- child's progress.

Examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances:

- To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival.
- If a parent, due to nature of the work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays. This would need to be evidenced by a letter from the employer. Factors indicated above will still be taken in to account.

A week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The date and time of the request will be looked into when considering the exceptional circumstances listed above.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian.

For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only a school can make an absence authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences that have never been properly explained;
- holidays not agreed.

Penalty notices

If a child of compulsory education age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at alternative provision made for them, the parent may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Payment of a Penalty Notice fine

Arrangements for the payment are detailed on the Penalty Notice and are as follows:

- If paid within 21 days, the penalty is £60 per responsible parent, per child
- If paid after 21 days, but within 28 days, the penalty is £120, per responsible parent, per child.

Example:

- In a one child family where both parents have equal responsibility, the Fixed Penalty Notice would be £120 if paid within 21 days and £240 if paid after 21 days.
- In a two child family, where both parents have equal responsibility and both children have been absent from school, the Fixed Penalty Notice would be £240 if paid within 21 days and £480 if paid after 21 days. The LA will not accept payment after 28 days, and will proceed to prosecution. A Penalty Notice can only be issued when an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason, or in one of the following circumstances of unauthorised absence:
 - holiday during term time when the school has not authorised the absence and the child has missed at least 10 sessions within a 10 week period;
 - persistent late arrival at school after the registers have closed, and where the U code is used on the attendance certificate on at least 10 occasions within a 10 week period;
 - in all but exceptional cases, the school will issue a formal warning letter to a parent giving fifteen school days for an improvement to be made, before requesting a Penalty Notice.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice, so these 15 days allow parents time to make representations to the school. If there is further unauthorised absence during the fifteen-day period, the school can request a Penalty Notice be issued by the LA.

The school will follow the necessary guidance for further absences as per 'A guide for schools and other professionals in Gloucestershire' – September 2013.

Incentives and Rewards

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured. Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.

Certificates are awarded at the end of each short term for anyone with 100% attendance. This is celebrated during school Celebration Worship.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be subject to regular review in light of changes made to legislation or the publication of new advice.

Any appeals against this policy can be made through the governor's complaints procedure.

Cam Hopton CE Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This school aims to serve the community by providing high quality education and promoting Christian Values.