

Attendance and punctuality policy

Cavendish Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school implements an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and challenges the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Cavendish Primary School works to maintain an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Aims:

1. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
2. To provide a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
3. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
4. To provide a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
5. To ensure positive and consistent communication between home and school.
6. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
7. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
8. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils we:

1. Apply the School Attendance Policy consistently.
2. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
3. Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
4. Monitor progress in attendance.

In order to make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, we:

1. Ensure all staff are familiar with the school attendance policy.

2. Have a designated member of staff with responsibility for attendance and punctuality.
3. Have a designated governor with responsibility for attendance and punctuality.
4. Keep the governing body informed of attendance issues.
5. Hold induction evening for reception parents.
6. Produce newsletters.
7. Provide appropriate training for appointed/promoted staff.
8. Work closely with the education welfare service and discuss relevant attendance issues at multi-disciplinary meetings.

Our framework defining agreed roles and responsibilities and promoting consistency in carrying out designated tasks includes:

1. Following LEA procedures for statutory registration.
2. Making phone/letter contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence, starting with children on the 'walk to school' register and children whose attendance is causing concern.
3. Ensuring clearly defined late registration procedures.
4. Responding swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
5. Defining clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure.
6. Timetable the Administrative Assistant (AA) with responsibility for attendance to meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
7. Having clear procedures prior for referral to the Education Welfare Officer.
8. Reviewing attendance regularly.
9. Being familiar with the Education Welfare Service's referral and recording system.

In order to provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils we:

1. Highlight attendance in PSHCE and assemblies.
2. Make time for vulnerable parents to speak to staff.
3. Seek improved communication with parents e.g. when parents ring in.
4. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
5. Involve parents from earliest stage.

We implement a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data through:

1. computerised records
2. Standardised recording of:
 - authorised/unauthorised absence
 - educational activity
 - presence
3. Being consistent in the collection and provision of information.
4. Deciding what information is provided for:
 - governors
 - pastoral staff
 - other school staff
 - parents
 - pupils (individual or groups)
 - education welfare service

5. Identifying developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

In order to further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school we:

1. Initiate first day absence contact.
2. Make full use of computer-generated letters.
3. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.
4. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships.
5. Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written).
6. Encourage all parents into school.
7. Actively discourage parents from taking holidays in term-time.
8. Include a reference to attendance in the home-school agreement.

We will implement a system of rewards and sanctions by:

1. Awarding 100% attendance certificates at the end of each term.
2. Actively promoting attendance and punctuality.
3. Having class rewards for punctuality.
4. Fair and consistent implementation.
5. Taking action which accords with objectives agreed between school and others, e.g. Education Welfare Officer, parent, Behaviour Support Service.
6. In cases of persistent absence or where parents have taken unauthorised term time leave the Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice.

To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies we:

1. Designate key staff (Administrative Assistant) for liaison with Education Welfare Service and other agencies.
2. Give priority to timetabled meetings with Education Welfare Service.
3. Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
4. Gather and record relevant information to assist Education Welfare Service.
5. Hold monthly attendance review with Head and Education Welfare Service.
6. Work closely with the Early Intervention Team (EIT) to identify vulnerable attendees.
7. Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings.
8. Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community e.g. community police contact officer.
9. Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.

We will recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence by:

1. Being sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils
2. Involving/informing all staff in/of reintegration process.
3. Providing opportunities for feedback.
4. Considering peer support and mentoring.
5. Involving parents as far as possible.
6. Agreeing timescale for review of reintegration plan.

7. Include Education Welfare Service, parents and pupil in reintegration plan.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of parents / carers to ensure that children attend school regularly and arrive on time. If a child is absent for any reason it is the parent/ carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for the absence and the child's expected return date.

It is the responsibility of each class teacher to encourage attendance and to communicate any concerns over attendance to the head. The head is responsible for monitoring attendance across the whole school and for liaising with the education welfare service and any other agencies that may be involved. An administrative assistant with responsibility for attendance is employed. Her duties include:

- day-to-day responsibility for the monitoring of registers;
- contacting parents following an absence;
- updating of computer records;
- informing the class teacher and headteacher of any unusual patterns of attendance;
- informing the Headteacher about any punctuality issues;
- ensuring that the local authority letters are sent out;
- informing the education welfare officer of all attendance and punctuality issues with individual pupils.

The head or deputy is responsible for deciding whether an absence should be authorised.

The headteacher will include reminders about regular attendance and unauthorised absences in the school newsletter and will keep Governors informed about attendance through the headteacher's report.

There is a named governor for attendance who meets regularly with the headteacher and the administrative assistant and reports to the Full Governing Body via the PP&P committee.

Holidays in term Time

No holidays in term time will be authorised and the Education Welfare Service will be informed of all such absences. Families taking holidays in term time may be issued with a fixed penalty notice by the local authority.

Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that:

Time off school for family holidays is not a right. Schools have discretion to allow up to 10 days absence in a school year for a family holiday if they believe that the circumstances warrant it.

Schools may agree up to 10 days "holiday leave" in special circumstances such as:

- a. 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
- b. when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

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.

(Keeping Pupil Registers, Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations, June 2008)

It is the policy of the local authority that no holidays in term time are authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances, as outlined above.

Absences for longer than two weeks may result in the child being removed from the school roll.

Traveller children

The school will follow DfE and LA guidance on the policy to be used with traveller children.

Marking of registers

Class teachers or teaching assistants complete the register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The register is taken electronically, using the school information management system (SIMS). Latecomers should sign in the book at the office. Any child arriving more than 10 minutes after the start of the session will be recorded as late and, if later than 30 minutes, the time of arrival noted. The LA marking system is used. All absence notes are passed on to the administrative assistant and relevant information shared with school staff.

Poor Punctuality

Punctuality is an important life skill that we expect the children to learn. Children who arrive late feel isolated from their peers and miss important opportunities to learn and to feel a part of the class. Children should be 'on the line' at ten to nine in the morning. Children with poor punctuality are sent target letters for improvement and, if the poor punctuality persists, the Education Welfare Officer will take action.

Persistent Absences

The administrative assistant monitors the registers and gives the headteacher a print out of any unusual absence statistics. Any child whose attendance is a cause for concern is highlighted. If there does not appear to be a plausible reason for the absence (e.g. a bout of illness) the family will be contacted by the administrative assistant. Where absence is significantly higher than average a letter from the Headteacher is sent to the family and the EWO is informed. If the absence persists the EWO may contact the family directly.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy.

Anne-Marie Inwood
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Autumn 2014 Review Date: