

# Coteford Junior School Attendance Policy

Policy reviewed	November 2025
Date of next review	November 2026

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# Attendance Policy

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Parents/carers are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school and it is the school's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance, so it is also important that parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Ofsted considers the effectiveness of school's attendance figures by:

- Overall absence and persistent absence rates for all pupils, and for different groups, in relation to national figures for all pupils
- The extent to which low attenders are improving their attendance over time and whether attendance is consistently low (in the lowest 10%)
- Punctuality in arriving at school and at lessons

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to create a safe, happy and rewarding environment for all children so that all children want to attend school. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot be responsible for their own regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. Through our Home-School Agreement, parents agree to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. We keep parents regularly informed about their children's attendance in a variety of ways.

## 1. Aims

We aim and work towards ensuring that all pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school. No groups of pupils should be disadvantaged by low attendance. We aim to have exceptionally high levels of attendance for all children.

- Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled to
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality at the beginning of a school day and to lessons. We also work with families to ensure they collect their children on time from school.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. School procedures for Registration Attendance registers

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether a pupil is:

- Present or Absent
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The reason for the amended entry e.g.

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances Lateness
- DfE attendance codes. (APPENDIX 1 )
- Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

## Procedures

- Gates open for all children to enter the school grounds at **8:20am**.
- Children line up with their teacher at **8:25am**.
- Children walk into class with their teacher
- Gates close at **8:30am**.
- The register is taken by the class teacher on Bromcom.
- If a child arrives after the teacher has taken the register and before 8:50am they will be marked as 'L' for late on Bromcom.
- Teachers are to save and close the register by 9:00am
- Children arriving after 8:30am will need to enter school via the main office and will be registered by the administration team.
- Any child arriving late to school from 9:00am onwards will be marked as 'U', which counts as an unauthorised absence.
- If children arrive during the day (after a Medical Appointment etc.) they will need to enter via the Main Reception to be registered by the administration team. Parents need to sign them in and if here for the afternoon, they will be registered then.
- The afternoon register is taken at 1:00pm for year 3 and 4
- The afternoon register is taken at 1:45pm for year 5 and 6.

## 4. Unplanned absences

Parents must notify the school on the first day and every day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible

**For process for unplanned absence see 'First Day Calling' (APPENDIX 2)**

Parents contact the school and can speak directly to the attendance lead. They can also leave a voice message on the attendance mailbox. Alternatively, please email the school.

If a pupil is absent and the school has received no contact from the parent/s then the attendance lead will telephone and text directly to the parent informing them that they must respond with details of the absence.

If a child who is on a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan is absent from school, then the attendance officer must report this to the designated safeguarding leads.

If a child who is in the SEND Persistent absentee monitoring group, is absent from the school, then the SENDCo must be informed.

If by the second day contact between home and school has still not occurred, then the attendance lead will:

- Make further calls and send an email to the parent

Try and ascertain if there are other numbers on which the parents can be contacted

**If by the third day, there is still no contact then the school designated safeguarding leads must be alerted to investigate whether a home visit is to be conducted.**

The school designated safeguarding leads may conduct an announced or unannounced home visit at any time to ensure the safety and well-being of a child. Each case will be assessed individually based on its specific circumstances.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Medical evidence must be provided if the absence is more than three days or the pupil's attendance is under particular scrutiny due to a poor absentee rate.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **Child Missing Education (CME)**

The school will continue to try and establish contact with home via various means including student's friends and parental acquaintances. However, if after 10 days no contact has been made then CME proceedings are initiated utilising the London Borough of Hillingdon CME Procedure.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an unauthorised absence unless advance notice is provided.

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents must use official appointment cards or letters when informing the school about medical or dental appointments. Our school admin staff will make a copy of the letter to store in the child's personnel file.

If a child becomes unwell whilst on the school site, parents will be contacted to collect the child, by a first aider or the school administration team.

When a child leaves the school site for such appointments, they must sign out from the main reception area.

## Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The school values good punctuality as much as it values good attendance. Pupils and parents are constantly reminded via: newsletters, school magazines, letters, assemblies, parent's evenings, annual reports, parent meeting about the benefits of having good punctuality.

The attendance lead will track and monitor children who are late:

- First 5 lates accumulated within half a term, by a family, will result in a letter being sent home, along with a phone call from the attendance officer to offer support to families. **(Appendix 5)**
- A total of 10 lates will result in a phone call home from the Senior Leadership Team to offer support to families.
- A total 20 lates will result in face-to-face meetings with Senior Leadership Team.
- Any child who arrives to school after 9:00am, a 'U' code will be issued, this will be tracked and monitored by the admissions officer. The 'U' code counts as an unauthorised absence and can be included when considering a penalty notice for irregular attendance.

## Late collection

Children may only be collected by an adult (16 years or older) whose details have been provided to the school prior to collection by a parent/carer. We ask all parents to make sure their child is collected on time by an adult at the end of the school day 3:00pm. Children can get upset if they are not collected on time. If your child is not collected by 3.15pm, we will try and contact you. If we cannot make contact, we will telephone other authorised adults that you have given us details for.

**If we cannot make contact within 1 hour, we will contact Social Care or the Police.** To help us keep your child safe, please inform the school office if someone other than you or the usual person is going to collect your child at the end of the day.

The attendance lead will keep a tracker for late collection tracking late pick up times after school.

If a child is collected late 5 times or more in a half term, then the attendance lead needs to bring this to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will then meet with parents offering support. If there is no improvement with the number of late collection times, then a safeguarding concern must be raised by the attendance officer.

## 5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

- We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport, operating at a high level of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs" The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c).
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there will be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.
- The school does not permit children to go home early during curriculum hours, unless exceptional circumstances. Evidence may be requested.
- We will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.
- Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
  - Illness and medical/dental appointments (with medical evidence if required)
  - Bereavement
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. A maximum of two days is granted.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Should the school not deem an absence as authorised, then it will be recorded in the register and monitored in case of repeat offences.

As the school believes that poor attendance prejudices achievement, attainment and progress **it will not sanction 'term time holidays'**. All requests to remove a student from school to attend a holiday during term time will be denied.

All absences during term time for holiday purposes will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in 'parental fixed penalty fines. (See Legal Sanctions Section)

### **Legal sanctions**

Coteford Junior School reserves the right to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance**

Good attendance is promoted throughout the school. We engage with families to ensure that they understand the value of ensuring that their children attend every day. Letters, texts, parent information evenings, newsletters, and the website all promote an ethos of high expectations and standards of attendance and punctuality.

Pupils are rewarded for good, and just as importantly, improved attendance and punctuality. Initiatives such as:

- 100% weekly attendance house points
- Published results weekly in Newsletter
- Non-uniform days

## **7.Attendance Monitoring and Intervention**

The attendance lead and Senior Leadership Team are constantly monitoring school attendance and pupil absence. As safeguarding our pupils at Coteford Junior is of paramount importance, the attendance lead works extremely closely with designated safeguarding leads and welfare team.

The attendance lead meet with the Headteacher fortnightly. At these meetings every pupil's attendance and absence patterns are monitored and scrutinised.

Where necessary measures are put in place to support pupils and their families understand the necessity for good attendance and inform them that should the attendance not improve without authorised reasons then further measures will be sanctioned which may include the involvement of the London Borough of Hillingdon's Attendance Support Team.

### **Measures include:**

- When a child's attendance drops to 90%, the attendance officer will send a letter (appendix 6) to the family to inform them of the attendance drop. If the attendance rate does not increase, then the family will be referred to the deputy Headteacher to intervene alongside the safeguarding team.
- Meetings/ telephone meetings with pupils and their families
- Parental meetings (Including 'parental attendance contracts' (**APPENDIX 3**) Notification of Parental Responsibility Proceedings (involving the Attendance Support Team)
- **Court action.** Coteford Junior School will pursue this course of action when all other measures have been exhausted.

**Persistent Absence:** The persistent absence threshold is 90% or below.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at National and Local Authority level through the Department for Education's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Vulnerable students including children on a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan and Looked After Children are monitored on a weekly basis and parents, carers and Children's Services and Virtual Schools are constantly updated and informed of any absence.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Governing Body:**

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **The Headteacher:**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

- **The attendance lead**
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Meets with Senior Leadership Team and safeguarding leads to implement strategies to combat poor attendance of individuals and groups
- Arranges meetings/telephone meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Works with London Borough Hillingdon Attendance Support Service to tackle persistent absence
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **Class teachers:**

- Devise motivational initiatives to improve year group and Leadership Team
- Monitor absence and attendance alongside the attendance lead
- Meet with pupils and parents of concern
- Support in conducting home visits
- Ensure that registers are accurately taken on Bromcom
- Support the ethos of good attendance
- Monitor patterns of attendance and punctuality, informing Senior Leadership Team
- Use provided data enable pupils to engage with their own attendance profile

### **Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour and Relationships Policy

Exclusion and Suspension Policy

Managing of Attendance of Pupils with Medical Needs

## **Appendix 1: Attendance Codes**

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence

## **Appendix 2: First day calling protocol**

**1st Day**  
Attendance Lead to telephone home by 11am  
Inform Safeguarding Lead of absence of CIN, CP, LAC  
absence daily  
Inform AHT for Inclusion of the absence of pupils with an  
EHCP

**2nd Day**  
Attendance Lead to telephone home by 11am and send  
text and email to family.  
Inform Safeguarding Leads of absence of CIN, CP, LAC  
absence daily  
Inform AHT for Inclusion of the absence of pupils with an  
EHCP

**3rd Day**  
Attendance Lead to telephone home by 11am and send  
text and email to family.  
  
Attendance Lead to alert Senior Leadership Team to  
arrange a home visit.

**4th Day No Contact Made**  
If no contact made on a home  
visit then a Stronger Family  
referral will be considered.  
  
Inform Attendance Support  
Team after 10 days.  
  
Complete Child Missing  
Education after usual checks.

**4th Day Contact Made**  
  
Attendance Lead to establish  
reason for absence, encourage  
return to school, provide internal  
support and refer to other  
support agencies if needed.

**Appendix 3 Attendance Contract**

## Coteford Junior School Attendance Contract

<b>Name of child</b>	<b>Analysis of Attendance</b>
<b>Date of birth</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Current attendance on Bromcom</b>	
<b>People attending the meeting</b>	
<b>Action agreed</b>	
<b>Attendance Target to be achieved by when?</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Parent/carers name</b>	
<b>Parent/carers signature</b>	
<b>CJS member name</b>	
<b>CJS member signature</b>	

Dear Parent,

We have been monitoring the attendance as well as punctuality of child . They have been late for school 10 times since the **Date** This is of concern to us.

It is vital that your child attends school on time so to receive an education suitable to their needs, abilities, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

If your child has a problem that affects them attending school on time, then you must discuss this with your child's class teacher or a member of the SLT. The school will do what it can to support you and your child to address the issue. If your child has a high level of lateness and there seems to be no logical reason for this, then the school will be referring your case to the Attendance Officer from Partnership Learning. If it does not improve this may lead to a fine being issued or prosecution may proceed.

You have a legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school on a regular basis and on time with equipment to support them throughout the day. If your child's attendance continues to be poor, then legal sanctions may be considered.

I hope to see an improvement and will continue to monitor the situation. If you wish to discuss this letter, then please contact the school.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely  
Headteacher

Dear Parent /Carer,

I am writing to you because [pupil's name]'s attendance has become a cause for concern. It currently stands at [add percent]. It is the Department of Education/Ofsted that dictate attendance below 96% is poor and that below 90% is 'persistent absenteeism'.

### **The Law**

Children must attend school under the Education Act 1989 (revised). Poor attendance at school can result in one or more of the following:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')

Regular attendance is an important factor in a child's academic success. When pupils are frequently absent, it is difficult for them to keep up with their school work and this could affect their life chances. For this reason, we take school attendance very seriously.

If your child is going to be absent from school, it is important that you contact the school on the first day of the absence to inform us of the reasons. If this continues for more than one day, you should make contact with the school on a daily basis to keep us updated.

We are keen to work with you to address any barriers to your child's attendance. If you require any advice or support on this matter, please get in touch with me to discuss this and we will do our best to help.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Officer

<b>GREEN</b> Pupils with attendance from 96% to 100%
<b>AMBER</b> Pupils with attendance from 90% to 95.9%
<b>RED</b> Pupils with attendance Below 90%