



The Coppice Primary School Attendance Policy

Written by	Billy Hutt
Approved by Trustees	September 2018
Date for Review	September 2019

The Coppice Primary School Attendance Policy

Introduction

Parent/carers of registered students have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (Section 444) to ensure that students of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be referred to the Worcestershire County Council Senior Education Welfare Officer for Prosecution, if the issues around the non-school attendance cannot be resolved by the use of Coppice attendance strategies.

All children of compulsory school age have the right to a high-quality full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Coppice Primary takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy has been developed in consultation with Trustees, Teachers, Education Welfare Services and pupils' Parents and Guardians. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising the awareness of the importance of an engaging and relevant curriculum.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils' successes and achievements.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

Statements of Expectations

What is expected of the pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

Pupils should:

- Respect themselves and others.
- Do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually.

- Inform a trusted adult if they feel they are being bullied.
- Encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.

What is expected of the Parents/Guardians:

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school and stay in school for every session that they have been registered. Parents should make sure that their children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure an education for their children.

If a child is in foster care or a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where school attendance is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, Education Welfare Services and Social Services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

Parents/Guardians should:

- Offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- Work closely with the school and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.
- Take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will not be authorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances, in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, and also be aware that the school is duty-bound to refer all unauthorised holiday leave of 10 or more consecutive days directly to County. It will then be County's decision whether or not to impose a fine.
- Be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS or the start of new terms.
- Support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

What is expected of the School

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive to creating happy, successful and confident learners. School attendance will be supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record the reason for the absence and whether it was authorised or unauthorised.

The school should:

- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- Meet the legal requirements set out by Government.
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- Develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1996 Education Act.
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- Develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees.
- Develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO.
- Adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LEA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Lates:

- The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at 8.45am. Teachers must ensure the registers are completed, and manual registers returned to the office, by 9.15am. The registers will close at 9.15am.
- Children arriving after 8.45am will be marked as late on the register and the reason for lateness noted in the Late Book.
- Those children who have arrived later than 10.00am will be marked with a 'U' (late after registers have closed) unless they have a legitimate reason e.g. medical appointment ('M') or other acceptable reason ('C' – other authorised circumstances), when it will be marked accordingly.
- All unexplained absences are chased up on a daily basis by text message requesting a reason for the absence. The Headteacher/Deputy Head will personally phone the parents of Pupil Premium children and Persistently Absent (PA) children to request a reason for absence. Medical evidence will be asked for if appropriate and as a matter of course with PA children.

Absences

Reasons for absence must be given by parents/carers. These may be offered by text; verbally (either in person or over the phone) or in writing. If the child involved has an attendance of below 90%, or there has been no verbal explanation, then a written explanation must also be received by the school upon their return. The school may then decide whether to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made in accordance with the 1996 Education Act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence:

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The child lives over a certain distance from the school and the LEA has either failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or make suitable transport arrangements.
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith.
- The child is absent “with leave” which, due to exceptional circumstances, has been granted by the school.
- A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason and, on the advice on our Educational Welfare Officer, will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

	1st day of absence	1st day of return to school	2 weeks after period of absence
Parent/ Guardian	Contacts school with reason by phone, text or in writing.	Provides letter stating reason for absence IF no previous explanation has been given.	Should by this time have given an explanation.
School	If no contact from parent/guardian, a text is sent requesting an explanation for the absence.	Class teacher retains letter in manual register.	School mark all unexplained absences as unauthorised.

Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance. It is the decision of the Head Teacher as to what might be considered an exceptional circumstance and parents should not expect their request to be granted as a right.

We are therefore unable, legally, to authorise any holidays unless there is an exceptional circumstance.

Parents can be fined for taking their children on holiday during term time without the consent of the school.

Parents are requested to fill in a leave of absence form and return it to the Deputy Head's office at least 6 weeks in advance of the proposed absence whereupon, if the leave is authorised, they will be notified of such in writing. However, parents are advised that they must assume it is NOT authorised unless they hear otherwise and also that the school is duty-bound to refer all unauthorised holiday leave of 10 or more consecutive days directly to County. It will then be County's decision whether or not to impose a fine. The school will also refer to County any 6 day holiday requests where the child's attendance is below the 90% PA threshold.

Monitoring

The Deputy's office will review the attendance for all pupils weekly.

This involves:

- Monitoring any issues connected with requests for leave of absence or explanations for illness, and intervening as appropriate.
- Reviewing list of pupils below 92% attendance (from September 2015 Persistent Absence level has been raised from 85% to 90%), liaising with EWO and intervening as appropriate i.e. when attendance/punctuality becomes a concern we reserve the right to pass the matter over to our EWO should it be necessary.

POOR ATTENDANCE STRATEGY FOR PP PUPILS AND PA CHILDREN:

1. Those students whose attendance falls below 96% will be closely monitored and further action considered. Between 90% and 96% it is the responsibility of the school to discuss the matter with the parent/carer in consultation with the Head/Deputy Head/Education Welfare Officer and administrative staff. 89% and below further intervention will be required. All intervention must be documented.
2. Recognition of a pattern of absence is vital. Liaison between SLT, class teachers and the Education Welfare Officer with support from the County attendance officer will ensure a holistic approach to the cause for concern. Early involvement of the parent/carer is paramount in securing good attendance.
3. The Coppice has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding a pupil's attendance at The Coppice:
 - Phone call home.
 - Letters to parent/carer including those requesting medical evidence
 - Home visits by the EWO/Head/Deputy Head
 - Calling meetings with parent/carers and pupils in order to discuss any issues
 - School mentoring
 - Parenting contracts
 - Pastoral support plan
 - Individual educational support plan
 - Pre prosecution meeting County/parent/carer/child/school.

4. If there is no improvement in a student's attendance following the school's interventions, the Academy will refer the matter to the Worcestershire County Council Senior Education Welfare Officer for Prosecutions for advice and possible legal action.
5. The legal action to be considered in full consultation with The Coppice:
 - To prosecute a parent/carer for failing to ensure that their child regularly attends school to the statutory requirement through the Education Act 1996, section 444(1 or 1A)
 - Application to Magistrates Court for an Education Supervision Order – to ensure that the child of compulsory school age and registered at a school attends regularly
 - Application to Magistrates Court for a Parenting Order – to enforce regular attendance following a successful prosecution by the Local Authority
 - Penalty Notice issued for an instant monetary fine - for irregular attendance.

TRAVELLERS

There is provision within the legislation to permit Travellers to remove their child/children from full time education whilst they are travelling, however this can only be done after the completion of 200 sessions (100 days) in an academic year. The parent/carer must attend school and discuss the pending period of absence with the Head of Year prior to removing the child. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise this absence or not. Should permission be granted 'T' will be entered into the pupil register system.

Rewarding good attendance

We reward good attendance at The Coppice in a variety of ways:

- We record weekly class attendance percentages and issue certificates to the highest attending class in both KS1 and KS2.
- Half-termly certificates are issued for all children with 100% attendance.
- A badge and prize are awarded to children with 100% attendance for a whole academic year.
- Children with 100% attendance in any term will receive a bronze pin badge award. Any child who has 100% attendance for two consecutive terms will receive a silver badge. 100% attendance for the year will merit a 100% badge as per above.
- Children with attendance of 98% or over for the whole academic year (from the first day of the new academic year to the cut-off point in the second half of the Summer term) will receive a whole school reward of a fun afternoon before the end of the Summer term.
- Weekly Punctuality Award presented to KS1 and KS2 class with the least number of lates.

Data Protection Statement

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our GDPR Data Protection Policy.

All data will be handled in accordance with the school's GDPR Data Protection Policy.

Name of policy	Content	Reason for policy	Who does it relate to?	Where is it stored?
Attendance Policy	Guidelines for pupil attendance	To provide clarity	Pupils	Secure Network drive

As such, our assessment is that this policy:

Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements	Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements	Has a High Level Of Data Compliance Requirements
√		

Signed.....Deputy Head

Signed.....Trustee

Date: September 2018 *Review date: September 2019*