

# *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 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 or medical appointments of child (but not the sickness of siblings/ family members)
- Funeral (Close family member – only day of funeral is authorised)
- Exceptional circumstances
- Embassy or VISA appointments (Letter/email/text to be provided confirming appointment)
- Absence for non school sport participation or film/theatre participation (detailed information required to authorise and the child has to reach the required attendance level)

#### **Religious observance**

The day/s of religious observance will be authorised for the ceremony and travel time for a one off observance not regular or recurring events. Where necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body.

#### **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:

- Absences not properly explained
- Shopping trips
- Parents/carers keeping children at home unnecessarily

- Looking after family members who are unwell
- Birthdays
- Death of a pet
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Day trips and holidays which have not been agreed

### **Holidays in term time**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications (Appendix A) for leave must be made in advance. The school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including the previous pattern of term time leave.

The school will not authorise leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- When a pupils attendance record already falls as persistent absence as defined by the DfE  
If the child is 4 years old.

The school may refer to the attendance officer if appropriate.

### **Persistent absence (PA)**

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

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached PA mark or at the risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is an illegal practice in the UK and if it is suspected that a female pupil is absent for this purpose, then the Headteacher will use direct questioning to ascertain whether 'cutting' of the girl will be undertaken during this time. The Headteacher will then take this information from this meeting and to refer to the police, if appropriate. School will also refer to the Child Protection Policy.

### **Children missing from Education (CMiE)**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability aptitude and any special education needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

*The school will always ensure that it follows it's Child Protection in ensuring that all children are safe.*

### **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/carers to discuss the request.

### **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 attendance 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 issued by the Hertfordshire County Council, if the unauthorised absences 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 issued 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.

## **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.

## **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is unacceptable. If a child misses the start of the school day they can miss the input of a lesson, instructions about work, group or 1:1 work as well as disrupting the lessons for the other children. Good time keeping is a vital skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

- 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

## **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.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as to the best way to ensure a high level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

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

**APPENDIX A**

**CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**REQUEST FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL  
DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

**You are reminded that we strongly discourage families from withdrawing their children from school or taking their holidays during term time as it is disruptive to the children's education.**

I would like to apply for an authorized absence from school for the children named below:

Children's Names	Class
1.....	.....
2.....	.....
3.....	.....

Dates of absence from..... to .....

The circumstances that require my child/children to be absent from school are  
.....  
.....

Signed .....(Parent/Guardian).....  
Date

**Please return the form to school as soon as possible.**

OFFICE USE ONLY  
2017/18

Request No.

Permission for authorized absence is granted.

Signed ..... Ms K Bentham - Headteacher

Permission for an authorized absence has NOT been granted because:  
.....  
.....

Signed ..... Ms K Bentham - Headteacher



## Children are Central

**Headteacher:** Ms K Bentham BSC with QTS MA NPQH

Date

Address

Dear

### The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

#### Registered at Central Primary School

This is a formal warning that you are at risk of being in breach of the regulations stated above. **Childs name** has been absent from school and the absence has not been authorised.

Should the number of unauthorised absence sessions reach 15 or more in the current and/or previous term you will be in breach of the regulations and the Local Authority may issue you with a penalty notice.

The notice requires you to pay a penalty of £60 within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each parent is liable to pay a separate penalty and penalty notices are issued for each child to whom the absence relates.

Payment of the penalty enables you to discharge your liability for the offence for the period in question of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. (section 444, The Education Act 1996).

Failure to pay the penalty means you are liable to prosecution for the offence, by summons to appear before the local Magistrates Court. On conviction you may be liable for a fine of up to £1,000 per parent. This is a criminal offence which carries a criminal record. The Local Authority will ask for costs of £125 to be awarded against you.

If you fail to ensure your child attends regularly and 15 sessions of unauthorised absence is reached a penalty notice will be issued. **You will not receive a further warning before the penalty is imposed.**

If you believe there are legitimate reasons for your child's absence, please contact me within 5 working days to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Katie Bentham

Headteacher