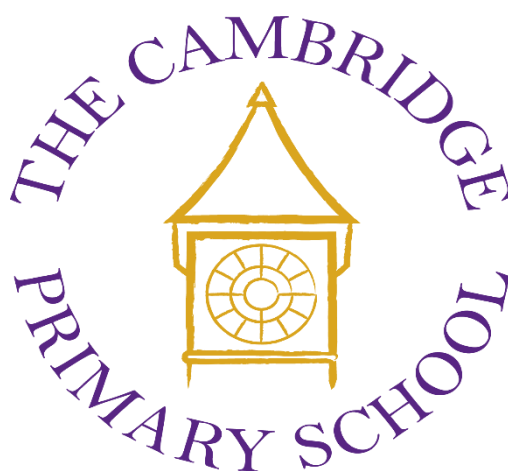


THE CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2024



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| Date of Approval: | March 2024 |
| Date of Next Review: | March 2025 |

Attendance Policy

The Cambridge Primary School is committed to developing and implementing policies and practice which supports improved attendance, in partnership with parents, pupils and the Local Advisory Committee (governors), with relevant departments within Hampshire County Council ([click here for Hampshire Attendance Guidance for Parents and Carers](#)) and borough councils, and with other organisations who have an interest or are affected by school attendance. Throughout this policy, the term 'parents' includes guardians, carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children.

Knowing who is absent and why, is fundamental to effective safeguarding. Non-Attendance to school or unauthorised attendance, can result in safeguarding action. This is because persistent absenteeism and sudden changes in patterns of attendance and pupil behaviour, are a key indication that something is wrong and could lead to sudden extended absences. As a school, we have a duty of care to take action.

We therefore scrutinise pupil absence, investigate the reasons for this and ensure our procedures are followed. For example:

- Children who become withdrawn, or who start acting differently in class and who are then absent, would be flagged as a safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Leads and investigated
- Absences may well be due to illness, but they could equally be linked to safeguarding issues such as bullying, family break-ups, domestic abuse, involvement in county lines or online grooming

A great deal of work has to be done to protect children. The key to early intervention, of course, is good communication between our school and strong links with parents. School action will include:

- Monitoring of attendance with accurate record keeping
- Half-termly letters to parents informing them of their child's attendance, if below 90% (persistent absence) or if frequently late
- Speaking to parent/carers who we make aware that the procedures are rigorous and that absences will always be questioned. Our staff do their best to maintain relationships and trust
- Where there are causes for concern, we make contact with the Local Authority and, where there is one, a family Social Worker
- A Child Missing Education form may also be filled in to be followed up by the Local Authority, as in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' this could be an indicator of a safeguarding concern.

At The Cambridge, attendance is closely monitored, staff are well trained, we maintain positive communication links with parents and have effective systems in place to deal with any attendance issues quickly and sensitively, so that we are well equipped to keep children safe.

We firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve excellent attendance but when absence is unavoidable through sickness, the school should be notified on each day of absence. Parents will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity for any other absence.

Parents, whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so, they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. In addition, schools are required to report all absence figures to the

local authority and the DfE and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents will:

- Encourage regular school attendance by supporting the values of good attendance in education at home and to be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day (including extra-curricular activities) and have completed any homework they have been given
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- Contact the school office on the first day of a child's absence, giving the reason for the absence
- Discuss with the class teacher or Headteacher any problems preventing their child/children from attending school
- Provide evidence, if required where the length and frequency of absence through illness is giving cause for concern

We expect that school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, as required by current legislation
- Monitor every pupil's attendance
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Be alert to early signs of disaffection or a child's worries about school which could culminate in non-attendance and report these concerns as soon as possible to the Headteacher
- Encourage good attendance
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
- Provide a sympathetic response to any parent or pupil's concerns and offer support or work with other agencies as appropriate
- Make initial enquiries to parents of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils
- Fulfil, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them

In order for this Attendance Policy to be successful, **every** member of staff in the school must make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times. Parents should also need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Students leaving during the school day

- Pupils are not permitted to leave the site during the day without prior permission from the school
- Pupils must be signed out by a parent when leaving the school and sign back in on return

Dental and medical treatments

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school should be notified of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Lateness

The school day, and morning register, begin at 08.45hrs. Please note that if pupils arrive after the school start time they will be recorded as late. Pupils arriving after 9.15hrs will be recorded as 'late after close of register' which counts as an unauthorised absence for that session. This is in line with Hampshire County Council and Department for Education guidance.

Persistent lateness before the close of register- and after- will be followed up by the school and may result in a Penalty Notice.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school, they inform The Cambridge Primary School as soon as possible. The pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- date the pupil will leave the school to start the next
- address of the new school
- new home address if appropriate

Pupils' school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above, the family will be referred to the local authority tracking officer.

Requests for leave of absence during term time

Permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion and will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**.

If a family needs to request absence in term time, then they must complete a **Leave of Absence Request Form** (available on the website and from the school office) and submit it to the head teacher at least two weeks prior to the leave date. The Headteacher, who may consult with the Chair of the Local Advisory Committee, will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately.

Family holidays

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and are available from the school office and on the school's website. Family holidays need to be booked within the school holiday dates. **Family holidays are not deemed exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.**

The School Attendance Regulations 2006 were amended with effect from September 2013. The key amendments relate to the granting of leave for the purpose of family holidays in term time:

"Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Education Regulations 2013 which became law in September 2013 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted."

The needs of military families relating to a deployment would generally be deemed exceptional.

Safeguarding

A child not attending school is a safeguarding concern. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Family Support Advisor regularly analyse trends and patterns in attendance to ensure that the safety and well-being of children is the priority and the risk of emotional based school avoidance is reduced. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If we have not had communication regarding the absence, this raises safeguarding concerns regarding the well-being of both the child and parent/care giver. The school may carry out a home visit and/or make contact with relevant agencies, such as Police, 'Child Missing in Education' Team or Children's Services to ensure the safety and well-being of both child and parent.

Penalty Notices

County policy in respect of penalty notices will be followed:

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

In education law, parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness.

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. the child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance.
2. the child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

NB. Please note that a session is a morning or an afternoon, therefore one school day is equal to 2 sessions.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- prosecution

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.

The Code of Conduct states that schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed

- persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will be categorised as unauthorised any further lateness (code O), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 school day period
2. one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.

This includes where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- non-approval of a parents' request for leave of absence, or
- a holiday that has been taken without permission.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence, the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parents for each child. This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order. For further information parents can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.