



Cradley C of E Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

CRADLEY CE Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

'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.'

DfE November 2016

Principles

At Cradley CE Primary School we believe that attendance and punctuality are vital for a child to maximise both their educational and social potential to the fullest and to create and develop an ongoing feeling of belonging in their class/school community.

In promoting the belief that attendance and punctuality are important values we will be helping to equip our children for life and potentially impacting upon their futures as employees and employers.

We believe that:

- Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher.
- Any and all absence impacts on a child's educational opportunities.
- Persistent and repeated lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school and is categorised and recorded as an unauthorised absence by the Department of Education.
- Persistent and prolonged absence affects access to the curriculum, ultimately impacting on progress.
- Parents/Carers allowing their child's absence from school without authorisation from the Headteacher may be guilty of an offence.
- The most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school.

Guidance from Dudley Education Investigation Service:

Above 97%: Excellent attendance! Less than 6 days absence a year – Less than 30 hours of learning lost These young people will almost certainly get the best levels/grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.
95%: 10 days absence a year – 50 hours of learning lost These pupils are less likely to achieve their target levels/grades and will start to find it difficult to maintain a habit of attending school regularly.
90%: 19 days absence a year – 95 hours of learning lost The Government classes pupils in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work and achieve their target levels/grades. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by Dudley Council, including the issuing of Penalty Notices and Fines.

The Government has stated that once a child's actual attendance falls below 90% they are classed at **Persistently Absent**.

Definitions

Every half- day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

1. Authorised absences.

Any half-day absence from school for which the parent/carer of the child has provided the Headteacher with a reason for that absence, the Headteacher can and is allowed to accept that reason for the purpose of Authorisation and for which the Headteacher agrees that the child should not be in school.

2. Unauthorised absences.

Any and all half-day absences from school where the parent/carer of the child has NOT provided the Head teacher with a reason for that absence, or, that any reason provided cannot be accepted or allowed by the Head teacher for the purposes of Authorisation.

(Late arrival in the classroom for registration, both in the morning and afternoon, may be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that half-day session)

Note

Absences may be authorised for a medical appointment in school time BUT school may ask parents/carers to ensure their child attends registration, is collected from school and then returned after the appointment in order for the absence to be authorised. The timing of and venue of the appointment will need to be evidenced and discussed with school to agree arrangements.

In the case of an emergency parents/carers should negotiate with the Headteacher on an individual basis. Parents will be advised on the amount of absence that the

Headteacher can agree to authorise in each instance. Any extension to the original agreement may not be authorised.

3. Promoting good attendance

At Cradley CE Primary School we endeavour to praise and celebrate all types of achievement and progress. Attendance is included in this.

We aim to promote good attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Each term we celebrate attendance as a whole school. Children who have achieved 100% attendance for the term will receive a certificate and a badge.
- We have an attendance cup which is awarded half-termly for the best class attendance. This is awarded in our half-termly praise assembly and is also published in our newsletter each half term.
- Children who have had 100% attendance for the Autumn and the Spring term will receive a 'diamond' attendance award and a badge.
- Those children who have attended school for 100% of the year from September to July will be awarded with a certificate and a book voucher.
- We aim to maintain clear communication with pupils and parents about the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Attendance figures are monitored regularly and we will inform parents when their unauthorised absence becomes a concern.
- Attendance figures are also reported to parents in their child's end of year report.
- We work in partnership with the Education Investigation Service (EIS) to communicate to parents their legal obligations and the consequences of condoned absence.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

- To do their best to attend school regularly
- To do their best to arrive at school by 8.55am

Parents/Carer

- To ensure their child attends school every day it is open.
- To ensure that their child is on time for registration every day.
- To notify the school of any reason for absence by 9.15am.
- To be aware that if no notification is received by 9.15am the absence is marked as unauthorised.

- To understand that if they take a leave of absence in term time they may be liable to a Penalty Notice - a fine of up to £120 per parent, per child.
- To provide the school office with up to date contact details and telephone numbers for every parent, carer or person with 'care of' the child at the home address and any person with parental responsibility that may not be at the child's home address.

Teachers

- To mark their register on time and accurately.
- To praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance.
- To monitor pupil absence and inform SLT/deputy when absence is impacting on achievement.

SLT

- To have a named member of SLT responsible for attendance.
- To set clear and challenging attendance targets as part of school self review.
- To utilise the support of available specialists in relation to the attendance issues
- To intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern.
- Write to parents when their child's attendance becomes a concern.
- Invite parents into school to attend an 'attendance clinic' if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Education Investigation Service if necessary

Office

- To monitor late entrants into school and record this accurately on the child's register.
- To forward phone messages to class teachers regarding absences.
- Call parents on the first day of absence if no information has been received by 9.15am
- To produce individual or class summary sheets upon request of the Education Investigation Services (EIS) or SLT.
- To produce half termly attendance figures for monitoring purposes and yearly figures for the end of year reports.

5. Registration Procedure

Registration occurs in the classroom between 8.45am and 8.55am. A child who is in the classroom during this time will be marked as present.

Pupils who arrive in school after 8.55am but before 9.15am will be marked as 'Late'. If your child is late **10 times** school will write to you informing you that we would like you to attend an attendance clinic with a school governor.

7. Attendance and Illness

Unfortunately, children do suffer with illness at times. When this happens, as parents/carers, we also need to make a judgement as to if the illness means that the child is unable to attend school. We know that parents/carers are the best people to make this judgement and to decide if their child should stay at home.

We encourage parents to make this decision knowing that if your child is 'a little under the weather' in the mornings how quickly they can recover later in the day and that if you bring your child to school and advise us of the circumstances we can monitor your child's condition. If a child is sent home from school then this absence will be authorised by the Headteacher, however this authorisation will not automatically continue to the next day

If you feel that your child is unwell and you also feel that your child is not able to attend school that day we expect you to call the school office BEFORE 9.15am and explain the reason for the absence. (You should know that if you do not do this the absence will be recorded as unauthorised)

If the reason you have provided can allow the Head teacher to authorise the absence no further action will be taken.

School allows parents/carers up to a maximum of 7 days or 14 half-day sessions each academic year when the Head teacher can agree to authorise a child's absence as a result of illness as advised by parents/carers.

After your child has reached this level of absence as a result of illness, you may be asked to provide the Head teacher with some further information, detail or evidence (sometimes in writing) that supports the parents view that their child was 'unfit' to attend. This information can then be reviewed to consider if it would allow the Headteacher to continue to authorise the absence.

This does not mean that we do not believe parents when they say their children are unwell but it does provide school with the necessary information and detail which supports the Headteacher's decision to authorise any absence should Governors, the LA and/or OfSTED review or question schools attendance figures.

We would suggest that in the case of a child being prescribed some medicines that this does not automatically mean that the child should be absent from school. The school's medical policy allows us to administer medicines, with written consent, which may result in no or reduced absence

School can work with the School Health Advisor and invite parents/carers to meet and discuss any unresolved issues.

If no further information, detail or evidence is provided by the parents/carers the absence will remain unauthorised.

Long term sickness absence

If a child needs to be hospitalised for 3 days or more we can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that they work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would be recorded as being educated off site and would be equivalent to an attendance at school.

If a child leaves hospital and following this at home for 2 weeks, or more, then we can contact Cherry Tree Pupil Referral Unit and they will support the child at home. This would be recorded as being educated off site and would be equivalent to attendance at school.

8. Attendance Monitoring

All pupil's attendance is monitored and reviewed on a fortnightly basis. Below are some triggers that will require further investigation and communication with parents/carers. Where a child has had poor attendance in previous months/years then they may be monitored and reviewed on a more frequent basis.

After 5 days/10 sessions of absence across a school year

Once a child has had more than 5 days / 10 sessions of absence, parents will receive a letter from the school to advise them of this. Included in this letter will be advice about future attendance triggers.

After 7 days/14 sessions of absence across a school year

Once a child has had more than 7 days / 14 sessions of absence, we will then look at the reasons provided for absence. Every time the child is absent after this, parents will be required to provide further evidence so we can consider whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised (e.g. doctor's note, prescription medicine, extended conversation). The school's medical policy allows us to administer medicines with written consent which may ensure a quicker return to school. If no evidence is available the absence will be unauthorised.

Between 12 and 24 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period (current academic year only)

Once a child has between 12 and 24 session of unauthorised absence, a referral will be made to the EIS where a warning letter will be written and may result in a penalty notice being issued. School will send a letter home and/or make a telephone call to inform parents of this.

After 24 sessions of unauthorised absence across a school year

Once a child has had more than 24 sessions of unauthorised absence, a tier 3/4 referral will be made to the EIS.

9. Leave of Absence

Head teachers are no longer allowed to authorise any absence which is taken for a family holiday. This was a Government decision and not schools. A parent/carer, with whom the child normally resides, CAN request a LEAVE of ABSENCE.

Should a parent/carer, with whom the child normally resides, consider that they have an 'EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE' that might allow the Headteacher to authorise a leave of absence this must be detailed in writing, in advance, to the Head teacher for consideration. If any leave of absence is not authorised but it is still taken then a referral to the EIS may be made and Penalty Notice could be issued. However any unauthorised absence that is 10 sessions (5 days) or more will automatically be referred to the EIS (this is line with guidance from the Dudley Education Investigation Service).

The governing body will review each case on an individual basis to decide whether exceptional circumstances apply. Parents will receive a letter informing them of the outcome.

Exceptional circumstances are not specified in the DfE guidance; however advice from the National Association of Head teachers identifies the following possible exceptional circumstances:

- Absences to visit family members are not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave.
- Consideration of the needs of the families of service personnel, if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities
- Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

Parents/carers should be aware that information in relation to this is detailed in the Behaviour Policy.

10. Removal from school roll

If a child is absent from school for 20 school sessions or more, where no contact with parents can be made, we would work with the Education Investigation Service to find out where your child is. A result of this investigation may be to remove your child from the school roll (Pupil Registration Regulations 2016).

If a parent chooses to remove their child from role for the purpose of Elective Home Education (EHE) then School must inform the EIS.

If a child has not returned to school after a leave of absence this could also result in them being removed from role.

11. Referrals

Referrals will be made using the online referral form through Dudley Education Authority.

This policy may be adapted and changed according to individual cases.

Policy written by Mrs E. Game and the EIS September 2015

Policy reviewed by Mrs E. Game September 2016

Policy reviewed and adapted by Mrs E. Game September 2017

Policy reviewed and updated September 2018