Attendance Policy
Revised: Jan 19

The staff and governors of Coaley Primary Academy are committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils to maintaining a school which serves the community's educational needs, and of which the community is proud.

The school staff and governors, alongside the DGAT, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance, and there is a large body of research evidence to support this. The School is committed to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school;
- Arrive and leave school punctually;
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- Ensure school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- Contact the school before 10.00a.m. on the first day of the child's absence and repeat this each consecutive day until they return
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- Notify the school immediately of any change of address or contact details, especially mobile telephones
- Notify the school of any family circumstances that might have an adverse affect on the child

Our school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily (morning and afternoon);
- Monitor every pupil's attendance each week – this may include groups of pupils eg. FSM, disadvantaged pupils, etc.
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Follow up all unexplained absences
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parents'/carers' concerns on attendance;
- Follow up with parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly to clarify the school's expectations with regard to regular school attendance. This is mostly done through a letter in the first instance – see example 1. long term, chronic illnesses or disabilities are taken into account when deciding whether to send the first letter. However, this could be done through an informal conversation if this is appropriate. Unexplained absences and patterns of irregular and unjustified absences are also taken into account.
- Follow up irregular and unjustified patterns of attendance by:
    - Sending out a second letter to arrange to meet the parents – see appendix 2
    - Set up an action plan to help parents improve attendance

- Arrange for regular meetings around the child (TAC meetings) to encourage regular attendance
- Refer poor attendance to the LA and educational welfare services where it meets the criteria

Encouraging Attendance

Uplands School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. Registration is taken at 8.50am and closes at 9.00am. Therefore, if a child arrives after registration but before 9.00am they will receive a late mark in the register. Pupils who arrive at school after the close of the register will receive an unauthorised registration.
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics in the school prospectus
- By celebrating good and improved attendance;
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance or lateness continues.

Procedures for notifying us of your child's absence from school:-

- Please inform the school early in the morning on the first day that your child is ill and repeat this on each subsequent day until your child returns to school.

- If your child is away from school for a medical appointment we ask that if possible you notify school before the day, again in order that a record of this absence is made. If, however, you are unable to do this, we ask that you telephone on the morning of the appointment. We will also need to know the approximate time of return.

- When returning to school after an appointment we ask that you accompany your child into school to inform us that they have returned (rather than letting them arrive on their own) and fill in the late book in the Office

- If a child needs to leave early for an appointment please collect them from school, as no child will be able to leave the premises without being accompanied by an adult.

- If your child is away from school for any other reason (e.g. holiday/family outing) then a term time absence form must be completed.

- If we have no notification of a child being absent and in the unlikely event that they have not arrived at school once the register has been taken, we will then telephone the parents or emergency contact. If we are unable to make contact we will have no alternative but to immediately inform the authorities. This is for everyone's safety.

School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff will make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving clear and consistent messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Head Teacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- Adopt the whole policy;
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- Consult and liaise closely with the Education Welfare Service on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay;
- To work in close collaboration with the Education Welfare Service during their termly/half termly register analysis;
- Monitor and evaluate attendance with the Education Welfare Service
- Authorise or unauthorise the attendance following the guidance set out in this policy

Class teachers:

- To complete registers accurately and punctually morning and afternoon
- To follow up any unexplained non-attendance;
- To record accurately all absences in the register;
- To inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance of concerns

All absence during term time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 set out the circumstances in which schools may grant a pupil leave of absence.

Schools have a discretionary power to grant a pupil time off school during the term and a number of examples are listed in the regulations. However, schools are not restricted to granting time off in those circumstances; they can also do so if they believe there are extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify the leave. For example, children who fall within the groups at particular risk may have needs that require the school to grant time off.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent(s), carer (s) or corporate parent that the pupil normally resides with, or on the day the illness first occurs, leading to a non-attendance at school.

With the exceptions of family holidays and employment, schools' discretion around leave of absence is far-reaching. The school is able to refuse the whole period requested by a pupil's parents, grant part of the period and refuse the remainder, or grant the whole of the period requested. Any leave of absence granted by a school must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code. Periods that are refused must be recorded as unauthorised.

All requests should be treated on a case by case basis within the school's published attendance policies which should give it the flexibility to respond to difficult circumstances whilst discouraging unnecessary absence.

Persistent absence is regarded as any child with an attendance of 90% or below. However, attendance is monitored each week and children whose attendance dips below 95% is monitored internally by the school. Extra support, guidance and monitoring will be given to any child whose attendance falls below or hovers around 90% and/or is not improving. This will be in the form of an initial letter and subsequent referral to the LA if necessary. Children whose attendance falls within this category will expect a letter in the first instance and any absence requests to be treated less favourably.

The issues that the school takes into account when considering whether to authorise any absence includes:

- the amount of time requested
- age of the pupil;
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record;
- proximity of SATs and public examinations;

- length of the proposed leave;
- evidence of medical conditions;
- pupil's ability to catch up the work;
- pupil's educational needs;
- general welfare of the pupil;
- circumstances of the request,
- purpose of the leave;
- frequency of the activity;
- when the request was made.

Absence in cases of sickness or if the child is unwell

If a child is sick, unwell and unable to attend school, then the parent is to ring school before 10.00am on the first day of illness and on each subsequent day of non-attendance.

The decision whether to send their child to school lies with the parent. However, the decision whether to authorise any absence lies with the Headteacher, or delegated person. When deciding whether to authorise the absence in these cases, the Headteacher will take into account:

- age of the pupil;
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record;
- evidence provided by a medical professional of medical conditions;
- frequency and length of absence, and other illnesses/absences, and the absence history of similar conditions/illnesses
- Whether the child is a persistent absentee or not

Absence in cases of holiday requests

The School will respond to all requests for authorised absence from holiday requests and other absences using the school designated form. Parents will be asked to complete information indicating the requested dates of absence and the reasons for this. The parents are expected to contact the school if anything delays the pupil returning when expected.

The form will also include space for the school to indicate its decision and what action will be taken if permission has been refused and the parents keep their child away. The guidance for family holidays from the Local Authority will be issued to all parents which clarifies the reasons why a school may allow up to 10 days authorised absence in a school year.

A decision to authorise absence may include

- for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- restricted work commitments

The school recommends that holidays which are taken for the following reasons should not be authorised:

- availability of cheap holidays;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

Whilst the application must be made by the parent(s)/guardians(s) that the child normally resides with, there is no restriction on who the holiday is taken with. This is a matter for the parent(s)/ guardians(s) not the school.

If the local code of practice allows, parents can be given a penalty notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised holidays.

In exceptional circumstances, schools can approve more than 10 days' holiday leave - called extended leave of absence or extended holidays. This would follow discussions with parents as to whether their plans could be changed to overlap with school holidays and thereby reduce the effect on their child's education.

TERM TIME SCHOOL LEAVE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS at UPLANDS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.
As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by avoiding removing your child from school wherever possible.

THE FACTS	**THE LAW**
Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on work they have missed. This can affect progress and self esteem and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates. WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term-time leave such as: • Closeness to regular tests, assessments & SATs • At the beginning of a new school term If the school refuses a request for term-time leave and the child is taken out of school, this will be recorded as **unauthorised absence**	The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. However, in exceptional circumstances school may authorise, in advance, a request for a period of leave of up to ten days in any academic year. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides. If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.
Please contact your child's Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue. **Children should attend school for 190 days each year, and every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.** We hope that you will consider that your child's education is too important to take them out of school during term time.	

REQUEST TO TAKE A SCHOOL CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

PLEASE REMEMBER

Absence from school can seriously disrupt your child's continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away; they are also less well prepared for lessons upon their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which together we must seek to avoid.

I need to take my son/daughter …… out of school

from ……...to …… number of days……

This is because: ……

……

Signed ……..(Parent/Guardian) Date …….

Relationship to Child ……..

This form must be completed and returned to the child's school no less than two weeks before the planned absence.

……..

Dear parent / guardian,

Current Attendance %

Re: ……..... (Child's name)

Further to your recent request for leave of absence.

☐ Leave of absence authorised from ……to ……. (inclusive).

Please ensure that your child returns to school promptly as failure to do so can result in their removal from school roll.

☐ Leave of absence refused. Absence from school between …….. and ……. will be marked as unauthorised. This could be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice of up to £100 (Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996).

Signed : …… (Headteacher) Date: ……

Example Letter: 1

Parent of Date

Dear xxx

I am writing regarding xxx attendance at school. So far this academic year xxxx attendance has been xxx%. The year's average attendance of children at Coaley Primary is xxx%. Obviously some absence due to illness is unavoidable, but it is important that you encourage your child to attend school as much as possible. It is also imperative that your child arrives at school before the registers close as this will affect their attendance record. If your child arrives at school after the register closes but before 09:15 they will be marked as "late" in the register. If your child arrives at school after 09:15 they are marked as "unauthorised absence".

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that if your child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. There is a risk that if your child's attendance is persistently low then a referral could be made to the Local Authority who may start a legal process.

If you wish to discuss the reasons for xxx persistent absence and/or lateness and to set in place a strategy to improve their attendance, myself and the Chair of Governors would be happy to meet with you. Please contact the school to arrange an appointment if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Lucas
Executive Headteacher