



Attendance Policy

Article 28: (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child.

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Review: December 2017

***Loving Learning,
Striving for Success,
Achieving Everyday***



INTRODUCTION

This Policy has been agreed by the Governors of Colegrave Primary School and represents the School's commitment to striving for 100% attendance by all our children. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Guiding Principles:

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is the legal responsibility of parents / carers to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children.
- All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable. These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

Aims of the Policy:

- To ensure that all children attend as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To perform the school's duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of its ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education (including parents, carers, staff and governors) understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of children who attend Colegrave Primary and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood.
- To work with families to identify reasons for poor attendance and aim to resolve these wherever possible.

Promoting Attendance:

The Governors, Head teacher and all staff will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include:

- home/school agreement
- information boards in the playground to update parent on the schools weekly attendance

- letters, newsletters, child's reports
- parent meetings
- weekly attendance assemblies, led by the head teacher
- rewards and incentives for outstanding attendance (certificates, trophies, prizes, treat days for 100% attendance)

Absence during term-time:

The Head teacher will not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. If a child is taken on holiday during term-time, without obtaining the school's agreement, a Penalty Notice is issued. Parents may also receive a fine if returning from an extended term-time holiday, without school agreement, is delayed. We are unable to accept medical evidence provided from overseas. If a child has been unwell whilst abroad, medical evidence from the child's GP or Hospital in the UK is required upon return to School. A Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 21 days it rises to £120 per parent, per child. If not paid at all, court action may be initiated by the Local Authority.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CARERS

Understanding types of absence coding:

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, GP note, etc. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental emergencies which unavoidably fall in school time. Parents are asked to inform the school office on the first day of the child's absence and each consecutive day of the absence. Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents
- Birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed
- Truancy Reluctant attenders/School refusal:

Parents/carers should do everything possible to encourage their child to attend school on a daily basis. If the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work or

disputes with peers, parents should discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity. The school will do everything possible to resolve the issue.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Registration and punctuality procedures:

Registers are taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day at 8.55am, and once during the afternoon session. The registers will remain open for 20 minutes. Pupils arriving before the end of the registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence.

Only the Head teacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view and evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (Unauthorised absence). Reasons for absence are recorded on the SIMS system. If a pupil is persistently late, parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the reasons for this. A meeting will be held with a member of SLT and the School's Attendance Officer.

First Day Absence Contact:

Parents are expected to notify the school on the first day of the child's absence if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. This may be in the form of a letter, a phone call, or oral explanation to the School Office. Explanations by the child are not accepted. If the school does not receive notification, the parent/carer will receive a telephone call, to ascertain the reason for absence. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived. Class teachers and administration staff will be attentive for patterns of absences e.g. mostly Mondays or Fridays. If such a pattern is spotted, it will be brought to the attention of the Attendance Officer.

Second Day Absence Contact:

If the child remains absent for a second day, without contact from the family, there will be another phone call, to attempt to ascertain a reason for absence.

Continuing Absence Procedures:

In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, the school will decide whether a home visit is needed. Any child who is absent without explanation or has a pattern of erratic attendance, or persistent lateness (under 90%) will be highlighted as a high concern. Parents will be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss the reasons for continued absence. If attendance does not improve, after a period of agreed monitoring, the Safeguarding Officer will visit the home, set targets for improvement, signpost sources of support if needed, and ultimately may recommend court action or a Penalty Notice if there is no improvement.

Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures:

Daily monitoring of the registers takes place to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA). The Attendance Officer is responsible for identification of any emerging concerns, and putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers, but if the pattern continues a referral to an appropriate source may take place. The school will refer to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be a medical one; where there appears to be issues requiring outside intervention to support the family and the child, referral may be made through the Triage System.

If the child is regularly absent, due to illness, medical evidence will be requested to support the absence. This can be a copy of a prescription, doctor's certificate or the label from prescribed medicine.

Poor Attendance /Punctuality:

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

- 1) When a child reaches 12 days of absence within a term, the school will issue a warning letter to the Parent/Carer, informing them that a fine will be given if their child has any more unauthorised absence
- 2) Following the warning letter, if there is another unauthorised absence, the school may ask the Council to issue a Penalty Notice on its behalf. A Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 20 days it rises to £120 per parent, per child. If not paid at all, court action may be initiated.
- 3) If the fine is not paid in the time limits specified by the council, the school may ask the Council to initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines, or even imprisonment.
- 4) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Child Missing in Education procedures:

If, after ten days continuous absence school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, a referral of the child's details to the Local Authority will be made, in order to perform further checks, not available to school. If after 20 days continuous unauthorised absence, their whereabouts cannot be traced, they will be removed from the school roll. Procedures for trying to trace children who cease to attend, without prior notification, are covered in detail in the Safeguarding Policy.

Non-starters:

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family for a ten-day period after their expected arrival, the pupil's details will be referred to the Local Authority CME team for further checks.

Reporting absence:

It is a legal responsibility to include attendance on a child's annual report. This information includes the number of authorised and unauthorised absence out of the maximum number of possible attendance, together with the number of late marks. It is of vital importance that this information is accurate. This is the responsibility of all staff.

Action taken by the Attendance Officer in relation to the absence or punctuality of an individual pupil is recorded and kept on file.

VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Children who have Looked After Child (CLA) status, children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or a Children in Need plan (CIN) will be treated with the highest priority. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home or a home visit. The Designated Lead for Safeguarding will be alerted of every first day absence for these pupils.

Children with Special Educational Needs or disabilities (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible. Children on the "at risk" register may not be taken off roll without permission from Social Services. This is usually communicated to the School Attendance Officer by the Designated Lead for Safeguarding.

LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If any child misses the start of the day, they miss EPIC time (Everyone Positive in Colegrave) and could miss key learning in their first lesson. Pupils arriving late can disrupt lessons, be embarrassed by their lateness and therefore absence may be encouraged.

The school day starts at 8.55am and children are expected to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 9:05am. Any child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9:30am the registers are closed. In accordance with the DFE regulations, if any 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 that they have an unauthorised absence. This is a U code which means arrival after registers have closed.

If any child has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be sent a first and then second warning letter, stating the number of days and the dates that their child has been late. If poor punctuality continues, parents will be asked to meet with the School Attendance Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team to resolve the problem. Parents and carers can approach the school at any time if they are experiencing difficulty in getting their child to school.

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT

The school has a number of systems for the recognition and reward of children's achievements and good attendance.

- The Head teacher leads weekly attendance assemblies across the school, where class, phase and whole school attendance figures are shared
- Classes with the best attendance are rewarded with a weekly attendance certificate and trophy
- Children obtaining 100% attendance are awarded in the final assembly of each half term
- Children attaining 100% attendance for the year take part in a fun activity specially organised for them
- Parents are notified regularly of the classes with the best attendance via the various notice boards in the playground and on the school's website.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body receives a termly attendance report from the School Attendance Officer. This takes the form of a computer printout and will be incorporated within the Head Teacher's written report to the Governing Body. The Governors will comment on the report, and if possible, make suggestions as to how overall attendance might be improved.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

The Head teacher, Governors and staff of the school will monitor the effectiveness and quality of the Attendance Policy on an annual basis, in collaboration with the Local Authority. It will be reviewed on each occasion.

Approved Date: Autumn 2016

Review Date: Autumn 2017