Coaley C of E Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy: December 2018
Date of Review: September 2019

Responsibility of: The Governing Body of Coaley C of E Primary Academy

This policy was written by: Mrs A Stranack (Interim Headteacher) in consultation with members of the Governing Body & the Local Authority

The policy was approved by the Governing Body on:

Our Vision Statement and Aims

Our vision is to be a school rooted in Christian Values lived out daily through our six core values (Courage, Respect, Compassion, Forgiveness, Humility, Truth). A school which values every unique member of its community as a valued child of God. A school family which enriches, celebrates and encourages all children of faith and none to be the best that they can be. Coaley C of E Primary Academy is committed to strive for educational excellence and to the spiritual, moral, and cultural development of every pupil. We greatly value our special, historic and continuing link with St Bartholomew's Church and our significance within our village and the community beyond. We aim to foster an education that encourages delight, wonder and joy in learning through life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

Aims and Objectives:

- To create a happy community in a safe, open, friendly and secure environment
- To foster in every child the characteristics of effective learning – curiosity; independent thinking and reasoning; ability to apply knowledge and skills; enjoyment and fascination; imagination and creativity; ability to reflect; without fear of making mistakes
- To develop an outstanding curriculum which enthuses and stimulates and which responds to the particular needs of our pupils
- To provide memorable opportunities to extend and enhance pupils' learning
- To encourage every child to develop socially and to achieve academically
- To be committed to outstanding teaching that enthuses staff and pupils
- To instil spiritual and moral values in every child and an understanding of the diversity of British culture, encouraging self-respect, respect for themselves, others and the environment so that they participate fully in life in modern Britain and make a valuable contribution , always remaining tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs
- To promote and model excellent behaviour where everyone understands the consequences of their actions
- To develop in every child a willingness to participate in, and respond to artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities
- To communicate clearly with staff, pupils, governors and parents ensuring that everyone works effectively as a team
- To ensure that all children are fully prepared to take the next steps in their education and to be fully prepared to take their part in modern society

Regular attendance at school is an essential part to all pupils achieving our vision, aims and objectives.

1. Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to meet their full potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

2. Attendance at Coaley C of E Primary Academy

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can authorise absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

In Coaley C of E Primary Academy we aim to have a whole school attendance rate of 100%.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

a) In every case, **early intervention** is essential to prevent the problem from worsening.

It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance;

b) Prior to the engagement of external attendance support services, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for involvement.

3. Early Intervention

A key element of our school absence procedures are the systems for identifying and addressing emergent patterns of irregular attendance at an early stage. This includes:

- First day contact with parents for all pupils absent without known reason
- Analysis of individual pupil data to identify quickly any patterns of absence which cause concern
- Procedures to investigate and resolve unexplained absences within a week
- School attendance panels for pupils causing significant concern
- Reporting/requesting support from the allocated Inclusion Adviser for any child missing education
- A system for regularly checking the attendance of pupils at approved educational activities off-site if this circumstance should arise

4. Arrival and Registration

All children should be in the school ready to register at 8.45 a.m. Children are entitled to enter the school gate from 8.35 a.m. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances. Morning registration ends at 9.00 a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he/she must report to the school office and will be marked as 'Late'. Arrival after 9.10 a.m. is recorded as an unauthorised late mark.

5. Parental Responsibility

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents:

- All natural parents, whether married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- Any person who has day to day care of a child or young person i.e lives with and looks after the child.

Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly, in the school prospectus. Punctuality is also stressed as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole.

Attendance may be discussed with parents during consultation evenings.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full time education.

6. Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

b) An appointment card or verification by the doctors/dentist/ hospital may be required.

c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

d) If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

7. School Responsibility – THE LAW and School Attendance

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated, each regulation applies to all schools in England.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 restricts authorised leave of absence to be for families with exceptional circumstances. The decision rests with the school and all applications for absence requests must be made in advance by the parent the pupil normally resides with.

School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.

The Senior Leadership Team and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance. The Headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Attendance Administration staff.

Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class register twice per day at the start of each session.

The Headteacher, not parents, authorises absence; Coaley C of E Primary Academy adheres to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

8. Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours

The local authority has full responsibility for prosecuting parents where absence continues to be problematic.

9. Family Holidays/Absence during Term Time

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in law, have to apply for permission in advance. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body and in line with the Department of Education's statutory guidance and department advice, November 2016.

When an application is made for authorised absence during term time the Headteacher will give consideration to the following:

- Nature of the proposed absence/is this an exceptional circumstance

Please note to have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The date and time of the request will be looked into when considering the exceptional circumstance listed above.

10. Definitions

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

10.1 Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian.

For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only a school can make an absence authorised.

10.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Holidays not agreed

10.3 Penalty notices

If a child of compulsory education age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at alternative provision made for them then the parent may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in one of the following circumstances of unauthorised absence:

- Holiday during term time when the school has not authorised the absence and the child has missed at least 10 sessions within a 10 week period
- Persistent late arrival at school after the registers have closed, and where the U code is used on the attendance certificate on at least 10 occasions within a 10 week period.
- When an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

In accordance with Local Authority Guidance we reserve the right to request the issue of a fixed term penalty notice, without warning, if any of the above conditions have been breached. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

Where a Penalty Notice is issued, it will be issued to each parent for each child. The definition of parent in education law is broader than the definition in other legislation. The ‘parent’ in this case does not need to

be named on the birth certificate and could be for example, the birth parent's current partner if they are involved in the day to day care of the child.

The school will follow the necessary guidance for further absences as per 'A guide for schools and other professionals in Gloucestershire' – September 2017.

Payment of a Penalty Notice fine

Arrangements for the payment are detailed on the Penalty Notice and are as follows:

- If paid within 21 days, the penalty is £60 per responsible parent, per child
- If paid after 21 days, but within 28 days, the penalty is £120, per responsible parent, per child.

Example:

In a one child family where both parents have equal responsibility, the Fixed Penalty Notice would be £120 if paid within 21 days and £240 if paid after 21 days.

In a two child family, where both parents have equal responsibility and both children have been absent from school, the Fixed Penalty Notices together would be £240 if paid within 21days and £480 if paid after 21days. The LA will not accept payment after 28 days and will, proceed to prosecution.

11. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and member of the school leadership team with responsibility for attendance will monitor the attendance of all pupils regularly throughout the year. Children at risk of persistent absence will be a key focus for this monitoring. Outcomes from monitoring will be presented to the Governing Body either at full meetings or through the standards committee together with the impact of any actions that have been undertaken to reduce the absence.

This policy will be subject to regular review in light of changes made to legislation or the publication of new advice.

12. Additional Guidance

Gov.uk School Attendance and absence guidance

Gloucestershire Local Authority Attendance and absence from school guidance

Leaflet for parents

Leaflet for parents – penalty notices

Leaflet for parents – prosecution