



‘Within a caring Christian community we enable every child to flourish and inspire a love of learning in all members of our community’

## **Attendance Policy**

### **School Attendance - the Statutory Framework**

#### **Education Act 1944**

This establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

#### **Pupil’s Registration Regulations 1986**

This establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

#### **Education Act 1996**

This places a legal obligation on the Local Authority to provide education suitable to a child’s age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have and also Section 4 444 states that “The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law”.

**From 1st September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended.** The amendments remove all reference to the statutory threshold that a Head teacher may grant up to 10 school days leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term time. The amendments make it clear that **Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

- Should the Head teacher feel that exceptional circumstances are clear in the application for holiday leave then it is up to Head teachers to determine the length of any leave granted.
- The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that unauthorised absence is investigated and where deemed necessary and appropriate that compulsory school attendance is enforced via the prosecution of the responsible parent. However to be effective in raising, promoting and sustaining good levels of attendance it is not just the Local Authorities enforcement role that is important; schools have a crucial role in supporting, encouraging and informing parents and pupils of expected attendance levels and school policy and action where attendance is a concern.
- In supporting schools to reduce holiday absence the Local Authority has provision to receive referrals from schools to issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised holiday leave during term time. (please refer to Wiltshire Council’s “Penalty Notices - information for parents” leaflet – copy available from school or on the website)

‘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’.

### Aims

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure all children to benefit equally through the values and ethos of our caring, Christian community
- To ensure all children benefit equally from our rich curriculum
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all members of our school community receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

It is important to demonstrate the importance and value of education by ensuring children attend school whenever possible. Children who are away for part of the learning can often find it difficult to catch up as they have gaps in their knowledge and are behind the rest of the class in the learning journey. This can then lead to children not achieving their full potential. When children are not in school they can also miss whole-class or even whole-school experiences. These are very valuable opportunities for classes to bond through shared experiences, developing children's sense of identity and being part of our school community.

### Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence. For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance. We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. All other absences are unauthorised

### Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Unapproved Holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with the school policy following guidance from the Education Act 1996 and as agreed by the governors. The Education Welfare

Officer may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

### **Punctuality**

- The whistle is blown at 9:00 and morning registration is between 9:05 – 9:10am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom, so you need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by between 8:50 and 9:00.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.

### **Leavers**

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving.
- Take our school's compliments slip so the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred
- Let us know when you move.

### **Children Missing Education**

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and we cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

### **Child Protection Statement**

At Coombe Bissett CEVA Primary School, we believe that every child has the right to be safe and therefore to be cared for in a way that ensures her/his safety and meets her/his individual needs. We recognise that all children need protection at all times from anything or anyone that may cause them harm and work together following the Child Protection Policy to ensure this. We respect all members of the school's community and treat information with confidentiality.

### **School's Responsibilities**

The Headteacher and Governors carry the responsibility for improving and maintaining good attendance as well as maintaining the attendance profile.

- The Headteacher will work, when necessary, in close association with the Educational Welfare Officer on any issues related to poor or unauthorised attendance.
- The class teachers are responsible for maintaining accurate registers and adhering to all agreed registration procedures.
- The school Admin Officer is responsible for adhering to all agreed registration procedures and providing the Headteacher with attendance data.
- The Headteacher will work with the Admin Officer to ensure absence figures are returned to the DfE annually.

### **Parents' Responsibilities**

Parents are asked to:

- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn' (i.e. not too tired or too hungry).

- Work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's education.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance.
- Avoid unauthorised absences by only taking holidays out of term time.

### **Procedures – School**

- Children self-register themselves when they first arrive at school (this is in the playground or classroom depending on the weather).
- Registers, after they have been checked by the school office, are kept in classrooms.
- Attendance registers are to be taken twice a day by the class teacher. Registration times are: 9.00am – 9.05am and, 1.00pm – 1.05pm.
- An early drop-off system exists to help working parents and children can arrive in school from 8.30am; they sign themselves in as soon as they arrive.
- The correct registration codes must be used. A current checklist of codes and explanations are to be found at the front of each class register.
- Where pupils miss registration altogether and parents fail to provide an adequate explanation, they should be marked as an unauthorised absence even though they may arrive later.
- Excluded pupils – where a pupil has been temporarily excluded, he or she should remain on the school role. As the absence results from specific action by the Headteacher, it should be treated as authorised.
- Registers may remain open for a maximum of twenty minutes. If a child arrives within this time they are marked as late.
- As soon as the morning register has been closed, it must be sent to the School admin officer who will respond immediately to any unexplained absences.
- As soon as the School admin officer receives the morning attendance registers, it is her duty to contact the parents or guardians of any pupils who are absent without authorisation in the interest of Child Protection. This action must be taken within the first hour of the school day.
- Registers are then returned to the classroom.
- The Headteacher must be advised immediately of any concerns linked to unexplained absences.
- Upon completion of the afternoon register, any unexplained absences must be reported immediately to the Headteacher or her representative in her absence. If a child should be found to be absent without any authorisation, an immediate search of the buildings and grounds must be made. If the child is still missing, the police and parents are to be called without fail.
- It is the duty of the staff to alert the Headteacher to any concerns they might have with regard to pupil lateness or absence. The Headteacher will review the circumstances and, if appropriate, contact the Educational Welfare Officer.
- The Headteacher alone may grant all forms of permission for absence from school. Any parents who approach class teachers with regard to such issues must always be redirected to the Headteacher who will decide accordingly whether or not to give authorisation.
- All forms of absences are to be recorded daily by the admin officer stating clearly the date, name of pupil and reason for absence.
- The school is not obliged to accept explanations where there is reason to doubt their validity. Where explanations have given cause for concern, a note should be retained in the child's record file.
- The Headteacher will regularly monitor the attendance registers and procedures to ensure that all systems are working smoothly and correctly. This is in addition to the statutory checks made by the Educational Welfare Officer.

- During a fire drill or actual fire, the Class Teacher will take the register outside to the emergency registration zone. The Admin Officer will take signing in and out books.
- The class teachers will monitor registers to see if there are any emerging patterns of lateness or absence and, in the first instance mention this to parents and report it to the Headteacher who may then write to parents if there is no improvement.

### **Procedures – Parents**

- Should a child be ill and is unable to attend school, parents are asked to contact the school before 9.00am or as soon as possible thereafter. The school needs to be kept regularly informed of how long the absence is likely to last.
- Parents are asked to arrange as many medical appointments as possible to be outside school hours but we recognise that this is not always possible. In such instances, a note should be sent in advance of the appointment to the school office.
- Parents are asked to keep us regularly informed of any circumstances which may possibly be affecting their child’s attendance.
- Signing in/out – parents are asked to sign their children in to school if they are late or upon return from an appointment. Similarly, pupils need to be signed out by parents via the school office if they are taken out for an appointment.

### **Strategies for assuring good attendance**

To improve and maintain pupil attendance, we will:

- Raise understanding and awareness of our attendance policy.
- Display sensitivity to the needs of individual pupils.
- Congratulate pupils for their punctuality.
- Regularly monitor our attendance figures and respond swiftly to any areas of concern.

Attendance is monitored termly by the Headteacher and an attendance summary is printed for all children. If a child’s attendance is of concern (i.e. below 90%) a letter informing parents of the importance of good attendance is issued. For children with persistent absence (i.e. whose attendance falls below 85%). The Headteacher discusses this with parents if appropriate (i.e. if persistent absence has not been caused by long-term illness) in order to improve the child’s attendance, and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed in cases of continuing low attendance. Attendance is also monitored termly for vulnerable groups of students (EAL, FSM, SEN, Disabilities). A record of each child’s attendance is included in their Annual Report in term 4.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The governing body are informed of absence figures termly in the Headteacher’s report, enabling effective monitoring of attendance and evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy.

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