Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust

Cawston Church of England Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

Policy Type:	**School Policy**
Approved By:	**LGB**
Approval Date:	**Spring 2018**
Review Date:	**Spring 2020**
Person Responsible:	**Head Teacher**

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment, which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you at half-termly on how your child is performing in school, any concerns about attendance and punctuality rate and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by recognising individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and events.
- Promote raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.
We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.
PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our electronic register system and we also combine this with academic monitoring where absence affects attainment.
All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Parent Support Advisor, use of circle time or individual incentive programmes. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance Team Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- **Send a note in on the first day they return** with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher or our Parent Support Advisor if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

The Attendance Team Officer:

If difficulties cannot be sorted out, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance Team from the Local Authority. He/she will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.
Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Attendance themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day he/she misses work and time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:
The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be at school by that time. Registers are marked by **9.05am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. All parents are asked to sign the Late Book if arriving after 8.55 am.
At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record you will

be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays In Term Time:

Holidays during Term Time will not be authorised.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96.5%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.
Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful education.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Newsletters and we ask for your full support.

Persons responsible for attendance in this school

Mrs Swann - Headteacher
Mrs Brett – Assistant Headteacher
Mr Apps - Chair of Governors
C Marley - Attendance Team Officer

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.
Equally, parents have a legal responsibility to make sure that their children attend.
All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Approved by Governors:

Prepared by: Mrs K Swann