



Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy

Rationale:

This policy and its associated paperwork has been developed in line with Surrey's guidance. Claygate Primary School is committed to developing and implementing a consistent and transparent set of standards and approaches which improve and maintain attendance. In support of this policy we work together alongside the LA Inclusion Officer, previously known as Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) attached to our school to help monitor and improve attendance by supporting families who are causing concern.

We are committed to developing and implementing policies and practice which support improved attendance, in partnership with parents/carers, children and governors, with relevant departments within Surrey County Council and with other organisations who have an interest or are affected by school attendance.

CPS firmly believes that all children benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Children will be expected to achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

Expectations:

We expect that all children will:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss with their class teacher or Head Teacher any problems preventing them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any home learning activities they have been given
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- on the first day of absence to contact the school office before 9.30am, giving the reason for absence and an estimation of how long the absence is likely to be.

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children, as required by current legislation
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- encourage good attendance
- provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's concerns
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of children who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- The school's attached Inclusion Officer may follow up concerns about attendance by contacting or visiting parents/carers at home
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached Inclusion Officer
- Fulfil, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

School Attendance and Registration

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.'

School Attendance Departmental Advice for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools And Local Authorities October 2014

Requests for leave of absence during term time:

The Governing Body's view is that absence during term time is disruptive and detrimental to children's education. We have a responsibility to ensure that the children's education comes first. The Education Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence, unless the absence is considered to be for **exceptional circumstances**.

If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an **Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances Form** must, if possible, be completed at least one month prior to the leave date. This can be obtained from the School Office. The Head Teacher, who may consult with the Chair of Governors, will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence request. Each request will be considered separately based on the reasons for each request. Please note: Although good prior attendance / academic ability are not factors, low attendance or previous term time absence may be.

The October 2014 National Association of Head Teacher's (NAHT) guidance defines exceptional circumstances as: rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 'Unavoidable' means an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence. Absence during term time for holidays is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right. Authorisation **cannot** be given retrospectively.

Auditions may be granted up to a maximum of 8 sessions per academic year. If successful, the school will follow Surrey's guidance on 'children and young people in employment or entertainment'. The same applies to sporting competitions.*

Music and entrance exams may also be granted for the session of the exam itself.

Family holidays: The school holiday dates are published a year in advance by Surrey and are available from the school office and on the school's website. We expect that parents/carers will book their family holidays within the school holiday dates. The school will not authorise any family holidays, but parents still have a duty of care to ensure the school is fully informed if they intend to take their children out of school without authorisation.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day:

Whenever possible, medical and other appointments should be arranged outside of school time. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment will be requested. Only the time for the actual appointment will be authorised.

- children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school,
- parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time
- where a child is being collected from the school, parents must report to the school office before the child is allowed to leave the site. Parents must sign a child out on leaving the school and sign them back in on their return. *
- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or

returned to school. Evidence of the appointment will be requested. Only the time for the actual appointment will be authorised.

Penalty Notices:

In line with the guidance from the DfE, The Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when children are taken out of school for 7 sessions ie or 5 or more days leave of absence without school authorisation within a 6 week period.

Where a child takes 'leave of absence' without exceptional circumstances each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child (currently £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 21 – 28 days). If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days the Local Authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance. **This money goes directly to Surrey County Council and does not benefit the school in any way.**

In addition to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised leave of absence, Penalty Notices may also be issued when a child is stopped by Truancy Patrol or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance. Schools are required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the DfE and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

Encouraging Attendance:

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to children at all times. Parents/carers should also need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Claygate Primary School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child or parent's concerns about the school or other children
- by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration (see Lateness)
- by publishing attendance statistics
- by celebrating good attendance
- the Head Teacher / DHT / Inclusion Lead monitor children's attendance with the school office staff and the attached Inclusion Officer
- by informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness
- by if necessary arranging meetings with parents/carers
- by referring the families to the attached Inclusion Officer if the irregular attendance continues

Responding to Non-Attendance:

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- on the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.30am, the school will endeavour to contact them that day by phone
- if there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and a home visit may be made by the Head Teacher,
- if, by the end of the second day there has still been no contact made, a home visit may be made by the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss this
- a concern form regarding safeguarding may be completed if no contact can be made and social services may be contacted
- parents will be informed that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the attached Inclusion Officer
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Officer may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

Punctuality /Lateness:

- Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school on time.
- *Children arrive at 8.45am and registration takes place between 8.55am and 9.00am. Children who arrive after the register has closed at 9.00am will be recorded as late to school. After 9.30am lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure they attend school and on time.
- Persistent lateness will be addressed by notifying parents by letter in the first instance, and may be referred to the Inclusion Officer and can be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority.

Changing School:

It is important that if families decide to send the child in their care to a different school that they inform School Office staff as soon possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received,

- the dates the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- the address of the new school
- the new home address, if it is known

School staff will then confirm with the parents the leaving date for their child. Following this date the pupil's school records will be sent to the new school as soon as possible and within ten days of the child leaving.

The Local Authority will also be sent appropriate information within ten days of anyone leaving or joining the school. If no notification is received from a new school then the child's name will not be removed from the school roll until after an investigation by Inclusion.

The Head Teacher, Governors and the School Attendance Lead:

The School will:

- adopt the whole policy
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently in line with current legislation and that appropriate resources are provided
- ensure that all absences are coded correctly in line with DFE guidance
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence
- initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of unexplained absence and lateness before referring to the Inclusion Officer as appropriate
- ensure that key office staff have dedicated and protected time for liaison and follow up work with the attached Inclusion Officer
- consult and liaise closely with the attached Inclusion Officer on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate children are identified and referred without delay
- to work in close collaboration with the attached Inclusion Officer during their termly/half termly register analysis ensuring agreed action is carried out
- organise attendance assemblies, awards and other incentives for good attendance
- to set whole school attendance targets and to publish attendance data in the Head Teacher's Report to Governors
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the attached Inclusion Officer

Office Attendance Officer:

- oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- consult and liaise closely with the attached Inclusion Officer regularly to share any concerns expressed about attendance or disaffection that might lead to non-attendance with the Head Teacher
- manage the school's scheme for contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence

- as instructed by the Head Teacher, initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of unexplained absence and lateness before referring to the attached Inclusion Officer
- record details of consultation, liaison and monitoring with the attached Inclusion Officer, analysis of registers etc.
- follow up any unexplained non-attendance or lateness with the Head Teacher
- record all reasons for absences and lateness in the register*

Class Teachers:

- complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily
- inform the Head Teacher of concerns
- ensure children receive rewards as appropriate

Review of Policy:

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

This policy also links to our policies on:

Safeguarding
Teaching and Learning
PSHE

Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances

Background

Schools are required to provide education for 190 days a year and it is expected that children who are registered at a school will attend for this time. Parents do not have an automatic right for their children to have time off school and any requests for absence are entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

Research shows that children do not achieve as well in their education and in public examinations the more school absence they have, for example a child absent from school for a period of two weeks each year, for exceptional circumstances and with the average absence for illness may miss the equivalent of one whole year's education over their school life.

General Principles

The following general principles underpin this policy:

The principles of honesty, openness, transparency and the spirit of co-operation underpin the policy.

Where a request for absence form is not submitted, absences cannot be authorised retrospectively; this is prescribed in law and in these circumstances the penalty notice code of conduct must be followed.

Data from each individual school in relation to requests for absence will be monitored by the local authority.

This policy annually or in line with any legislative changes.

In order for consideration to be given, requests for absence must be for **exceptional circumstances** only.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. The death or terminal illness of a close family member.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a close family member.
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Head teacher agrees to consult with the Inclusion officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Head Teacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- 2) Year 6 transition day (for pupils in year six).
- 3) Year 6 SATs week (for pupils in year six).

Looked After Children

This policy applies to all children, including those who are Looked After Children.

The Head teacher will only approve an absence for a Looked After Child in accordance with Children, Family & Adult Services guidance. The only person who can request an absence for a Looked After Child is the area manager. Requests from foster carers and social workers should not be considered.