

ATTENDANCE POLICY

CARDINHAM SCHOOL



Grow your mind; aim high

Author :	Cardinham School
Authorised by	Governors
Authorised date :	23/05/22

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The governor responsible for safeguarding will liaise regularly with the Headteacher to this end.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Liaise with the EWO on issues of persistent absences

3.3 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance twice daily, in accordance with 4.1, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.4 School office staff

School office staff are expected to:

- Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system
- Contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason
- Make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports where necessary

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once at the start of the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register are automatically tracked by the MIS in use and include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55 on each school day at the main school 9:00 at Woodside.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55 and will be kept open until 9:10 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:05.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:55 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents / carers are able to notify the school by way of email or Class Dojo message to the class teacher, Headteacher, or office staff, or by telephoning the school and using the automated system.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents / carers should collect an absence request form from the school office, or request one via telephone or email and return this to the school at their earliest convenience.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school uses the MIS on a fortnightly basis in order to identify ongoing punctuality issues. In the first instance, the Headteacher will have a supportive and informal discussion with the pupil's parent/carer in order to ascertain reasons for regular lateness, and support the family to resolve the issue. If issues of punctuality persist after this, see section 5.2 as to how the school will proceed.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephone, by 10am each morning.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school reports to parents on their child's attendance record annually in the written end of-year report, unless a child's attendance gives the school cause for concern. If a child's absence does give cause for concern, the procedures in the following sections will be followed.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is 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.
- 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.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Study leave
- Flexi-schooling requests must be presented in writing to governors

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Attendance is monitored by the Headteacher and governors as outlined in section 3. All absence is recorded accurately and followed up as outlined in the procedures in section 3 and 4.

When a pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (i.e. their attendance drops below 90%), a letter (See Appendix 2) will be sent to parents informing them of the matter and outlining the importance of good attendance.

The following process will be put into action if a) a pupil's attendance is below 85% b) a pupil has been identified as a 'persistent absentee' and their attendance hasn't improved after two monitoring cycles.

- 1) The Headteacher will make contact with parents for a supportive meeting to discuss any difficulties that may be causing the absence. A plan will be agreed between the school and parents / guardians. The conversation will be followed up via email and recorded on CPOMS. This plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Headteacher and family regularly in order to improve attendance.
- 2) In the event that attendance doesn't improve, a further conversation will be had with the family to ascertain whether there continues to be mitigating factors. At this point, the Headteacher will send a further attendance letter to parents (see Appendix 3).
- 3) If after a further round of attendance monitoring, there hasn't been an improvement in attendance figures. The Headteacher will consult with the EWO to discuss how best to proceed. At this point, a further plan will be devised, put into place and monitored. Eventually, if deemed appropriate, a final letter warning parents of a penalty notice may be sent to parents (see Appendix 4).

5.3 Reducing unauthorised absence

All unplanned, unauthorised absences will be followed up with a telephone call by the Headteacher, who will reiterate the import of regular attendance. Continued unauthorised absences will be dealt with as above in section 5.2. Legal sanctions remain open to the school, as outlined below in section 5.3 and will be considered on a case by case basis, where plans to improve attendance have failed.

5.4 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The following reminder is provided on letters to parents when chasing up attendance.

“If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates’ Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.”

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Headteacher monitors pupil absence on a fortnightly basis, and follows up on unauthorised absences as they happen.

A pupil’s parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil’s absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Attendance data is collected by teachers on a daily basis as outlined in section 3.4 and stored in SIMs on an external server based in TPAT buildings. This is monitored daily by the school office as in section 3.5 to ensure accuracy and completeness. This data may be used for internal purposes, for example to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support
- Fulfil the school's legal requirements for reporting to the Trust and the DfE

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Safeguarding Covid Annex
- Behaviour policy
- Remote learning provision
- Outbreak management plan

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend or absence related to Covid-19
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
RE: ATTENDANCE – INITIAL LETTER

Mr & Mrs
House
Street
Town
Postcode
Date

Dear

I am writing to you regarding.....attendance. You will know that good attendance is crucial for success in school and for your child to achieve their potential. National average attendance is 95% and we expect all students to aim to be above this and achieve good attendance of 96% or higher.

Currently, attendance is and, so far this academic year, falls into the 'persistent absence' category. The 'odd day off' may seem harmless but it creates gaps in learning which are difficult for pupils to catch up on and it disrupts friendships and social groups.

The school has a statutory duty to support every child's attendance and achievement. We very much value your support and have researched how parents can help improve attendance.

- If your child is 'off colour' in the morning without clear symptoms of illness, please encourage them to attend school. Frequently they will feel better when they 'get going' and if they do not, our staff will contact you to arrange for them to return home.
- Be clear with your child that they must attend school whenever possible and make sure they understand the link between high attendance, educational achievement and future success.
- Book routine medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Do not allow your child to take occasional 'days off' and only allow them to stay at home if they are so unwell that they cannot reasonably attend school.

We very much appreciate your support in ensuring your child's attendance improves. If you would like to discuss your child's attendance, or if you would like further advice, please contact your child's class teacher to arrange a convenient time.

Best wishes,

Headteacher

Appendix 3

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
RE: ATTENDANCE – FOLLOW UP LETTER

Mr & Mrs
House
Street
Town
Postcode
Date

Dear

I am writing this follow up letter to inform you that we have not seen **an improvement/enough of an improvement in**’s attendance. They continue to be classed as a persistent absentee as there attendance is....

The table below shows the impact of time missed over the course of a child’s education.

If your child misses...	The equals...	Which is....	And over 13 years of education that’s....
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 school years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 school years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 school years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 school years

The ‘odd day off’ may seem harmless but it creates gaps in learning which are difficult for pupils to catch up on and it disrupts friendships and social groups.

The school has a statutory duty to support every child’s attendance and achievement. We very much value your support and have researched how parents can help improve attendance.

- If your child is ‘off colour’ in the morning without clear symptoms of illness, please encourage them to attend school. Frequently they will feel better when they ‘get going’ and if they do not, our staff will contact you to arrange for them to return home.
- Be clear with your child that they must attend school whenever possible and make sure they understand the link between high attendance, educational achievement and future success.
- Book routine medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Do not allow your child to take occasional ‘days off’ and only allow them to stay at home if they are so unwell that they cannot reasonably attend school.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates’ Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

We will continue to monitor attendance and should make you aware that our Education Welfare Officer may be informed and may contact you if attendance does not improve.

If you would like advice with regard to any issues surrounding your child's school attendance, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or your child's class teacher for further information.

Best wishes,

Headteacher

Appendix 4

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
RE: PENALTY NOTICE WARNING LETTER

Mr & Mrs
House
Street
Town
Postcode
Date

Dear

I am writing regarding the attendance of

Our School is committed to maximising the educational progress of all our students and we work, in partnership with parents to ensure this can be achieved. Your child's attendance is a cause for concern.

Should your child's attendance continue to not improve, we may refer the matter to Cornwall Council who may decide to take legal action against you.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

I would like to offer you the opportunity to contact myself for advice or support in helping your child attend more regularly.

We hope that further action with regards to your child's attendance can be avoided by us working together.

Best wishes,

Headteacher