

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Clanfield CE Primary is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to grow, learn and flourish and culture where learning and school is valued. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Legal Responsibility

- Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually
- The Local Authority has a legal duty to ensure parents and carers carry out this responsibility
- The school has a legal duty to respond to absence or registered children in compliance with the regulations

There are 175 non-school days each year for family time, holidays and appointments. When attendance drops below 90%, children are spending more time out of school than in school during any one year; this will impact on attainment, progress and social skills.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Home – School Newsletter
- Report to you at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate the importance of attendance and learning in school
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.



Clanfield CE Primary School

Understanding types of absence

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, emergency medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time
- excessive illness without medical evidence
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school

For medical appointments during the school day, notification is required in advance. Appointment cards/letters must be shown to the office. Routine appointments should be made outside of school hours

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved by communicating with the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never 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 usually make things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly to the class teacher
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Clanfield CE Primary School

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an LSA, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete an Early Help Assessment with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family (TAF) to support you with this.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school office on 01367 810257 before 9:00am on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Headteachers if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The County Attendance Team

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at the Local Authority. At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

“If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.”

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. It does not support the culture of learning at our school.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 8.50 **a.m.** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 8.55 **a.m.** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.00 **a.m.** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteachers and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time so that we can support you.

On arrival after the close of register, children must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the child has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

Support Systems

Clanfield CE Primary School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents and carers should make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school also recognises that some children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those children with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee children and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents or carers and children
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors



Clanfield CE Primary School

- Personal Social Health Education (PSHE)
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Late Gate monitoring by staff
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages

It is important to remember that the vast majority of children at Clanfield CE Primary School arrive on time and every day.

Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

- It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
- Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications.
- All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
- The Headteachers will meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
- Exceptional Leave is unlikely to be authorised in Years 2, 6, 9 and 11.
- Exceptional leave is unlikely to be authorised when a student's attendance is less than 95%.
- Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
- Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable e.g. a holiday that happens at the same time every year
- Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, children will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Children withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the child
- Left the school but not known where he or she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child

Clanfield CE Primary School will follow the Local Authorities' Children Missing Education Protocol when a child's whereabouts is unknown.

Targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Home - School Newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Mrs Kim Rogers and Mrs Kate Smith, Head Teachers
Mr Duncan Collett, Governor with responsibility for attendance

Updated: September 2019



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & it's attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Clanfield CE Primary School.

Signed:
Parent / Guardian / Carer

Dated:

Child's Name:

Year.....