



Caslon Primary Community School, Beech Tree, Beecher Bear Nursery and Daycare

Attendance Policy 2023-2024

At Caslon Primary Community School, Beech Tree, Beecher Bear Nursery and Daycare we believe that every child has the right to an education and that excellent attendance and punctuality play a crucial part in maximising every individual's chance to reach their full potential.

We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (2018) Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

We follow the Department for Education guidelines and expect every child to maintain attendance of at least 95% throughout the academic year. In line with 'Working Together To Improve School Attendance (September 2022), persistent absence is considered any attendance below 90% within the academic year.

Celebration of Attendance

We strongly believe in rewarding those whose attendance and punctuality is significantly improved or consistently excellent through weekly 100% attendance certificates. Each child that has 100% attendance for a term receives a bronze star badge, a silver star badge for two consecutive terms and a Gold star for 3 consecutive terms. There will also be recognition for pupils showing a vast improvement in their attendance over set periods of time.

Attendance Analysis

We have a dedicated team of staff who meet regularly to look at attendance figures and punctuality. This includes recording how many minutes of lost learning occurs through unsatisfactory punctuality. The information gathered in these meetings leads to families receiving letters stating the percentage attendance of their child/children and expectations for improvements.

Attendance analysis will take place monthly and will include at least two members of the Senior Leadership Team. Following each meeting, letters will be sent informing parents of

declining attendance and punctuality. Their child's attendance percentage will be stated or the amount of lates will be stated and minutes of lost learning stated.

Persistent absence is considered below 90%. If, after two absence letters are sent and a child remains below 90% Early Help will be offered and a meeting will be requested by the Deputy Head Teacher. Attendance Support Plans will be actioned if no further improvement is noted. At this stage, Early Help will be offered and reasons for refusal must be recorded. If attendance continues to decline or remains below 90% - a referral to Education Support Service (ESS).

Authorised absence:

We will authorise a maximum of 10 half days/5 days of absence per pupil per year without any medical evidence of illness. This caters for the occasional colds/coughs/sickness bugs. Attendance at medical appointments will also be authorised provided an appointment card/letter of proof is presented for our records.

Any longer term illness which leads to more days off will be authorised provided it is in line with LA guidance (e.g. in the case of chicken pox.)

We consider that a medical prescription is proof of illness but does not necessarily justify a child's absence unless supported by a doctor's note. In most cases prescriptions can be administered at school where there is a need for 4 doses to be administered per day. (Also see medicine policy.)

Late to school

The school gates open at 8:30am and close at 8:40am. They children will always be greeted by a minimum of two members of staff. Registers are open in the classroom between 8:30 and 8:45am. Any children that arrives late will have the minutes late recorded on Scholar. The school register closes 30 minutes after the class registers close and will result in a U mark (late after registers close) resulting in an unauthorised absence for that session.

The only exception to a child not receiving a late or unauthorised mark is that you have been able to provide proof of attendance at a medical appointment e.g. appointment card from Doctors surgery. We are aware that there may be exceptional circumstances for some children and we would ask that you speak to the Head Teacher if you consider that your circumstances require special consideration. Late marks are a privilege which the school can choose to apply or withdraw at head teacher's discretion.

Short Term Illness

If your child is particularly ill, your first action is to call the school as early as possible (and before 9:30am) on the following number – 01384 818875. If you cannot get through please leave an answer phone message.

This must be done every day that your child remains ill. Without a Doctors' note, length of illness cannot be predicted and must therefore be reported to school daily. Failure to contact the school will result in the school following procedures as described in the 'No Contact from Parent' flowchart.

Reporting your child as being absent for a significant period (5+ days) with no proof will be recorded as unauthorised absence. (The only exception to this is if your child has been admitted to hospital or has a significant long-term illness which has already been reported to the school with medical evidence). If parents/carers cannot provide any further evidence regarding child's absence, the school may involve the school nurse. If repeated absences occur without medical evidence a meeting will be requested with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and an Individual attendance plan will be actioned. Early help may be offered at this stage. If attendance continues to decline without medical evidence, you may be issued with a Warning Notice or Penalty Notice from the Education Support Service.

Please be aware that our records of parental communication can be presented as evidence for referral purposes.

Long Term Sickness

If a child needs to be hospitalised for 3 days or more we can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that they can work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would mean that your child is being educated off site and this would not affect their overall attendance percentage.

If a child leaves hospital and following this is at home for 2 weeks or more, then we can contact Cherry Tree Pupil Referral Unit and they will support your child at home.

Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards greater tracking and monitoring. Where a child's attendance has become of significant concern, whether through a decline in percentage of attendance (towards 90%) or an emerging pattern in their absence, meetings will be requested by the Deputy Head Teacher to monitor the attendance with a view to seeing rapid improvement via an Individual Attendance Plan. Records of each meeting and phone call will be kept as evidence should the need to a referral arise.

Leave of Absence

We want all of our pupils to learn in a high quality, happy and secure environment. We recognise that attendance and punctuality is paramount in raising standards and pupil attainment. Therefore we follow government guidelines as stated below:

Granting leaves of absence (Working Together to Improve School Attendance -September 2022)

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and

circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a

family holiday.

Halesowen schools cannot grant leave of absence for family holidays, unless is it deemed truly exceptional circumstance. This applies to siblings who attend different Halesowen schools.

Absences considered 'exceptional circumstances' must be requested in writing directly to the Head Teacher at least 20 days before the event. All 'Leave of Absence' forms requesting 5 days off or more will receive a reply from the Head Teacher.

The school will notify the ESS that the circumstances required to justify the issuing of a Penalty Notice for a leave of absence, if the school does not have reasonable grounds to

believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause and:

- An application has been refused and leave is then taken;
- No application has been made and leave is taken; or
- Leave has been granted but extended leave is taken without the additional absence being authorised by the school.

Although attendance at nursery is not statutory, authorised absence is only normally granted for emergency situations and medical appointments. All planned absences in term-time must be requested using the Leave of Absence Holiday Request Form. Holidays will be marked as such in the attendance register.

Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances are not specified in the DfE guidance; however advice from the National Association of Head teachers identifies the following possible exceptional circumstances:

- Absences to visit family members are not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave.
- Consideration of the needs of the families of service personnel, if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities
- Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

Suspensions

Parents/Carers can be issued with Penalty Notices if a pupil who has been excluded and contravenes the details set out in the Suspension Letter as to their whereabouts during school hours throughout the duration of that Suspension.

It is our legal responsibility to make a referral when a child who has been suspended, is seen out in public. This will result in an immediate fine from Education Support Service.

Criteria for Referrals/Penalty Notices

Referrals to ESS will be made based on the following documentation as detailed by Dudley ESS.

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/learning-and-school/education-support-service/>

The Education Support Service (ESS) is responsible for ensuring that parents meet their legal obligations in respect of their child's education and in doing so they may issue penalty fines or take legal proceedings to ensure that parents do so. A parent has a responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and if a child's attendance becomes a matter of concern, school may make a referral to the ESS and support them in the actions that they may take.

Referrals

Between 12 to 24 sessions/6 to 12 days of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period School is responsible for making a referral to the Education Support Service (ESS) when a child has been absent from school for at least 12 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period. There are two sessions per school day, a session is a morning (am) or an afternoon (pm), so 12 sessions is the equivalent to 6 days off school.

In excess of 24 sessions/ 12 days of unauthorised absence over 12 weeks School is responsible for making a referral to the Education Support Service (ESS) when a child has been absent from school in excess of 24 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 12-week period. There are two sessions per school day, a session is a morning (am) or an afternoon (pm), so more than 24 sessions is the equivalent to more than 12 days off school.

A child is defined as a persistent absentee if they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions.

Prior to the referral to Dudley Council, Education Support Services:

1. School will inform parents of their child's attendance progress in writing, offering them to contact the school to discuss reasons impacting on their attendance.
2. If there has been no improvement, the school will write to parents informing them that a referral to Dudley Council, ESS which may result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or legal action if unauthorised absence continues to occur.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents/adults with parental responsibility for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age (5-17) attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. They can only be issued by a head teacher or someone authorised by them such as the Education Support Service, the local authority or the police. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalty notices can be issued where a pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and drops to 90%

Penalty Notice is £60, if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120, if paid after 21 days, but within 28 days of receipt. The payment must be paid directly to the local authority, the school does not receive the money. The parent can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made.

There is no legal right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

Penalty notices remain 'active' for a 12 month period after they have been awarded. Therefore it is necessary for improvement in attendance to be brought about in order to avoid a fixed penalty notice or court action.

Child Missing in Education(CME)

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the

whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. Schools must also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England statutory guidance. Schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

Removal from School Roll

If a child is not ill and is persistently absent from our school for above 20 days, as a school we would work with the ESS to find out where your child is, as detailed above. A result of this investigation may be to have your child removed from the school roll. (Section 8 Admissions) It would then be the parent’s responsibility to contact admissions in order to re-register the child/children.

No contact from Parent

In the event of no contact with parent/carer, the following procedures will be followed:

1st Day of Absence;
 Phone call to parent from school
 If no reply - repeat phone call at 1pm.
 Messages sent via Class Dojo throughout day 1 of absence.
 Instill complete home visit and feedback to school on outcome

Day 2 of absence:
 Door knock by member of Attendance Team.
 Continued phone calls and Class Dojo messages.
 Instill complete home visit and feedback to school on outcome

Day 3-4 of absence:
 Day 3 - 2nd door knock and letter of concern delivered.
 Daily phone calls to all named contacts.
 Day 4 – final door knock (before referral to Children’s Services and Attendance Agency).

Education Support Team will be contacted.

In the event of;
 10 consecutive sessions off, 12-24 unauthorised sessions in 6 week period

Attendance Monitoring

Time	Action	Response
Daily	Phone calls Dojo’s	Reason for child’s absence is determined
Day 2-4	Phone calls Dojo’s Door knocks External agencies including Children’s services	Reason for child’s absence is determined. The safety and well-being of the child is determined
Ongoing	Education Support Service contacted for 12-24 absences in 6 week period or 10	Fixed penalty notice

	consecutive days of unauthorised absence	
Ongoing	Education Support Service contacted Leave of absence not authorised 5+ days	Fixed penalty notice
Monthly	SLT attendance monitoring conducted	Below 90% first time receive first attendance or punctuality letter
Monthly	SLT attendance monitoring conducted	Continue below 90% receive second attendance or punctuality letter
Monthly	SLT attendance monitoring conducted	Continue below 90% without improvement. Or punctuality remains unsatisfactory. Attendance meeting and Individual Attendance Plan School Nurse referral offered Early help signposted
Monthly	SLT attendance monitoring conducted	Individual Attendance Plan Reviewed. School Nurse referral offered. Early help signposted If no improvement ESS contacted

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

- To maintain a good and positive attitude towards coming to school.
- To try their hardest to come to school.

Parents

- To ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, in a fit state to learn every day that school is open.
- To notify the school by 9:30am of any absence. Answer machine messages may be left giving a specific reason for absence.
- To provide written explanation of absence on the first day a pupil returns to school if a phone call was not made/message not left.
- To take family holidays in school holiday periods, not during term time.
- To provide letters/doctors notes where prolonged absence occurs.
- To ensure that the school have up-to-date contact details e.g. when mobile phones are replaced.

Teachers

- To complete attendance registers up to date and complete them by 8:45am and 1:05pm respectively.
- To praise pupils for continued and improved punctuality and attendance.
- To notify Attendance Team and SLT of concerns regarding absence or lateness particularly when it is having a detrimental impact upon progress.

Senior Leadership Team

- Named member of staff responsible for attendance (Assistant Head).
- Monthly attendance and punctuality analysis
- Named member of staff to report to Head Teacher and Governors termly in attendance issues.
- Set clear and challenging targets for attendance and punctuality for whole school, classes and individuals.
- To intervene early and make persistent efforts when individuals give cause for concern.
- Follow the schools Attendance Action Flow Chart in the event of persistent or prolonged absence.
- Utilise further professional bodies when improvements are not seen in relation to attendance below 85% or prolonged absence.
- Records to be kept of communication with parents whenever it occurs.

Other relevant Policies:

Working together to Improve School Attendance 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073616/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Summary Table of responsibilities for school attendance 2022

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf

*Policy updated(T Wagstaff): July 2023
Renewal Date: July 2024*

The following codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorized Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorized absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorized absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorized absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorized absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorized absence
O	Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorized absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorized absence
S	Study leave	Authorized absence
T	Traveler absence	Authorized absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorized absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances