
Attendance Policy

**Date established by governing body:-
Spring Term 2023**

Reviewed:- 6th February 2023

Date for next review:- Spring Term 2024

Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial for allowing children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Cleaswell Hill School believe attendance is a shared responsibility and work with families to early identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

School Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation, it is a thread that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, positive behaviour support and teaching and learning. In addition to our vision for learning and core values.

This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Race Relations Act 2000 and Equality Act 2010.

At Cleaswell Hill School, our key levels of attendance are:

Attendance	Description
100%	Excellent
96%	Good
94%	Satisfactory
Below 94%	Unsatisfactory
90%	Persistent Absence

Legal Framework

Parents/carers have a duty to educate their children 'suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs which they may have' either by regular attendance at school or otherwise under Section 7 of The Education Act 1996.

Parents/carers whose children are registered at school are then responsible for ensuring that they attend punctually, regularly and stay at school.

All schools must call the attendance register twice per day – at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. School must ensure that attendance registers are kept in accordance with legal requirements and the policy of the school. In addition, schools must inform the Local Authority about pupils who do not attend school regularly or who have been continuously absent for two weeks or more (unless the absence is covered by a medical certificate).



Local Authorities are required to ensure parents/carers carry out their responsibilities with regard to their children's education. Northumberland Local Authority fulfils this requirement through the Education Welfare Service, whose primary responsibility is to enforce the regular and punctual school attendance of all pupils.

School Education Welfare Officer is Clare Laskey, who meets with the Karyn McMahon (Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Lisa Collis (Attendance Officer) every 3-4 weeks to monitor school attendance.

Procedures

School ensures that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and that it is a statutory requirement that they complete this accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

School requests that parents/carers inform the school if they know in advance that their child is going to be away (e.g. medical appointment).

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school directly on the first day of absence with a reason for absence, preferably by telephone or email and do this on each day of absence by 9.00am. If they are unable to do so on the day of absence, then they should do so immediately on the child's return to school.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform school transport of any changes in requirements during this period.

In Cleaswell Hill School, office administration staff communicate any absence to the class teacher.

Administration staff will contact parents/carers to enquire how pupils are on the first day of absence if the parent has not provided this information. If no contact is made by 9:30 the family will be rung until contact is made and an explanation given.

Parents/carers who do not make contact with the school regarding a child's absence and cannot be contacted by the school will have an unauthorised absence recorded for their child.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide if a welfare check is required.

A record is kept on SIMS of attempts made to establish contact with parents/carers at the start of absence.

Parents/carers will be expected to contact school directly if the bout of illness lasts longer than originally anticipated.

If no contact has been made within 5 days, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Team. School contact parents/carers following unexplained absence and have a two week response requirement for this information.

Authorisation of Absence

At Cleaswell Hill School the decision on authorising an absence will be taken by the Headteacher.

Authorised Absence: an absence agreed by the Headteacher with an explanation from parents/carers



Unauthorised Absence: an absence not agreed or unexplained

Medical: a health appointment such as hospital, doctor or dentist

Illness: illness as informed by the parent/carer or on receipt of doctor's/hospital notes, if required.

Full guidance on attendance codes is held in the school office and in each register.

Holidays in Term Time

From 1 September 2013 The Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2013 removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days leave per year. The regulations make clear that Headteachers' can only grant leave of absence during term time when there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher will determine if the request for an absence in term time is exceptional and will consider each request on a case-by-case basis. A parent/carer requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance. A 'Request for Leave-of Absence during Term Time' form is available from the school office and on the school website.

Where absence from school can be considered an "exceptional circumstance" and the pupil has a satisfactory level of school attendance (94% or over) a request is likely to be granted. If a request is made for longer than 10 days or the child's attendance is below 94%, then parents/carers may be contacted to discuss the request.

Cleaswell Hill School fully recognises the stress and sensory overload that some children can experience in, for eg. crowded situations, high levels of noise and needing to queue. When children are distressed, this places additional strain on the rest of the family. This means that for some families to have a relaxing, restful holiday this needs to take place outside busy school holiday periods.

Strategies

School will:

- Support good attendance through positive learning environments and learning activities
- Promote a strong pastoral system, ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued
- Monitor attendance and identify patterns of absence and intervene early
- Have procedures that allow absentees to catch up on missed work, without disrupting the learning of other class members
- Make provision for any pupil returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, to ease back into the school system successfully

Child Protection Concerns

If there are any Child Protection concerns, these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps.

Late Arrival

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and time with the class and teacher receiving vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils disrupt lessons and it can be difficult for the child.

Registration begins at 9.00am, pupils arriving after the register closes at 9.20am, will be marked as present but arriving late (L).

On arrival after the close of register, there will be no staff to greet pupils on the yard and pupils must report to the school office to ensure their safety.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with staff in school to resolve the problem, but you can approach staff at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time.

Absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, evidence of attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if the family woke up late.

Using Attendance Data

Cleaswell Hill School will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the Local Authority as required in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Indicators next to a pupil's name will show if their attendance has stayed the same, improved or deteriorated and will be used to identify emerging patterns and trends.

If a pupil's attendance becomes a cause for concern, a First Concern Letter and, if necessary if no improvement is seen, a Second Concern Letter will be issued in consultation with the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, school will refer to Education Welfare and the use of legal sanctions may be considered.

Contact details

There are times when school and/or Education Welfare may need to contact you about your child's attendance. It is important that school have your contact details at all times. A minimum of one emergency contact number is required.

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