



# Cowbit St Mary's Church of England Primary School

## Attendance Policy

### 1. Mission Statement

Cowbit St Mary's CofE School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

Absence from School, for any reason, can have a negative impact on a child's educational progress.

To this end, holidays taken during term time should be avoided whenever possible, and if taken during term time will be classed as unauthorised absence except in exceptional circumstances. Current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Parents should be aware that any parent who fails to ensure their child(ren)'s regular attendance at school may be issued with a Penalty Notice (fine) of £60 payable within 21 days, or £120 if they pay within 28 days.

### 2. Implementation

This policy has received the full agreement of the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually.

### 3. Aims:

- All pupils in our school have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil will be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of parents and pupils to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

#### **4. Expectations:**

Our school has regular day-to-day contact with parents and has an efficient system for contacting parents when needed. This means that many parents are easily contactable which helps us to resolve problems and concerns quickly. If there is a problem relating to attendance parents would be invited to a meeting to discuss the problem discreetly. This may perhaps be by telephone call or letter and then discussing with them the reasons why a possible referral is being made to the Education Welfare Service or another agency. It would be emphasized that the expectation of this is to support and assist the family. If there are Child Protection concerns then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures would be followed immediately.

#### **We expect the following from all our pupils:**

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

#### **We expect the following from parents:**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework (when appropriate).
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.
- To avoid removing their child from school for holidays during term time.

#### **Parents and pupils can expect the following from our school:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the student or their parent).
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- A quality education.

#### **5. Encouraging Attendance through Good Practice And Rewards**

##### **Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:**

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks by the Headteacher at appropriate times.
- A certificate for 100% attendance for the year provided by Lincolnshire County Council.

- If necessary our school will establish a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- The efficient use of the registration records kept centrally on the school administration system provides valuable, year group, class and pupil level attendance data which enables speedy analysis and timely responses by our school.
- Parents receive in their children's end of year reports details of their child's attendance and whether or not it is excellent, satisfactory or causing concern.

## **6. Responding To Non-Attendance:**

### **On the first day of non-attendance:**

- If no note or message has been received by the school by 9.15am, then attempts will be made to contact the parents/carers by telephone. [It may be appropriate to make enquiries from siblings as to the reason for the absence.]

### **On each subsequent day of non attendance:**

- If the child is still absent and no explanation has been received, then the school will again endeavour to make contact with the parents/carers for an explanation.
- If after 5 consecutive days of absence and no contact has been made, the school will write to parents/carers.
- On the return of the child to school – if a note is not sent in from the parents explaining the reason for the absence, a letter will be sent home.

### **Reintegration.**

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence will require special planning. For example, it will be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme.
- All staff will be made aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the Headteacher as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate.

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes will be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders may need to be considered as and when the need arises. (The school will refer to the law guide and relevant legislation if it feels necessary)

## **7. Procedure for Monitoring Absence**

- Parents/Carers will be notified by the Headteacher for example via the School Newsletter of the importance of regular attendance. They will also be informed of how attendance will be monitored.

- During each large term the Headteacher will monitor attendance figures.
- If the attendance of any child falls below 90% during the monitoring period, then a letter will be sent to the parents highlighting the importance of regular school attendance. The letter will also inform parents that attendance will be reviewed over the next half term, and notifies them of the action that will be taken should attendance fall below 90% during that review period. (Discretion is used by the Headteacher when considering attendance reports to allow for legitimate reasons for absence e.g. illness)
- At the end of each half term the school will write to parents inviting them in to school to discuss any concerns regarding non attendance to see if any support can be offered by school to help.

### **Escalation Process**

The action that will be taken if a child's attendance falls below acceptable limits is as follows:

- A letter will be sent seeking parental co-operation to raise child's attendance above 90%.
- The Headteacher will make a referral to Education Welfare where required.
- The Education Welfare Officer will contact the family.
- If attendance does not improve to accepted levels, the Education Welfare Officer will contact parents and monitor child's attendance and a target will be sent for the next 4 weeks.
- If this target is not reached, then parents will be invited to attend a School Attendance Panel meeting which will give parents 4 weeks to meet a new attendance target. If parents fail to attend such a meeting, this could result in a Formal Legal Warning letter.
- When attendance remains below 90%, then parents may become involved in the Local Education Authority's Prosecution Procedure and parents may be prosecuted under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act for failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance.

### **8. Leave of Absence**

Parents should be aware that any absence of a pupil from school can have a negative impact on the child's educational progress.

- If parents take their child(ren) on holiday during term time, this will be classed as 'unauthorised absence'. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the Governors allow the Headteacher to grant authorised absence.
- The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child(ren) on holiday during term time.

- If parents feel aggrieved by the Governors decision, they will be given the opportunity to appeal.
- The use of Penalty Warnings and Penalty Notices for Unauthorised absences, including the taking of holidays without authorisation during term time, may be considered and will be issued in accordance with the local authority policy and procedures.

### **9. School Organisation:**

In order for our attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff makes attendance a high priority and conveys to pupils the importance and value of education. In addition there are specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff:

#### **Headteacher:**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence
- To liaise with the E.W.O.

#### **Class Teachers:**

- To complete registers accurately and on time. When a child is absent at registration time mark the session with a circle
- Return registers to school office by 8.55am.

#### **Administrator**

- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by making contact parents.
- Correctly record 'Lates' (authorised / unauthorised).
- To update reasons for absences in the register.
- To inform the Headteacher of concerns in a timely manner.

#### **Governors:**

- A Governor(s) has a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Receive and monitor attendance progress reports at Curriculum and Pupil Committee Meetings.
- Any areas of concern are raised at full Governing Body meetings.

#### **Parents:**

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Provide signed and dated absence notes for all absences if requested.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

## **Education Welfare Service:**

The Education Welfare Service has been described as the "attendance enforcement arm" of most local authorities which complements the role of the school.

The primary role of the Lincolnshire Education Welfare Officer is the promotion and enforcement of regular school attendance. EWOs have a major contribution to make to the Local Authority's and school's commitment to improving school attendance by providing: Strategic support to schools, Enforcement/Legal proceedings, and through individual casework with children and families.

The School will seek intervention from the EWO where there is an element of or possibility of truancy or parental condoned absence and the intervention criteria are satisfied.

Cowbit St Mary's CofE School will do everything reasonably possible before making a referral to the EWO.

Requests for intervention are subject to the following criteria:

1. In line with current legislation, any pupil absent for 10 consecutive days without explanation where vigorous attempts to find an explanation have failed, as this may have Child Protection implications.
2. Pupils with unauthorized absence of over 15%.
3. The School must have attempted to discuss concerns with the family, challenged the reasons for absence, be able to evidence this and informed parents at all times about possible involvement of the EWO via the use of the correspondence referred to at Point 7 above.
4. Absences must be unauthorized, at least for the duration of the assessment period.
5. Requests for intervention from child, parent or other agencies when absences may be authorized if there are serious concerns.

## **10. Liaising With External Agencies**

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the E.W.S. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The E.W.S. may be able to help schools establish multi-agency meetings or may be able to advise on how schools can become involved in existing local arrangements.

**Other Agencies** to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Services.
- Local police

### **11. School Attendance Targets**

The Governing Body approves overall absence targets which are presented to them by the Headteacher.

### **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. We have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Our school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents our school from sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Approved by Governors \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signed by Chair of Governors

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To be reviewed November 2018

## Appendix 1

### Guidance For Class Teachers at Cowbit St Mary's CofE School:

#### Suggested Methodology

It is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities.

#### The Importance of Registration:

- Our school attendance registers, must be kept up to date. At the BEGINNING of each morning and afternoon session, pupils must be marked present or absent.
- Our registers must be kept in ink and corrections must be made in such a way that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable.
- If a child is present in the morning enter / (in black).
- If a child is present in the afternoon enter \ (in black)
- If a child is absent at either session enter 0 (in red) (the symbol for categorising the absence in should be entered when established in black)
  
- N – No reason yet provided for absence (unauthorised)
- B – Educated Off Site (not dual registration) (authorised)
- C – Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another code) (authorised)
- D – Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) (authorised)
- E – Excluded (no alternative provision made) (authorised)
- F – Extended family holiday (agreed) (authorised)
- G – Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement) (unauthorised)
- H – Family holiday (agreed) (authorised)
- I – Illness (not medical or dental etc. appointments) (authorised)
- J – Interview (authorised)
- M – Medical/Dental appointments (authorised)
- O – Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code or description) (unauthorised)
- P – Approved sporting activity (authorised)
- R – Religious observance (authorised)
- S – Study leave (authorised)
- T – Traveller absence (authorised)
- V – Educational visit or trip (authorised)
- W – Work experience (authorised)
- L – Late (before registers close i.e. after 8.55am but before 9.15am and after 1.15 p.m. but before 1.45 p.m.) (present but recorded as late)
- U – Late (after registers close i.e. after 9.15am and after 1.45 p.m. and no reasonable explanation) (late and recorded as unauthorised)
- X – Non compulsory school age absence (not counted in possible attendances)
- Y – Enforced closure



- Z – Pupil not yet on roll (not counted in possible attendances)
- # - School closed to pupils
- Staff are aware at Cowbit St Mary's CofE School that accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems has a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.
- Attendance registers, and bound copies of electronic registration print outs are kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.

### **Unauthorised Absence:**

At Cowbit St Mary's CofE School every effort is made to ensure that if a child is absent a reason is established as quickly as possible. If a child arrives late (outside of 30 minutes from the beginning of the session i.e. after 9.15am and after 1.45 p.m.) this will be an unauthorised absence and a 'U' should be written in black in a black 0.

### **Categorising Absence:**

- Only the school, in the context of the law can authorise absence, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence are reported to the Headteacher for them to follow up.

### **Each day**

It is the teachers' responsibility to ensure that the register is completed at the appropriate times. (See guidance offered in The Importance of Registration) and returned immediately to the school office. Teachers should ensure that the daily grid at the bottom of the page is filled in accurately indicating how many children were present at each session, how many were absent.

The half term break should be dated as other weeks but left blank. Some indication should be written that this week was half term.

If the school is closed on a term day for inclement weather etc. then this should be indicated with the appropriate letter.

### **Each week**

It is the teachers' responsibility to complete the weekly grid at the base of the page indicating total possible attendance, total actual attendance, number on roll in the class, times the register was opened, authorised absences and unauthorised absences.

It is the teachers' responsibility to complete the individual attendance totals at the end of each section on a weekly basis. The individual totals should be completed and the class total indicated at the base of the grid weekly.

### **At the end of each term**

It is the teachers' responsibility to complete the end of term summaries at the end of each section this includes;

1. the **total attendance** for the class (the number of actual sessions attended by all the children added together)
2. the total number of **times the register was opened**
3. the **average number of children on roll** (add together the number of children on roll each week and divide by the number of weeks the register was kept for)
4. the **average attendance** (total attendance divided by the total number of times the register was opened)
5. **total authorised absences** (add together all the authorised absences from the weekly summaries)
6. **total unauthorised absences** (add together all the unauthorised absences from the weekly summaries)
7. **the % of absences that are unauthorised** (add together all absences, both authorised and unauthorised and find the % of the total that are unauthorised)

Teachers should be aware that the attendance register of every class in every school has to be made available for inspection during school hours by H.M.I. and from the L.A. It is in teachers' interests to keep their registers up to date and accurate.

Please ensure that your register is up to date and accurate and clear so that the admin staff can complete their tasks (i.e. entering all the data onto the school management system).

## **Appendix 2**

### **Good Practice at our school:**

Good practice occurs with:

1. The Headteacher being charged with specific responsibility for pupil attendance.
2. The school has devised a sensitive scheme for the follow-up of absentees - e.g. either by telephoning home or sending out letters to parents or carers.
3. Class Teachers ensure that records of attendance are as accurate as possible.
4. Rewards are available for individual pupils with an excellent attendance record in the form of certificates.
5. The school contacts parents/carers of pupils who are persistently late.
6. Absentees and truants are welcomed back to school upon their return and efforts made to reintegrate them socially and academically.

### **Pupils Who Are Off Site Should Not Be Marked As Present.**

#### **The Following Activities Fall Within This Category.**

- Field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas.

Absences should **not** be authorised under the following circumstances.

- Shopping trips.
- Holidays in term time where the permission of the school has not been given.
- Minding the house or looking after siblings.
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
- No reason given.
- School staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. The Headteacher will decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents are considered. Further advice will be sought from the LA.

#### **Lateness:**

Our school actively discourages late arrival by children who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation. Our school's policy on how long registers remain open is thirty minutes from the beginning of registration. In the event of bad weather this period is extended.

Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they may be marked present.

Where a pupil arrives after register closure without good reason, they are marked with a letter 'U' in black to indicate that they were late but that they are on site. The late arrival will be recorded as an unauthorised late arrival on the school management system.

Where a pupil arrives after 8.55am but before 9.30 a.m. and after 1.15 p.m. but before 1.45 p.m. they are late but within the open periods of the registers. Teachers indicate the late arrival with an 'L'. This will record as a late arrival on the school management system but not as an absence and will indicate to teachers that the child is on site.

### **Persistent Absence**

Persistence is: 'Any pupil who at any point in the year has accumulated absence of 15% or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised'. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support the school in developing an action plan to reduce persistent absence.

### **Removal from the school roll**

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2). **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**

- Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has left the school and it is not known where the pupil has gone and the

Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil.

- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Headteacher of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Local Authority/Education Welfare Service to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the Headteacher has been notified that the pupil has died.
- If a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time and the School and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded.

Schools can only lawfully delete non-compulsory school-age children in the following circumstances:

- The pupil has left the school.
- 20 continuous school days absence without good reason.

- Death of the pupil.
- Permanent exclusion.

**Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date**

Our school ensures, as far as possible, that the information we hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This helps to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date',

### Appendix 3

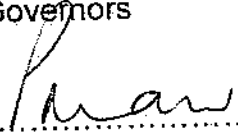
#### Guidance For Parents:

The importance of regular and punctual school attendance is included in our Home-School Agreement, which is signed by Parents.

#### How parents can help us:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- Contact the school whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason or the absence and the length of time the child will be away.
- Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and the child has everything he/she needs for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect the child.
- Contact the school if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.
- To avoid taking family holidays in term-time. Term time absences, especially during SATs and examination periods, may seriously affect the progress of your child.

Reviewed by Governors

Signed .....  ..... Chair of Governors

Date 11/9/18

For review September 2019