



# Caslon Primary Community School

## Attendance Policy 2019-2020

### *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child*

*Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.*

At Caslon Primary Community School we believe that every child has the right to an education (UNICEF Rights of the Child - Article 28) 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 (2018) and School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

Protecting children from maltreatment.

Preventing impairment of children's health or development.

Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.

Detecting early support through Early Help Assessment.

We follow the Department for Education guidelines and expect every child to maintain attendance of at least 96.1% (our school target is 97.5%) throughout the academic year.

### **Celebration of Attendance**

We strongly believe in rewarding those whose attendance and punctuality is significantly improved or consistently excellent through half-termly 100% attendance reward trips/activities.

Class attendances are also celebrated and published in the newsletters.

### **Attendance Analysis**

We have a dedicated team of staff who meet regularly to look at attendance figures including an external agency - Education Attendance Solutions Ltd. The information gathered in these meetings leads to families receiving letters stating the percentage attendance of their child/children and expectations for improvements.

After each monthly attendance analysis meeting, letters informing parents of declining attendance and punctuality will be sent home to keep parents informed and set targets for improvement.

Where attendance is dropping towards 93%, a meeting may be requested by the Deputy Head Teacher or our Education Attendance Solutions Ltd colleague. If attendance continues to decline, a referral to Education Investigation Service (EIS)

### **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 doctors' 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**

Registers are open in the classroom between 8:50 and 9:00am. If your child arrives late at any point, they must be signed in by a parent/carer at the main school office and a reason for lateness must be given. Any child who is in Year 5 or 6 and is not accompanied by an adult should bring a note explaining their lateness. 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. Late marks are a privilege which the school can choose to apply or withdraw at head teacher's discretion.

The register will be closed 30 minutes after school's start time. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a 'U' mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. If unauthorised lateness persists it could result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or enforcement proceedings against you.

We are aware that there may be exceptional circumstances for some children and we would ask that you speak to the Deputy Head or Head Teacher if you consider that your circumstances require special consideration.

*The DfE have stated that;*

*"Arriving late for school, after the register has closed, is recorded as an unauthorised absence for the whole session."*

*The Pupil Registrations Act 2008 states that it is the duty of the parents to ensure their child/children arrive on time for school.*

### **Short Term Illness**

Please refer to Dudley LA guidance on recommended periods of absence regarding specific illnesses (See medical Policy).

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 (4+ 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 Health Advisor and parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the Education Attendance Solutions to discuss how to improve your child's attendance. Following this meeting you may be issued with a Warning Notice or Penalty Notice from the Education Investigation 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 PA 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. Daily absence calls may also be placed by the Deputy Head to the parent. Records of each meeting and phone call will be kept as evidence should the need to a referral arise.

## **Holidays/Leave of Absence**

In Halesowen we are proud of the work we do with our pupils. 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.

All of our schools follow the DfE guidance 2016 which states:

The government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;

Parents to:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

The DfE guidance also states:

- Head Teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstance.

**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.

A school or academy may notify the EIS 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.

### **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.

### **Exclusions**

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

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

### **Criteria for Referrals/Penalty Notices**

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

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/media/5480/feb-18-eis-guidance-to-schools.pdf>

### **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 Investigative 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.

### **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 EIS 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:

### **1<sup>st</sup> 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.

### **Day 2 of absence:**

Door knock by member of Attendance Team.  
Continued phone calls and Class Dojo messages.

### **Day 3-6 of absence:**

Day 3 - 2<sup>nd</sup> door knock and letter of concern delivered.  
Daily phone calls to all named contacts.  
Day 5 - final door knock (before referral to Attendance Agency).

### **Attendance Meeting with Head Teacher/DSL**

On pupils' return to school or on during first contact with parent following absence.

### **Education Investigation Team will be contacted.**

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

## 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 9:00am 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 (Deputy Head).
- 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.

*Policy updated( T Wagstaff): February 2019  
Renewal Date: February 2020*

The following codes will be used to record attendance information.

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

