Codnor Community Primary School

Attendance Policy

June 2024

Mr James Blake
Headteacher

CODNOR COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy for Attendance

Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

We believe that good attendance is fundamental to a child's progress through our school:

- academically
- socially
- in terms of learning behaviours
- in developing good habits, ethos and philosophy regarding their approach and attitude to work which will serve them in their life beyond school.

This policy is based on the statutory DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (August 2024) at the address below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.
- Outline school's response to poor attendance, **ensuring that everyone is treated fairly**.
- Summarise the roles and responsibilities of different people in the school community with regards to attendance.

Definitions

- **Authorised absence.** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- **Unauthorised absence.** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

Roles and responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

The Governing Body is responsible for reviewing this policy in conjunction with the Headteacher and monitoring the policy's effectiveness.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring class teachers complete the electronic register so that school knows if any children are absent, especially when no reason has been given for the absence as this is a safeguarding issue. The Headteacher ensures that parents of any children who fall below the attendance threshold of 95.00% or have persistent lates are contacted or informed by letter that their child's attendance/lateness is a concern.

The Headteacher, James Blake, is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school. Parents can contact the Headteacher by phoning the office (01773 742537) or emailing office@codnor.derbyshire.sch.uk FAO the Headteacher.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring class registers are completed accurately and on time, contacting the office if there are any issues completing the register.
- If there are any children absent without explanation, ensuring they are marked on the register as an N so that the office can contact parents as soon as possible.
- Recording lateness on the electronic register 'Integris' and ensuring that if a child is late, the child has been to the school office to let them know they are at school to avoid parents being contacted unnecessarily.

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring the electronic register has been completed by the class teacher and chasing up any unexplained absences.
- Recording absences where the parent has rung into school or left an absence reporting message.
- Monitoring the attendance and bringing the children who have poor attendance to the attention of the Assistant Headteachers and Headteacher.
- Sending letters out every half term to parents whose child's attendance/lateness is becoming a concern. At our school this is done by Mrs Stevenson.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child arrives on time to school. If the child is going to be late, informing the office in advance. If the child is going to be absent, informing the office and class teacher with the reason for their absence so that this can be recorded accordingly. This will ensure that school knows the child is safe and avoids parents being contacted unnecessarily. School must ensure that we know where children are for safeguarding purposes.

Registration

The school doors open at 8:30 for Nursery, 8:45 for the infants and 8:55 for the juniors. Children are expected to be in school by 9:00. This gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using 'Integris'. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule.

Lateness

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning. Our approach to lateness aligns with the DfE statutory guidance.

Any pupil who comes into school after 9:00 will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9:15 will be marked as late after close of register (attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect a child's overall attendance percentage. This can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9:00 will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late are dealt with through the normal attendance route, i.e. if their attendance falls below 90%, they receive a letter informing that their attendance is becoming a concern because it has dropped lower than the national, which is 95%. If on the next monitoring period the child's attendance hasn't shown any sign of increasing, Mrs Stevenson refers these to Mr Blake via the attendance monitoring report.

Parents will also receive a letter if their child is late more than 3 times over a five-week period. Attendance code U is an unauthorised absence. This can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal intervention.

Absences

- Class teachers are to ensure that the electronic register is accurately completed every day.
- Parents are to ensure children arrive on time to school.
- If the child is going to be late, parents are to inform the office in advance.
- If the child is going to be absent, parents are to inform the office and class teacher with the reason for their absence so that this can be recorded accordingly, and so that school knows

that the children are safe. This will avoid parents being contacted unnecessarily. We need to ensure that we know where children are for safeguarding purposes.

- If there are any children who we have no reason for absence, school will either ring or text parents to find out why their child is not in school.

First day contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.

Applications for Leave of Absence in term time

In September 2013, the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made in writing either by letter or by email to the office@codnor.derbyshire.sch.uk address, and ideally four school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. Parents/carers must have received written authorisation before their child can be absent from school.

Parents/carers may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

Addressing attendance concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually, and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns.

Parents who are having difficulty getting a reluctant child to school should discuss the matter with the class teacher in the first instance. If the problem is not resolved, they should contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). They can do this by phoning the office (01773 742537) or emailing office@codnor.derbyshire.sch.uk FAO the SLT. School will work with parents and children to determine the barriers to attendance and address them.

School's attendance monitoring system, 'Integris', flags up low attendance. This can be filtered by class and/or individual pupils. Low attendance is investigated:

- Classes with low attendance, not attributable to a particular group, the teacher has a conversation with the class and raises the profile of attendance/punctuality e.g. by displaying the percentage each morning. SLT will assist with this, and have conversations with latecomers.
- Regular latecomers: SLT will have a supportive conversation with parents with the aim of addressing barriers to punctuality. Parents will be warned of the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine).
- Persistent absentees: SLT will have a supportive conversation with parents and suggest Early Help involvement as a formal step. Parents will be warned of the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine).

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised, this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) or other statutory legal action.

National framework for penalty notices

The national threshold for consideration of legal action is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.** A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, **including lates after close of register** (Attendance code U) and **unauthorised leave in term time** (Attendance code G).

If a child's absence falls into this category and the school considers that further offers of support are unlikely to improve the situation, a request for legal action will be submitted to the Local Authority. **Schools are duty-bound to implement Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) consistently and are directly held to account for decisions on attendance**. Schools do not benefit financially from FPNs.

Incentivising attendance

Classes take part in an 'attendance prize' competition each term. This helps to ensure that children understand attendance and punctuality because these become part of day-to-day conversations. Our website has an attendance section and there are posters around school.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Headteacher is responsible for the review, monitoring and evaluation of the Policy in consultation with the rest of the staff.

Policy review

A review of the Policy will take place in line with the School Improvement Plan.

Governor approval

Any amendments to the Policy will be presented to the Governors for approval at the next available meeting.

Mr J. Blake
Headteacher
June 2024