

Clarendon Infant School



Attendance Policy

Policy agreed (date):	September 2022
Policy published (including on website) (date):	September 2022
Next review (date):	September 2023

Rationale

In order for children to take full advantage of their education they must attend school regularly and punctually. School staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each child attends school regularly and punctually.

The Education Welfare Service has the responsibility to implement the statutory duties in relation to school attendance.

Research has shown that regular attendance maximises levels of achievement making it easier to cope with school routine and school work which leads to pupils learning becoming more satisfying, the school promotes the concept that "every lesson counts"

The Law

All children of compulsory school age between 5 – 18 years of age are required to receive an education. As a parent you have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of a registered pupil and must ensure that they are also punctual in their attendance.

These responsibilities are set out in the following legislation; -

The Education Act 1996, Crime and Disorder Act 1998, The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, The Education and Inspections Act 2006, The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007, The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulation 2007 and amendments, The Education and Skills Act 2008.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon. School are required to report to the Local Authority pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for ten consecutive school days or more without known reason.

Guidelines

Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence. All other absences are unauthorised.

Parents must endeavour to arrange dental/medical appointments out of school hours, bringing children to school before and after medical appointments.

Unauthorised absences

There are instances where unauthorised absences are not permitted by law which is why they are referred to as unauthorised absences, some examples are as follows: Going on a family day out / going shopping; when no explanation has been offered for the absence or that given is unsatisfactory; parents are unwell; because it is the child's birthday; unapproved holiday; sleeping in after a late night; visiting relatives.

Procedures

Lateness

The school actively discourages late arrivals by pupils as a late arrival may seriously disrupt not only his/her continuity of learning but that of others.

The school encourages pupils with a responsible adult to come onto the school grounds at 8.40 – 8.45am each morning; pupils will be met by their Class Teacher and will enter the school by 8.50am at the latest via the External Class Doors for registration. The second registration of the day will take place after lunch at 1.05pm for the afternoon session.

Lateness is classed as any child arriving after registration closes at 9am. All children arriving after the External Class Doors have closed must be signed in at the office by a responsible adult. If a child arrives at school after 9.20am an unauthorised absence is recorded. The parents of those pupils who are repeatedly late or subjected to unauthorised absences will be asked to attend a meeting with the head teacher, however, should the issue of repeated absenteeism remain unresolved the issue will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and a formal attendance meeting will take place where the implications of further unauthorised absenteeism will be explained to them by the EWO.

Absence due to ill health

Parents must inform the school of an absence through illness prior to registration and by 9.20am at the latest on the day of the absence. The school telephone has an answering machine for absence messages and this is checked daily with the recorded messages logged in the Absence Record. Parents must keep the school updated during extended periods of absence due to illness.

A letter from the GP may be requested if a pupil has high levels of authorised absence through sickness and parents will be invited to an informal meeting with the Headteacher.

Parents may be asked for proof of illness if staff have a valid reason to suspect that the illness may not be the reason for the absence.

Holiday Absence

The school does not authorise holidays during term time. Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a child is removed from school for an unauthorised holiday the school will report the absence to the Education Welfare Service who will issue a Penalty Notice which carries a fine.

Unauthorised Absence and Penalty Notices

It should be noted that when a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absences (5 school days) within a six month period that the matter can be dealt with a fixed penalty notice, or alternatively, if the attendance is very low parents can be taken to court, without the fixed penalty notice system being used.

Payment of £120 (per child, per parent) is required within 28 days of receipt of the penalty notice; this sum is reduced to £60 (per child per parent) if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay will result in a prosecution. Should parents not pay the fixed penalty notices and they were successfully prosecuted they could be liable for a fine of £2,500, a community order or a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months, along with parenting orders. The Local Authority issues penalty notices through the Education Welfare Service. Penalty notices are issued to each parent for each child and payment is required for each penalty notice issued.

The local authority can use various powers when a child is missing from school without good reason in addition to fixed penalty notices applying for parenting orders, school attendance orders, and prosecution. A parenting order is an order by the court for the parent to attend parenting classes for example to improve school attendance.

Educational supervision orders are applied for through the court should they think that a child is not getting an education (you have 15 days to provide evidence that you have registered your child with a school or that you are giving them a home education). The order would require you to send your child to a specific school and if you do not, you will be prosecuted.

The legislation which outlines the legal power and duty that govern school attendance and how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents is as follows; The Education Act 1996 - section 434(1) (3) (4) & (6), The Education Act (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, The Education Act (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2010, The Education Act (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2011, The Education Act (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013.

Requests for Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances you may wish to make a request for a leave of absence. These need to be completed in advance of the absence and in a timely manner to ensure that the application for absence can be considered by the Headteacher. Any retrospective requests will be denied.

Procedures

Attendance logs will be kept by the school office of all phone calls and verbal messages related to absence.

Registers of all classes are sent to the office twice daily and monitored. The information from the class registers is entered into the school information management system for monitoring and record keeping.

Absences without explanation will be followed up initially by telephone call on the day of the absence occurring and if an explanation is not forthcoming the absence will be followed up by letter. If we are unable to contact parents and the school receives no response to the letter sent the related absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Any child with an absence rate below 90% will have their record examined and if required their record will be shared with the Education Welfare Officer, (EWO). A meeting between the parent/carer and school may be arranged and this might result in agreed actions, an Early Help Assessment (previously known as a CAF) or a further meeting with the EWO. [An Early Help Assessment is a way of working out and delivering the extra support a child may need. It might include support from other agencies to ensure help is delivered effectively to minimise the identified difficulty causing the absence.]

The school will liaise with Children's Services and other outside agencies as necessary regarding attendance of any registered pupil at Clarendon Infants' School.

This policy will be available to all parents and carers via the school website and it is given to all new parents/carers who register a child at Clarendon Infants' School.