

# Coppermill Primary School



## Attendance Policy

Ratified by the Curriculum & Achievement Committee: March 2019

Review cycle: Every three years

Next review: Summer 2022

## **Aims and Ethos**

At Coppermill Primary School we believe that good attendance is imperative to ensure that our pupils benefit positively from their education enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Good attendance and punctuality plays a vital role in keeping children safe and poor attendance disadvantages them and their progress.

We expect our pupils to arrive at school each day, on time and ready to learn. Our minimum target for whole school attendance is **96%**. We aim to monitor attendance closely so that any problems impeding full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary absence.

## **Attendance and the Law**

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority. In extreme cases, prosecutions could result in fines of up to £2,500.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (*not parents/ carers*) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is being taken, no mark will be recorded. The school Attendance Officer - Laura Jago, will then call the parent/s of any missing children each day, requesting a valid reason for absence. If this is provided, the school may authorise the absence, but this is not guaranteed.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays, unless a **formal letter** has been submitted in advance, and the Head teacher deems that the leave of absence should be granted due to **exceptional / extenuating circumstances**.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed at least 2 weeks in advance, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**. Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence of **10 sessions (5 days) or more**, in any one term (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if their child **persistently arrives late** for school after the close of registration, their parents or carers may receive a **Penalty Notice** of £60 per parent per pupil - if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in further prosecution.

In the circumstance that a child is absent from school for more than 3 days; and the school have made every effort to contact the parents (this may include a home visit if deemed necessary) with no response, in compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority and Education Welfare Service. It is their duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Parents/ Carers**

Parents/ Carers have a duty of care to ensure that their children have full access to an education. It is ultimately the parents/ carers responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school, punctually and ready to learn each day - **School starts at 8:50am** and the gates will close promptly at 9:00am.

Any arrivals after this time will be deemed as 'late' and the school will expect a **valid reason from the parent / carer** when the children are signed in at the school office.

If your child is absent for any reason, the parent / carer **must** inform the school office each morning of the absence via telephone call, email or by coming to the office in person. The parent must also provide all proof of the absence available, if requested to do so.

### **School**

At Coppermill we understand that there can be external factors which have an impact on your child/ children's attendance. Our intention is to monitor attendance closely and to ensure that we are able to communicate and support our parents in this circumstance, so we can work together to avoid the child's attendance being impacted more than necessary.

### **Governing Body**

The Governing Body has a responsibility to hold the school to account on good levels of attendance. They receive a termly attendance report from the Head Teacher. In addition, a Governor responsible for attendance meets with the school attendance officer once per term to monitor our attendance levels.

### **Registration Process**

Attendance registers are **required by law** and are taken twice a day. The morning register closes at **9:00am each day**.

Any arrivals **after close of registers, but before 9.30am** will be recorded as late – with an **(L) code** along with the time and a valid reason provided by the parent.

Any **arrivals after 9.30am** will be recorded with a **(U) code** which represents their attendance on site, however as their arrival was significantly late, it is an unauthorised mark. This mark will have a great impact on the students' attendance and ultimately the whole school attendance figures.

If any student incurs ten (U) code marks in a term the parent would be liable for a fine and possible further action if deemed necessary.

Afternoon registers are taken after lunch - **Key Stage 1 at 1:00pm and Key Stage 2 at 1:30pm each day**.

### **Reporting Absence**

Coppermill Primary adopts a **'first-day calling'** approach when reporting a child's absence from school. It is the parents / carers obligation to call or email the school office **each morning** that their child is absent due to illness, or if there is an extenuating circumstance which prevents attendance. **Informing the class teacher is not sufficient - the office must be informed.**

The parent must clearly state the pupil's full name, class and provide a valid, detailed reason for absence – **'unwell' is not a sufficient reason and will not be authorised**. If the school phone line is busy in the morning, a detailed voicemail message will be sufficient. Alternatively you can report absence face-to-face at the school office each morning.

Absences due to illness lasting **longer than three days** will require medical evidence or proof of medication being taken (provided by a doctor or pharmacy) in order to authorise the absence.

**Medical appointment cards / prescriptions are sufficient for this.** The evidence provided **must** be in English and will be placed on the pupil paper file as evidence of the absence.

### **Medical Appointments**

Routine medical appointments will **not** be authorised by the school. We **do not** encourage children missing their vital learning time during the school day and therefore ask parents/ carers that such appointments are booked either after school or during school holidays.

**Emergency appointments** at the doctor or dentist for example, may be authorised providing that the parent communicates with the school office and provides **proof** of the appointment - this will be copied and placed on the pupil's paper file.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Laura Jago is responsible for monitoring overall attendance and flagging any concerns which may need further investigation. The school works closely with our Borough **Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) on a monthly basis** to tackle any attendance issues that may arise.

Persistent lateness and poor punctuality can also be interpreted as absence. **Any pupil who falls below 90% attendance is a Persistent Absentee pupil.**

Any pupils who have a low attendance mark (below 90%) are closely monitored by the school Attendance Officer and will initially receive a **'Low Attendance' letter** at the end of the relevant term (half termly if deemed necessary). This will outline to the parent their child's attendance percentage and request that they actively take action to improve their child's attendance moving forwards. The EWO will also monitor this on the monthly visit to the school.

In the cases where there is still no improvement in attendance, a second **'Attendance Concern' follow up letter** will be sent to the parent requesting immediate action in improving their child's attendance. The school will also flag our concerns with the EWO who can pursue and investigate further if deemed necessary - You could receive further letters / a telephone call or a home visit in some cases at this point.

Failure to comply with the school expectations, having received all of the above notifications will lead to a **School Attendance Panel meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team** at the school, to discuss our concerns and investigate further – The EWO may be present at this meeting if the school deems it necessary to request she is present. This will be recorded and placed on file.

The Borough Educational Welfare Officer (**EWO**) and Behaviour, Attendance and Children Missing from Education (**BACME**) Service have a duty of care to follow up and investigate any concerns that the school bring to their attention. Necessary action and procedures will then be followed. In extreme circumstances, this can lead to court action being pursued or a fine being issued.

### **Collection at the end of the school day**

At Coppermill we have also implemented a **'late table'** procedure. If you are late to collect your child from school, the pupil/s will wait with a designated member of staff or in the school office until a parent / carer arrives to collect them.

The office staff will make attempts to contact the parent to where they are during this time. Upon arrival the parent/ carer will then be required to sign the child out, stating the **collection time and provide a reason for the late arrival**, which is recorded each time.

**By law, the School are obliged to report to Social Services if your child is not collected by 4:00pm due to our safeguarding duty.**

Persistent lateness to collect your child/ children from school will result in Laura Jago reporting to the Local Authority with the schools concerns.

The parent/ carer will initially be approached by the school office team for further explanations, the parent may then receive a **'late collection' letter** from the school expressing our concerns over the number of times the child/ children have come to school or been collected late each term / half term if no improvement has been recognised.

If improvements are not consistent, the parent may be invited to a **School Attendance Panel meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team** at the school, to discuss our concerns and investigate further – The EWO may be present at this meeting if the school deems it necessary to request she is present. (The minutes of the meeting will be recorded and placed on file). In extreme circumstances this can lead to court action being pursued or a fine being issued.

### **Nursery Pupils**

Children are admitted to Coppermill Primary School Nursery on the condition that they attend every day, unless there are valid reasons for absence. Persistent absence will be monitored in the same way as for children in the rest of the school, and necessary appropriate action will be taken.

If absence is unavoidable, the parent/ carer must report to the office in the same way as the rest of the school as outlined in this policy. Where a nursery child's daily attendance is inconsistent without good reason, or the child is absent for a period of time without notice or explanation, parents should be aware that their child's place may be **withdrawn** in order to enable another child to benefit from it.

### **Attendance Incentives**

Coppermill Primary School promotes and celebrates attendance and punctuality in our regular whole school assemblies in the following ways:

- **Attendance Bears - 'Attendony' and 'Attendalisa'** are awarded each week to the class with the highest attendance in Key Stage 1 and 2
- **Weekly certificates** - Any class reaching 100% attendance for the week will receive a whole class certificate.
- **Termly certificates** - At the end of each term, certificates and a small prize will be given out to all individual pupils who have achieved **100% attendance - our Gold Award!**
- We also acknowledge in assembly all individual pupils with good attendance across the term:
  - ✓ **98-99% attendance (Silver Award)**
  - ✓ **96-98% attendance (Bronze Award)**

These figures and names will be displayed on our **'Astounding Attendance' Board** each term in the main hall to celebrate excellent attendance.