



Cowbit St Mary's CofE School

Whole School Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential at Cowbit St Mary's CofE School.

We value all pupils and we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them enabling them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent individuals who are able to make a positive contribution to their community.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000 and the new legislation on attendance that came into force in September 2013.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act. In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

3. Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an explanation of the nature of the absence and an expected date of return.

Where a parent does not phone in, the School Business Manager will phone to check why the child is absent. A record will be made stating that the school had to contact home.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness In most cases a telephone call or email to the school (joanne.drew@cowbit.lincs.sch.uk) informing that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments Parents are strongly advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day.

Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement.

Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Leave of Absence Parents are advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Leave of absence may be granted but only in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Governing Body. Parents wishing to take their child on a leave of absence during term time must send a written request to the Chair of Governors before arrangements are made. If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on leave, the absence will be unauthorised and this may result in a Fixed Term Penalty Notice being issued.

Religious Observance We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

Cowbit St Mary's CofE School will follow County guidance to protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance.

Late Arrival Registration begins at 8:50 a.m., pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9:25 a.m. pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session. Parents need to sign the late book in reception when bringing their child to school late. Arriving late is a disadvantage as pupils are unsettled when classroom routines/ lessons have already commenced and should therefore be avoided. Persistent lateness may result in a Fixed Term Penalty Notices being issued.

Unauthorised absence Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation of an exceptional circumstance. Absence has to be preapproved before taking your child out of school.

4. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order

The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority

Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed

Death of a pupil

Transfer between schools

Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system

Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age

20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil

We will follow Lincolnshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown. In line with safeguarding procedure where school has received no notification as to the whereabouts of the child for a period of 5 school days, the school will report the absence to the Local Authority.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

The Governing Body and Head Teacher will:

Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents

Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy

Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with

Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school

Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings

Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time

Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance. At Cowbit St Mary's CofE School, this is the Headteacher.

Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site

Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence

Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

Staff will:

Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents

Form positive relationships with pupils and parents

Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve

Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually

Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues

Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with

Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource

Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time

Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body

Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented

Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence

Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families

Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

We request that Parents will:

Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress

Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment

Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations

Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.

Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours

Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties

Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance

Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home

Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before

Not keep their child off school unnecessarily e.g. to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family

Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time unless in exceptional circumstances, send a written leave of absence request to the Headteacher in advance

6. Using Attendance Data

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every week the School Business Manager will provide the Headteacher with attendance data and this will be fed back to Governors at each Full Governors meeting.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

7. Support Systems

School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, separation or divorce. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils

- Attendance Panels

- Referrals to support agencies

- Learning Mentor support

- Reward systems

- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

In extreme cases where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, we will consider the use of legal sanctions via the Education Welfare Services on behalf of Lincolnshire county Council.

Supporting documents School Attendance- Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance

Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour - Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance

Lincolnshire County Council Attendance Strategy and LCC Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct 2014

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schoold/welfare?tab=downloads

Policy reviewed by Governors July 2019

Approved by Governors 9th July 2019

Signed Chair of Governors

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To be reviewed July 2020

COPY OF LETTER TO BE SENT FOR PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

Re: Name of pupil and date of birth

Dear <Name of Parent>

In accordance with our procedure to improve attendance and achievement, I am writing to you because your child's attendance has fallen to ____%. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

An attendance of less than 90% means an average of at least one day off every week and this will harm your child's future if it is not improved. I realise that there may be good reason for your child's recent absence and you may have already told us about it. However, it is vital that all pupils at our school attend at least 97% of the time and therefore we will be monitoring your child's attendance.

With your support, I would expect your child's attendance to improve. If it does not, you will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss your child's attendance and any support the school can give.

I would like to remind you that parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure their children receive an adequate education under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

If you have any concerns or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

I look forward to seeing an improvement in _____'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

Mr B Johnson
Headteacher

COPY OF LETTER TO BE SENT FOR ATTENDANCE MEETING

Re: Name of pupil and date of birth

Dear <Name of Parent/Carer>

On <date> I wrote to you advising that _____'s attendance had fallen to _____%. Unfortunately, there has been no significant improvement in his/her attendance and this is continuing to cause concern. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

I must remind you that regular attendance is a legal requirement and it is important that any issues that may be the cause of this poor attendance are addressed as soon as possible. You are invited to attend a meeting at school with the Headteacher on <date> at <time> to discuss your child's attendance and offer our support in improving this. If you are unable to attend on this date please contact the school to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Please complete the reply slip below to confirm you will be attending this meeting.

Yours sincerely

Mr B Johnson
Headteacher

Attendance Meeting <date>

Child's Name:.....

I will be able to attend the attendance meeting on <date>

I will not be able to attend the attendance meeting on <date>

Signature:..... Date ___/___/___

COPY OF LETTER TO BE SENT FOR ABSENCE PANEL MEETING

Re: Name of pupil and date of birth

Dear <Name of Parent/Carer>

Following our meeting on <date>, I note that there has been no significant improvement in <pupil's name>'s attendance. <Pupil's name>'s attendance for this academic year has fallen to _____%. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

You are invited to attend a School Attendance Panel meeting on <date> to discuss the concerns around his/her attendance.

We need to draw your attention to the fact that parents have a duty in law to ensure their child attends school regularly, unless they are unable to do so by reasons of ill health or any other legally acceptable reason.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the school to rearrange. Should you subsequently not arrive for the meeting it will go ahead as planned and a copy of the action plan will be sent to you.

Please complete the reply slip below to confirm you will be attending.

Yours sincerely

Mr B Johnson
Headteacher

School Attendance Panel Meeting <date>

Child's Name:.....

I will be able to attend the attendance meeting on <date>

I will not be able to attend the attendance meeting on <date>

Signature:..... Date ___/___/___

**COPY OF LETTER TO BE SENT FOR REFERRAL TO CHILDREN MISSING
EDUCATION**

Re: Name of pupil and date of birth

Dear <Name of Parent/Carer>

Following our School Attendance Panel meeting on <date>, I note that there has been no significant improvement in <pupil's name>'s attendance. <Pupil's name>'s attendance for this academic year has fallen to_____%. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

It has now become necessary to refer <Pupil's name> and the concerns around his/her attendance to the local authority, Children Missing Education Team and they will contact you in due course.

Should you have anything you wish to discuss concerning this matter, I will continue to be available. Please contact the school should you require an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Mr B Johnson
Headteacher

COPY OF LETTER TO BE SENT FOR LATENESS

Dear <Name of Parent/Carer>

Our attendance records show that <name of child> has been late on <number of lates> occasions since the start of this term.

We are sure you will understand lateness can be very disruptive to the school day. Missing the start of lessons means instructions and other essential information will have to be repeated, which will delay the start of lessons and young people's learning.

The school day starts at 8.40 a.m. and register closes at 8:50a.m. The register will be open until 9:20a.m. Late arrival after 9:20am will be marked as unauthorised absence.

If you are having problems getting your child to school, please do not hesitate to contact us to see how we can work together to resolve the situation.

I look forward to seeing an improvement in <name of child>'s punctuality.

Yours sincerely

Mr B Johnson
Headteacher

COPY OF LETTER TO BE SENT FOR ABSENCE

Dear <Name of Parent/Carer>

Our records show <name of pupil> was not at school on the date/s listed below. Currently, we do not have any explanation for this absence. If you have already sent a note, please make sure <name of pupil> has handed it into the school office. If no note is received, this absence will be coded as unauthorised and this will remain on your child's attendance record.

We ask that parents/carers contact the school on the first day of a child's absence. The telephone number for the school is: 01406 380369 or email joanne.drew@cowbit.lincs.sch.uk .

Beside the dates below please enter the reason <name of pupil> was absent. If you were unaware of the absence enter a question mark:

<Date>:
<Date>:
<Date>:
<Date>:

Signed Parent/Carer

Please return this letter to the school office.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Mr B Johnson
Headteacher

COPY OF LETTER TO BE SENT REQUESTING A DOCTORS NOTE

Dear <Name of Parent/Carer>

Since the start of the school year <name of pupil> has been absent from school for <number of days> days due to illness. This is concerning as it means <name of pupil>'s attendance overall is <percentage absence>, which is significantly below what the school expects.

We understand that some absence due to illness is unavoidable. However it is important the school are aware of any on-going health problems so we can put the correct support in place.

We are sure that you are aware that every school day counts and missing any time from school results in lost learning. We want to support <name of pupil> and make certain that <he/she> does not get behind with work or miss out on any opportunities school offers.

Due to the large amount of illness absence <name of pupil> has had, we will require a doctor's note or appointment card for any future periods of absence relating to illness.

We will continue to monitor <name of pupils> attendance. If you wish to discuss <name of pupil> attendance with us please contact the school on 01406 380369. I will be happy to talk with you or arrange a meeting if required.

Yours sincerely

Mr B Johnson
Headteacher