

Central Primary School



Attendance Policy

Our motto: Children are Central.

Introduction

At Central Primary school, we want the whole school community – parents, pupils, staff and governors to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning. This attendance policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

As a school, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent or guardian writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents or guardians do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents or guardians will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours; this is not an authorised absence.

Authorised absences may include;

- Sickness of child (but not the sickness of siblings/ family members)
- Funeral (Close family member – only day of funeral is authorised)
- Moving house (one day, where absence has been notified in advance)

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent or guardian.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent or guardian.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Shopping trips
- Looking after family members who are unwell
- Birthdays
- Death of a pet

School Day

Doors open

- Breakfast club opens at 8:00am in the dining hall/ community room (£1 per day – to be paid on arrival to one of the breakfast club staff)

- First school bell sounds at 8:45am and doors to school open to allow pupils to enter the building (On days with poor weather school doors will open at 8:40am) the second bell will ring at 8:50am any pupils arriving after the school bell are late and must enter the school via the school office.
- Pupils who are not attending a pre-school club/ breakfast club or other authorised activity should not arrive at school before 8:35am and they should be accompanied by a parent/ carer until 8:45am when the first bell sounds (Pupils who walk to school on their own are an exception to this rule but should not be arriving at school before 8:35am unless attending breakfast or booster clubs). **Any child arriving before 8:35am will be asked to attend breakfast club and will be charged for the session.**

Registration

- Registers will be called between 8:50am and 9am by one of the classroom adults.
- Pupils will have their name called and should respond with 'Good morning/ afternoon *insert adults name* school dinners/ packed lunch please'.
- During this interaction, the children will order their school lunches from the lunchtime options.
- The number of pupils in class will be recorded in a circle on the wipe-board so that in the event of a fire any adult can ensure that all children are accounted for while they wait for the registers.

Lateness

- Any pupil arriving after 8:50am is considered to be late to school and they must report to the school office on arrival with a responsible adult giving a reason for their lack of punctuality. All incidents of lateness will be recorded in the school's late book and this is monitored on a weekly basis.
- Any pupil arriving after 9:15am will be recorded in the school's late log. This is to record pupils arriving after registration has closed. These will serve as records for why a child has arrive late to school and these are monitored in line with the school's safeguarding policies

Attendance Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectation which this policy makes of them.

School

Expectations	How is this achieved?
Central Primary School will provide a safe and purposeful learning environment	The school will create exciting and safe learning environments with a rich and engaging curriculum to encourage pupils to attend school
The school will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis	The school will take registers of pupils' attendance twice daily (morning and afternoon sessions) and record this into the School Information Manager System (SIMs) this allows prompt tracking or pupil attendance and identification of absences from school
Central Primary School will encourage good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absence	Parents will be phoned/ texted on first day of any pupil absence by school office (unless the school has been informed by the parent of said child by 9am). If an answer is not gained repeated calls, texts and emails will be made throughout the day of absence until communication is made. If no response can be gained from parents the school will record this absence as unauthorised until a letter is received from a parent/ carer stating the reason for their child's absence.
Central Primary School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality	Staff will abide by their staff handbook and code of conduct and will inform the Head Teacher of absence by 7am to enable cover to be sort as necessary Staff will encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality of their respective class and or key stages through a variety of

	means. These may include; - informal/ formal conversations with parents – promotion of attendance rewards within class – Asking about pupil absence from school – Talking about importance of regular attendance
<p>Central Primary School will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality</p> <p>Central Primary School will keep parents informed of their child's attendance/ punctuality record</p> <p>Central Primary School will work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern</p>	<p>Staff will let parents know when a pupil's attendance falls below 96%</p> <p>- Letters will be sent to all parents/ carers with children who have below 96% attendance on a half termly basis</p> <p>Below 96%</p> <p>- Parents/ carers will receive a text message on a weekly basis letting them know if their child's attendance is improving</p> <p>- Teachers will discuss with parents' options available at school to promote higher attendance i.e. breakfast club</p> <p>Below 90%</p> <p>- Parents/ carers will receive a weekly phone call about their child's attendance which will discuss how it can be improved</p> <p>Below 85%</p> <p>- Parents/ carers will meet with a member of school staff on a fortnightly basis to discuss attendance and an attendance plan (including stations for poor attendance) will be put in place (exceptions to this are pupils with known medical/ health or disability reasons which affect their good attendance to school)</p> <p>Below 80%</p> <p>-The attendance officer (AIO) will make a formal meeting with parents to discuss poor attendance and will put an attendance plan (including stations for poor attendance) in place which will be monitored via a meeting with parents on each half termly visit</p>

Parents/ Carers

Expectations	How is this achieved?
Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance	<p>Parents will ensure that their child is at school every day that they well enough to attend school</p> <p>Dentist/ Doctor/ Appointments will be made outside of school hours or as near to the end of the school day as possible as to not disrupt attendance and learning at school. <i>Where pupils need to attend an appointment in the school day, they should arrive at school as normal, and be collected before being returned for the remainder of the school day following the appointment.</i></p>
Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn	Parents will send their child to school in school uniform, on time, with their PE kits and Book Bags ready for their daily learning
Parents will inform school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school	Parents/ carers will ring the school on the first day of any absence before 9:15am to let the school know the reason for a child's absence

Parents will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary	Parents will continue to inform the school on the 3 rd , 5 th etc. day or absence where necessary to ensure that the school remains informed of the child's absence
Parents will avoid arranging family holidays during term time	Parents will not book or arrange family holidays during school term time – Family holidays will not be approved and will be recorded as unauthorised absences and may be subject to a financial sanction
Parents will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details	<p>When a parent/ carer changes a contact details, such as mobile number, home phone number, email address, postal address, work contact number and/or emergency contact numbers they should immediately inform the office via one of the following methods</p> <p>In person Visit the office and give the office staff an updated version of the amended contact details</p> <p>Via phone Ring the school office on 01923 225129 to give the updated version of the amended contact details over the phone</p> <p>Via email Send the updated versions of the amended contact details to admin@central.herts.sch.uk clearly stating your name, your child's name and class alongside the contact details you are amending</p> <p>Via letter Send the updated versions of the amended contact details in a letter to the office clearly stating your name, your child's name and class alongside the contact details you are amending</p> <p><i>It is vital that we always have your up to date contact numbers so that if your child is taken ill during the school day we are able to contact you quickly.</i></p>

Pupils

Expectations	How is this achieved?
<p>All pupils are expected to attend school and all their lessons regularly and punctually</p> <p>Pupils are expected to be ready to learn</p>	<p>Pupils will ensure that they arrive at school every day that they well enough to attend in school uniform, on time, with their PE kits and Book Bags ready for their daily learning</p>
<p>Pupils must remember to hand any note giving reasons for any absences to their class teacher or the school's office</p>	<p>Pupils will be asked at morning and afternoon registration for any notes/ envelopes for the teacher or office – in EYFS book bags will be looked through to ensure that any relevant notes/ envelopes are discovered</p>
<p>Pupils will not leave the school without permission</p>	<p>Pupils will understand the rules of the school which are refreshed on a regular basis and will not leave the school site without an adult or for Year 5 and 6 pupils authorisation to walk home alone at the end of the school day</p>

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent or guardian may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. We expect parents or guardians to contact the school at least three weeks in advance in writing. A request form is available on the school's website. The Head Teacher and/or County Attendance Officer will make contact with parents or guardians to discuss the request.

<p>Central Primary School will not authorise family holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances</p>	<p>The Head Teacher will decide on exceptional circumstances on an individual case basis</p> <p>An absence request form needs to be filled in (available from the school website) before any absence will be considered.</p> <p>The Head Teacher may ask to meet with a parent requesting holiday – failure to attend this meeting will result in absence not being approved.</p> <p>No holiday will be approved for a child in Year 2 or Year 6 as these are examination year groups.</p> <p>Holiday taken without consent will be unauthorised – If a pupil has over 15 sessions absent (half day = 1 session) the Head Teacher will ask the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice. A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 21 days raising to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. If this penalty notice is not paid the LA may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.</p>
<p>Central Primary will not authorise more than 7 (14 sessions) days absence from school even in exceptional circumstances</p>	<p>The Head Teacher will not authorise absences over 7 days (14 sessions) under any circumstances</p> <p>The Head Teacher will not authorise absences for consecutive school years for any pupil</p>
<p>Central Primary School will treat all requests for absence from school using the Absence Calculation chart Appendix B</p>	<p>We aim to make the process for absence request fair and use a point rating system</p> <p>This system is a guide and will inform the school's decision making process – there is no automatic right for parents to have absence requests approved</p>

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then

contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Central Primary School will use fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absences which are exceed 15 sessions (each morning or afternoon is counted as one session, so there are two sessions per calendar day).

The Penalty notice will be issues via the Local Authority on the advice and discretion of the Head Teacher.

The Fixed Penalty Fine will be £60 if paid within 21 days. This will rise to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute.

The Education Welfare Team sees Fixed Penalty Notices as an effective part of Central Primary School's drive to improve attendance and reduce unauthorised absences.

Fixed Penalty Notices are supported by both Hertfordshire County Council and the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Rewards for good attendance

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive a certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the half term. There are special Head Teacher certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

At the end of each week the class with the best attendance receives a certificate, when they have collected three certificates they nominate a reward that they would like their class to receive. Attendance figures for each class are published in the school's weekly newsletter and individual attendance figures are displayed on the boards outside each child's classroom.

Parents/ carers of pupils with 100% attendance are invited to a special attendance assembly once a half term to receive an award for supporting excellent attendance to school.

Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LEA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Equality

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 we seek to;

- a) **eliminate discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the act
- b) **advance equality of opportunity** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) **foster good relations** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

Our Attendance Policy aims to promote the positive attendance of all pupils to school in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Monitoring and review

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and will seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, class teachers will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

APPENDIX A

NEW ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

January 2009

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. present at another school or PRU)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> 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	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Further information on the correct use of these symbols can be found at :

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/schoolattendancedata/a0010008/pupil-registration-regulations-and-guidance>

from which a Word document entitled **Absence Data – Absence and Attendance codes, January 2009** can be downloaded.

Absence Requests during Term Time

The Head Teacher has the discretion to grant up to ten days authorised absence in a school year. However, each application will be considered individually taking into account factors such as the timing of the absence and the pupil's current attendance. For example, a pupil with an otherwise perfect attendance record will achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance if s/he has a ten day absence during term time. One way of managing this is by using the Absence Authorisation Calculator (see below). The legislation states that,

“(3) Subject to paragraph (4) a pupil may be granted leave of absence from the school to enable him to go away on holiday where –

- (a) An application has been made in advance to the proprietor by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and*
- (b) The proprietor, or a person authorised on authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application.*

(4) Save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil shall not in pursuance of paragraph (3) be granted more than ten school days leave of absence in any school year.”

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

In brief, this means that:

- Parents **CANNOT** demand a leave of absence as an automatic right.
- Parental requests **MUST** be made in advance.
- Schools **CANNOT** apply blanket policies to approve/reject all applications
- All requests **MUST** be considered on their own merits.
- Extended periods of absence will be granted **ONLY** in exceptional circumstances.

Absence Authorisation Calculator

The power to authorise/unauthorise a leave of absence belongs to the Head Teacher. In order to ensure equity within and between schools, decisions on whether or not to authorise a leave of absence for family holidays could be guided by the use of the Absence Authorisation Calculator. **This does not remove the Head Teacher's prerogative to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances or to decline this request.**

Procedure

Parent/ carer should complete a holiday request form and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the intended period of absence; school will respond to the request within one week. If school is aware of any difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed, appropriate support should be offered to the parent/carers.

The Absence Authorisation Calculation Chart should be used to guide the Head Teacher's decision on whether or not to authorise the requested leave of absence.

If the total score is 5 or less, absence leave may be authorised, if deemed appropriate by the Head Teacher

If the total score is 6 or more absence leave should not be authorised. However, the Head Teacher may be aware of exceptional circumstance which would warrant approving holiday leave and this should be recorded on the form.

If a pupil has already taken seven days' leave in the same academic year, or in the preceding year a further absence request for leave should not be authorised.

If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings, absence should not be authorised and this should be recorded on the form.

A letter confirming that the request has been authorised /denied should be sent to the parent/carer, with a copy of the Absence Authorisation Calculation Chart within one week of receipt of the absence request.

