



Calow Church of England (V.C.) Primary School

Pupils' Attendance Policy

Introduction

Calow Church of England Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her potential.

The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels happy, safe and secure.

Regular attendance in school has a direct and positive impact upon pupil attainment.

Aims

- To encourage parents to ensure their children are at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- To work in partnership with parents to establish good attendance patterns.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To promote effective partnerships with the Educational Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
- To improve rates of attendance for all pupils in school, thereby attaining and exceeding national expectations for attendance.

Implementation of Practice

Children should be at School, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like genuine illness, hospital appointments or other unavoidable causes. Application by parents for a child's leave of absence from school for **exceptional circumstances** must be made in writing by completing a form available from the school office.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given.

Unless the reason for absence has been communicated in advance, parents/carers are expected to contact the school by telephone or in person on the morning of the first day of absence and every subsequent day of absence to explain why their child is not in school. In the event that a child is absent and the school has received no notification from parents/carers, school office staff will try to make contact and find out the reason. If it is not possible to make contact, depending on the circumstances, unexplained absence may trigger a child protection concern and the school may make a referral to Children's Services.

We review individual pupil and whole-school attendance regularly, and include absence data in the pupils' annual school reports. The Headteacher reports attendance three times a year to the Full Governing Board.

School Sessions

The school sessions are from 8.55 a.m. to 12 noon (Key Stage One) 12.15 p.m. (Key Stage Two) and from 1.00 p.m. to 3.05 p.m.

Registration opens at 8.55 a.m. and closes at 9.25 a.m. Any pupil arriving after 8:55am but before registration closes is marked as "late before registration closed"; if arrival is after 9.25 a.m. the pupil is marked as "late after registration closed" (which counts in attendance data as a session missed).

Problems regarding pupils' attendance

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are hopefully resolved between school, parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Education Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use warning letters, further monitoring for fifteen days, followed by fixed penalty notices if an improvement is not seen.

Derbyshire County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/guardian for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice per parent is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/guardian for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996. Parents/Carers may be prosecuted for further periods of non-attendance not covered by Penalty Notices.

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/guardian who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We as a school monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached Persistent Absenteeism or is at risk of moving towards that, is given priority and we will seek to take action immediately.

Term-time absence

Term-time absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. This has been the law since 2013, when the entitlement to 10 days of term-time holiday was also removed from legislation. It remains the school's position that term times are for education, and holidays will not be authorised. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays, and dates are published well in advance. Exceptional circumstances are generally considered to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short, e.g. the funeral or wedding of a close family member. Parents/carers are invited to fill in a request form if they think their circumstances might meet the criteria, and all requests

will be seriously considered on their own merit, but holidays of any sort are very unlikely to qualify. The school will forward details of any unauthorised absences to Derbyshire County Council, who may make the decision to issue a fixed penalty notice or take other action.

Children Missing Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Headteacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the local authority Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Working together to improve pupil attendance

Roles and responsibilities of the Pupils:

- To attend school every day, arriving on time and ready for learning.

Roles and responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.
- If their child is genuinely unable to attend school, parents/Carers are expected to contact school at the start of each day of absence to provide a reason for absence.
- Parents/Carers are requested to make **routine medical or dental appointments outside school hours**.
- Parents/Carers are discouraged from taking holidays during term-time.

Roles and responsibilities of Staff

- To ensure the register is maintained accurately at the commencement of each school session.
- To report any notable and concerning patterns of absence to the Headteacher.
- To investigate any unexplained absence and follow child protection procedures where appropriate.

Roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher

- The Headteacher is responsible for managing pupil attendance within school.
- The Headteacher includes class attendance percentages in weekly celebration assemblies, and the winning class receives "Attendance Alfie" – a bear celebrating good attendance – for the week.
- The Headteacher rewards 100% attendance at the end of each long term, and at the end of the year.
- Each year a target group of pupils, whose attendance the previous year is below 90%, is formed. Letters are sent to parents/Carers outlining the concern of the Headteacher regarding attendance. The rate of attendance for this target group of pupils is monitored each month and reports discussed with the school's Education Welfare Officer.
- Each term, the Headteacher reviews the registers and identifies any patterns of attendance that are of concern. Parents/carers may be contacted and, where necessary, visits are made to the family home by the Education Welfare Officer. In some instances, parents may be invited to participate in a review meeting of their child's attendance.
- Regular reports on school attendance are provided for the consideration of the Governing Body – at least three times per year.

Roles and responsibilities of Governing Body

- Attendance has always been a matter of concern to our Governors. The Governing Body ratifies policies and is required by legislation to see that our registers are kept accurately.

- Governors have an invaluable role to play in establishing the importance of school attendance matters and in supporting measures taken to improve attendance.
- The Governing Body sets attendance targets for rates of absence each year and reviews progress towards these targets annually.
- Governors scrutinise the Headteacher's report on school attendance.

Success Criteria

We will know if this policy is being implemented when:

- a greater number of pupils are awarded 100% attendance certificates.
- a smaller number of pupils comprise the target group of below 90% each year.
- rates of pupils attendance increases closer to the national average.
- Targets set for attendance are met.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

School staff will monitor each individual's attendance daily. The monitoring of patterns and rates of attendance takes place at the end of each term, as detailed above. The monitoring of the effectiveness of this policy is undertaken annually by the Headteacher.

Policy Reviewed:
September 2015
June 2019