

# **Courthouse Green Primary School**



## **Attendance Policy 2017 - 2019**

**Courthouse Green Primary School**  
**‘Doing our best to be our best’**

**Attendance Policy**  
**‘Give your child the best start in life – every school day counts’**

**Rationale**

We believe that ensuring the best possible school attendance for all pupils is a school priority in order to enable children to achieve their best.

**Our aims**

- All children achieve the Government minimum target of 96% attendance in an academic year.
- Reduce the percentage of authorised absences to below 4%
- Reduce the number of parents requesting leave of absence for their child during term time
- Follow the Government guidance (January 2015) to not authorise any request of leave of absence during term time for holiday purposes
- Reduce the percentage of unauthorised absences

**Objectives**

In order to achieve our aims the following objectives have to be put into practice:-

- Work in partnership with parents to ensure that education and school attendance is valued.
- Keep parents informed at all stages of attendance
- Ensure that school procedures are in place for the monitoring of pupil absences and keeping parents informed.
- Ensure that school procedures are in place and reflect those of Coventry Authority.
- Ensure that the school procedures are in place for working with the school nurse when a pupil has been identified as having persistent absences due to illness.
- Ensure that all attendance is above the Government threshold for being persistently absent from school (attendance must be 90% and above).

**School Procedures**

The following procedures outline the strategies that our school uses to improve and monitor attendance as well as how we keep parents informed of their child’s attendance. This is in accordance with guidelines from the Local Authority, Coventry Early Help Hubs – Schools Service and Government Guidance (January 2015 ).

1. Reporting absence – all parents/carers must notify school on the first day of absence and continue to keep school informed for the duration of the absence – on a daily basis (speak in person or by phone to a member of office staff or leave message on school’s answer phone).
2. First day calling – we will contact all parents on a daily basis if we have not been given a reason for a child’s non-attendance, when we get no response from parents we will visit the family home.
3. Should we be unable to gain contact with a parent/carer or see the child within three days of unexplained absence, we will ask external agencies to conduct a safe and well check (police and/or social care).
4. **All children must have a minimum of three emergency contacts on their file** – this is essential in establishing reasons for absence and safeguarding.
5. Monitor attendance weekly – The Pastoral Manager (Kate Halfpenny) and our Learning Mentor Team meet weekly to discuss attendance records, concerns and agree any action to be taken. This is to ensure that our school’s attendance figures are in line with and are meeting school’s target for attendance that has been set by the Local Authority in 2017 – 2018 it is 96.4%. The Pastoral Manager meets with East Early Help Hub CAF Coordinator on a half termly basis to discuss ongoing concerns.
6. Letters to inform parents of their child’s attendance:
  - All parents receive a termly letter which updates them on their child’s attendance
  - Learning Mentors support children in school when their attendance falls below 94% through the use of an attendance reward chart

- When a child's attendance falls below 92% a letter will be sent to parents requesting medical evidence for all future absences. Failure to provide medical evidence may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- 90% Attendance – informs parents that their child's attendance has continued to drop, offers help to address or improve attendance and notifies that a FPN notice will be applied for if parents do not engage with us to improve attendance.
- 85% Attendance – informs parents that Early Help Hub workers will be making contact with them to discuss/offer further support in their role.
- Chronic illness/special circumstances letter – this letter recognises that there are exceptional circumstances for a child's poor attendance and gives parents information regarding their child's percentage attendance. It will also offer support and a link with the Learning Mentor.
- Attendance meetings- when parents have been invited to an appointment in school with the Schools Officer (Local Authority), Learning Mentor and School Nurse (if appropriate) to discuss their child's attendance.
- Persistent Pupil Absence– when a child's attendance is below 92%, a medical certificate or other evidence will be requested as proof of illness and to authorise an absence. Parents will be informed of this in the meeting with the Early Help worker and/or LM as well as in writing.
- If attendance is a cause for concern and continues to drop or does not improve the school will seek support by means of Local Authority procedures and apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice. In serious cases the parents can be taken to court for their child's non-attendance at school.

At all times parents will be kept informed of any concerns regarding attendance and will be given every opportunity to have help and support in getting their child to school. Every child's attendance is reported on at the end of each academic year in the annual school report.

### **Term Time Leave of Absence**

We aim to work with parents to ensure that all parents understand the importance of uninterrupted education. A leave of absence request during term time will only be authorised if deemed to be in exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher. Amendments to The Education (Pupil registration) (England) 2006 regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We do not believe holiday during term time to be an exceptional circumstance.

Parents are required to complete a form notifying the reason for the absence from school and the dates, including the expected date of return. The Headteacher will consider all requests on an individual basis. She will take in to consideration the nature of the request along with the child's attendance and attainment at that time. If a child has more than 10 days absence from school, any further unreasonable absences will be recorded as unauthorised. All absences, authorised and unauthorised will go on a child's record. Long term absences due to visits overseas will require a letter to the Chair of Governors as well as a completed Leave of Absence Form as the school may not be able to keep the child's place open for him/her when he/she returns to this country.

Any child that fails to return to school within 10 school days of a school holiday or after a period of exceptional leave could be deleted from our roll and the child will no longer have a place at Courthouse Green. Therefore it is essential that we are kept updated of the child's whereabouts during this period and the reason for delayed return.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Fixed penalty notices will be applied for in the following circumstances –

- A child has a period of ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a 25 day period (5 school weeks)
- If a parent takes a child out of school for a holiday that will incur 5 days absence from school
- If a pupil has not returned to school after a school holiday within 5 days

Types of Fixed Penalty Notice are as follows –

Holidays and unauthorised periods of absence as outlined above in bullet points 2 and 3 – automatic fine issued as stated below.

Deteriorating attendance leading to FPN application as outlined in bullet point one above – a period of 4 school weeks to significantly improve attendance is offered. If 100% attendance is achieved within the target date set, the fine application is cancelled, if absence continues during the target date range, then fines are issued as stated below.

Remember – lateness after 9.15 a.m. will incur an unauthorised absence mark in the register and therefore count towards any fixed penalty application. The current fine for fixed penalty notices is £60 per parent, per child. Non payment of this amount within 21 days will lead to the fine doubling in amount. Non payment at this point will lead to prosecution.

### **Partnerships**

Our school values working in partnership with parents/carers and with the wider school community and sees this as an essential part of promoting good attendance. Partnership working will be promoted through discussion with the parents/carers; working with professionals e.g. Children and Families First team, School Nurse etc; liaising with parents and organizing termly attendance awards for classes and individuals with the highest percentage of attendance.

#### **Early Help CAF Coordinator**

Sarina John - 02476786808

#### **School Nurse**

Georgina White – 02476 843139

### **Monitoring, Recording and Reporting**

Procedures and strategies used to promote and encourage good attendance in our school will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Pastoral Manager with the support of Learning Mentor, Admin staff and Schools Officer. Actual attendance figures will be reported to the authority through SIMs on a weekly basis and bi annually through the PLASC.

### **Policy details**

**Date of policy:** September 17

Reviewed to update personnel details: June 2018

**Date of next Review:** September 19