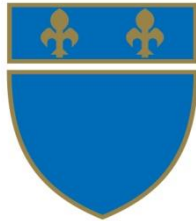


Clinton Primary School



Policy for **Attendance**

May 2019

CLINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

“Attendance and punctuality matter...”

Policy Aim

As a school we aim to:

- Monitor attendance of individual children as part of our duty to keep children safe
- Maintain an attendance rate of a **minimum** of 96%

Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular and timely attendance

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attendees make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attendees find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attendees find learning more satisfying
- Regular attendees have an easier transfer to secondary school

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ensuring school has two up to date emergency contact numbers, in case we cannot get in touch with a parent / guardian of a child who has not arrived at school.
- Understanding the daily registration procedure, the importance of punctuality and the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence (see Appendix 1)
- Ringing by 9am on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return
- Keeping us updated by telephone or email if children are not going to return in line with what was anticipated and reported initially.
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Raising concerns over a child's unhappiness about coming to school as soon as possible if this is a reason for non-attendance
- Promoting the importance of attendance to children in discussion and through ensuring they come to school unless they are really unwell

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by a phone call to the designated parent/guardian or emergency contacts, where necessary.
- Encourage all stakeholders- staff, pupils, parents and governors to set an example for good attendance and punctuality
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school brochure, in the Home-School agreement and at new parent induction evenings.
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his midyear and annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality at the earliest opportunity.
- Review attendance for individuals half termly in order to identify concerns:

(Children whose absence drop below 90% fall into the DfE category of 'persistent absentees' and parents will definitely be contacted under these circumstances.)

- Seek support from Local Authority in arranging tuition for children whose absence is long term and where they will miss long blocks of schooling
- Do our best to provide a stimulating and happy environment where children enjoy coming to school
- Work with parents where attendance issues seem to be as a result of a child's reluctance to come to school.

Children Missing in Education

Children who either fail to start school or leave one school without joining another are among the most vulnerable. As are those whose absence is unexplained and prolonged.

Schools have a duty to investigate any unexplained absences and to report these to the local authority. We will also report to the local authority any child who is taken off roll if there is any cause for concern that they may not be attending a new school. Appendix A shows the procedure followed if school is concerned a child is 'Missing in Education'.

Guidance For Parents

Some Important Facts

- There are 190 school days each year and 175 other days for shopping trips, birthday treats, non urgent appointments and holidays.
- One day a week absence is the equivalent over a school career of 2.5 whole years of education missed.
- 10 days holiday leave a year is the equivalent of two whole terms of education missed.
- 15 minutes of lateness a day equals one whole year of education missed.
- Half a day a week missed during Years 10 and 11 can mean the loss of a grade for every GCSE taken. Full attendance leads to the best educational outcomes – please give your child the best chance and make sure they are in school every day.

Procedures for Registration

- Registers open in the morning at 8.50 in KS2 and 8.55 in KS1, and close 10 minutes later. Children are marked present or absent.
- In the afternoon, registers open at 1pm in KS2 and 1.05pm in KS1. Registers close 5 minutes later.
- Staff are required to use the correct codes when recording absence. These are set out in each register.
- If pupils arrive after the close of registration, they are given a late mark.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

There are only four reasons why a child may be absent from school. These are:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Exceptional Family Circumstance (such as the wedding or funeral of a close relative)
- Where LA transport should be provided but is unavailable.

As the parent/carer(s) of a child starting, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly, and on time, and to provide a reason to the school for any absences. These absences will be authorised by the school following contact with parents or carers.

Schools may authorise other absences if they consider them to be unavoidable or where there are truly exceptional circumstances. If possible parents should always consult with the school in advance if their child is going to be unavoidably absent.

Only schools can authorise absence. Parents do not have this legal authority.

Absences not accepted by the school will be 'unauthorised'. If sufficient unauthorised absence accumulates the school will take steps, such as inviting parents to a meeting to improve attendance.

Once a child is registered in a school, attendance is compulsory until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which the child turns 16 (Year 11).

Truancy is a form of unauthorised absence where a child deliberately misses school. Parents, however, remain legally responsible for this absence. Assistance is available in this situation and may be sought via the school or by directly contacting the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement (ACE) Service (see below).

If there is no improvement in attendance a referral will be made to the ACE Service and this may result in legal action.

Term Time Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. There is **no** entitlement to time off in term time and these will be unauthorised.

We do not want children to see their parents breaking the law to take them out for holidays. Holidays affect learning hugely, with children missing key building blocks that affect their development well beyond the time of the holiday itself.

Holidays in September are damaging as they affect how children settle back into school and the social development that happens at the start of a new year.

Holidays would be especially damaging for children in year 6, where SATs and transition work for secondary school are of paramount importance.

The Government issued regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence, stating that:

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Legal Note

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). The Educational Social Worker aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action.

Punctuality

- Doors open at 8.40 in KS2 and 8.45 in KS1, with registration beginning 10 minutes later.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child is on time
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DFE guidance
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety if not collected or the school contacted by school closing time

Attendance Compliance Enforcement Service

As a Local Authority maintained school, we sign a memorandum of understanding with the ACE service which states our intention to:

- Demonstrate a strong attendance ethos
- Be prepared to share whole school and pupil level attendance data with the ACE team
- Offer 'Early Help' to parents whose children have low attendance, where appropriate and inform the MASH (Multi-Agency-Safeguarding-Hub) if this support is declined.
- Have a clear publicised policy on absence, stating how it will be managed.
- Have effective early intervention systems for securing good attendance, including first day calling for identified cases of poor attendance, analysis of data and follow up by teachers when pupils return from absence
- Nominate a school governor/board member with a specific attendance remit
- Set, monitor and maintain whole school attendance in line with targets set by governors
- Have a named member of their management team with lead responsibility for attendance
- Ensure all relevant staff receive training about attendance issues

- Promote the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and parents
- Intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance
- Make best use of additional support for pupils and parents with the greatest need
- Demonstrate that we have commissioned specialist support either from Warwickshire Education Services (The Local Authority's Traded Services Division) or from another provider where attendance is dropping towards 85% and remains unresponsive to 'in house' interventions.

Policy Monitoring

Monitoring of Punctuality and Attendance

The school will monitor attendance and punctuality through:

- maintaining a school register for attendance and punctuality at the start of the morning and afternoon session.
- coding reasons for absence in order to identify trends for non-attendance e.g. does the absence regularly take place on a Monday or Friday?
- the Headteacher seeking reports on attendance matters at regular intervals.
- maintaining a record of unauthorised leave of absence and informing governors (Q&S)
- monitoring attendance of specific groups
- Staff are asked to report any concerns over a child's attendance if they identify any patterns emerging
- Where long term illness affects absence, we may seek evidence via a doctor's note in order to meet Safeguarding requirements.

The school sets a target, as required by the government, for attendance and governors review proximity to the target, identifying if there is a trend of poor attendance compared to similar schools nationally. This enables us to identify whether there is an issue with attendance and would provoke further investigation into why.

Reports on attendance will be shared with the Governors' Quality and Standards committee annually, unless concerns emerge when reports will be more frequent.

"Every day counts..."

Children Missing in Education: Procedures

Scenario A: A child is absent from school with no communication from parents

1. School contacts parents;
2. Where parents are not contactable, emergency contacts are used;
3. Contact school that the siblings attend;
4. Home visits;
5. Enquiries to friends / neighbours and other services it is known the family are engaged with;
6. Local Authority to be contacted and kept informed.

Scenario B: A child is absent from school without permission, for over 10 days

1. School contacts parents (where no contact is possible, follow above steps);
2. Local Authority to be contacted and kept informed.

LA contact is: Access to Education, Warwickshire County Councils' Education and Learning Business Unit at 01926 736323 or via e mail to cme@warwickshire.gov.uk.