

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Ratified on 5th March 2021 by SDC

Introduction

At John Clifford School, we celebrate high levels of attendance and a good level of punctuality. The children love coming to school and they are supported in their development through access to quality teaching and learning and a varied and rich curriculum. This policy applies to all children registered at John Clifford School and it is available to all parents/carers through our school website. It is written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education¹ in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. John Clifford School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure that all pupils are in school and on time and able to maximise their progress.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance, the Headteacher and Governors also work together with other professional agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Strategies for Celebrating Excellent Attendance and Punctuality

To help all children achieve the best attendance possible, we:

Celebrate classes who achieve 100% attendance for the week.

Celebrate children who attain 100% attendance for the term.

Celebrate children who attain 100% attendance for the academic year.

We are aware that some children may find it difficult to always achieve 100% due to serious medical reasons and sensitivity is applied where necessary.

Aims and Objectives

Through this Policy we aim to:

Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality by achieving a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.

This will be achieved through:

the creation of an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school;

¹ Further details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

raising awareness to parents/carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education;

ensuring that our Policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age;

working in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Early Years Help Unit (Targeted Support) so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence;

promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, valued and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility;

establishing a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensuring consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties; and

recognising the key role that all staff play in promoting good attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of the school community have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

Adhering to the Absence Reporting Procedures outlined in this Policy.

Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.

Contacting the School Office on the first morning of absence.

Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)

Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

Monitoring whole school attendance.

Identifying trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.

Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.

Making referrals to the Early Years Support Service (Targeted Support)

Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Early Years Support Service (Targeted Support).

Liaising with parents/carers and other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Class teachers are responsible for:

Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and/or their parents/ carers.

Informing the Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.

Providing background information to support referrals.

Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.

Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.

Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.

Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

Administration Staff are responsible for:

Collating and recording registration and attendance information.

Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.

Ensuring that absences are recorded on the SIMs (Schools Information Management) system and lates are recorded on the Visitor Pod.

Contacting parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made.

Recording details of children who arrive late or leave early on the Visitor Pod.

Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual

explanations for attendance offered by children and/or their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher.

Corresponding with parents regarding attendance.

The Governing Body are responsible for:

Ensuring that the school promotes good attendance and punctuality and reduces absence

Developing and monitoring the schools policy on attendance and punctuality

Ensuring compliance with legislation and guidance issued by the Department of Education and Local Authority

Monitoring and analysing attendance data and ensuring that any patterns of absence that may give cause for concern are addressed

Evaluating the effectiveness of attendance procedures and implementing strategies to improve attendance and punctuality

Ensuring the Schools policy on and approach to attendance and punctuality is drawn to the attention of staff and parents/carers

Definitions

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a justified reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

(Coding – see Appendix a)

Procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

1. Maintain appropriate registration processes.
2. Maintain appropriate attendance data.
3. Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils.
4. Have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
5. Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
6. Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
7. Not authorise absence through holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
8. Work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
9. Refer to the Early Years Help Unit (Targeted Support Services) of any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
10. Report attendance statistics to Nottinghamshire LA and the DfE where requested.
11. Ensure staff are aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Attendance Officer with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Registration

All children line up at 8:50am if they are in Key Stage 1 or 2. The school doors open and the bell will be rung at 8.50am, gates are closed at 9am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom and be registered on our electronic attendance register known as SIMs in the Classroom. Any pupil who is absent will be recorded as absent at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.15am for the morning session and by 1.20pm for the afternoon session. These registers are then submitted electronically to the School Office.

(Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present)

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and hard copies are printed and are kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9am the only way to get into school is via the school Main Entrance. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.55am will be marked as late on the school Visitor Pod. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.30am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M). Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

End of School Day Late Collection

Parents must contact school at the earliest opportunity to inform of their lateness and give an estimated time of arrival, if a child is not collected by 3:45pm they will be supervised by the Headteacher or a member of Senior Leadership Group. In the event that the school is unable to contact any person on the child's contact list and they are not collected by 5pm, the school will contact social services and/or the police.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence and if possible their child's intended date of return. If parents are unable to provide a date of return they should text/telephone the school each day of their child's continued absence.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. (Attendance code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any communication from the parent/carer, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers

from 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence by text or telephone.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents/carers to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence should be either:

doctor's note

appointment card

a copy of a prescription

We may seek written permission from parents/carers for the school to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if "special circumstances" exist. Instead, Headteachers are now only allowed to grant a leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied "exceptional circumstances" exists. The school may ask for evidence to support your application i.e. wedding invitation, visa application appointment letter etc.

(Appendix b - Leave of Absence Form)

Addressing Attendance Concerns

At John Clifford School we expect attendance of at least 96%. It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. If attendance drops below 96%, concerns about attendance will be raised with parents/carers. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Early Years Help Unit (Targeted Support).

The Early Years Help Unit (Targeted Support) will issue penalty notices/prosecutions to parents where there has been a referral from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

(see Nottinghamshire County Councils code of conduct for persistent absenteeism

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/114105/truancyexcludedpupilscodeofconduct.pdf>

Children with attendance below 96% will be highlighted by staff at Parents' Evenings.

Appendix a

Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	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

Appendix b



APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

EVERY DAY COUNTS

GOOD ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL= GOOD PROGRESS

On the reverse of this application form is a request for permission for your child to be absent from school during term time. Before completing the application form, please read the following notes carefully:

From 1st September 2013, the law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time.

Headteachers cannot authorise **holidays** during term time.

If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, you must apply in writing for permission in advance using the attached form. Permission for authorised leave of absence may be granted only in **exceptional circumstances**.

The 10 day leave of absence has now been abolished.

If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or court action being issued against you for irregular school attendance.

If your child does not return within 20 days of the end of the absence they will be taken off role and you will have to re-apply for a school place.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child during term time, please complete the application on the reverse.

This form should be returned to your child's school at least

4 weeks' prior to the proposed absence.



**APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER
FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

(IMPORTANT - Please read notes overleaf)

Pupil's Name _____ Class _____ Year Group _____

Home Address _____

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of first day of absence _____ **Date of Return to School** _____

Total number of school days missed _____

Please explain the exceptional circumstances that make it necessary for your child to be absent in term time?

I make application for my child, named above, to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice and/or court action for irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/Carer making application _____

Signed _____ **Date** _____

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO SCHOOL
GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE**

Office Use

Copy to:	Parent/Carer		File		Attendance Register updated		Code Used	
-----------------	--------------	--	------	--	-----------------------------	--	-----------	--

REPLY FROM: Mrs Janine Waring, Headteacher

Parent of _____ **Class** _____

Thank you for your application for Leave of Absence as above. I confirm that this leave has been noted and will be classified as:

<input type="checkbox"/> Authorised: Number of days:		<input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised: Number of days:	
		If your request for additional leave has been classified as unauthorised it is for the following reason: Reason for request does not qualify for authorised leave.	

Signed _____ **Headteacher** **Date** _____

Please be aware that when parents / carers choose to withdraw their children during term time, the school is unable to set, monitor or mark work for the period of the absence.