



# Attendance Policy

**Date of Policy: Jan 2017**

**Policy Review date: Jan 2020**

**Signed:  
Headteacher: Julie Miles**

**Signed:  
Chair of Governors: Phil Robbins**

## **Equality Statement**

In our school, we are committed to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for all those with 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010, in relation to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, religion and belief, sexual identity and marriage and civil partnership status. We will endeavour to foster good relations between all.

(Our full Equality Statement can be found on the school website)

# Clapham Terrace Community Primary School and Nursery

## Attendance Policy

**This policy reflects the DfE guidelines which came into force September 2013 which state:**

**‘Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances’**

Clapham Terrace Primary School would interpret “exceptional” in this context as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, outweighing the loss of teaching time. The interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another but, **normally, requests for authorised absence will be refused.**

**The process involved within this policy is also applicable to children registered in our Nursery. Although pupils are not required by law to attend it is seen as good practice that parents follow the same procedures in preparation for full time education.**

Clapham Terrace Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all children. We believe if that children are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all children. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate good attendance through weekly, half termly, as well as annual reward systems, based on children achieving 99.5 % or 100% attendance. Children attending less than this, will only be considered for a reward if absences are supported by relevant religious or medical evidence. Attendance is a critical factor in a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our children.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents or carers, and children, the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a child’s attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and or carers, and children, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the child to full time attendance at all times.

### Objectives

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism
- To acknowledge and celebrate a successful record of attendance
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school, including parents or carers, children, teachers and governors
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents or carers and children
- To work effectively with other services and agencies to support these objectives
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

### Information

This outlines the policy information operated by the school, which will be considered when dealing with attendance and punctuality issues:

- We have clear start and finish times for registration: the school opens at 8.50am; the school day starts at 8.55am and registration closes at 9.05am
- We have guidance for staff on the accurate completion of registers
- We emphasise the importance of punctuality and responding to lateness; if a child arrives at school after 9.05am they will be marked late; less than 90% punctuality will be followed up
- There will be daily contact between parents or carers and school when a child is absent
- In line with the Health Protection Agency guidelines, a period of 48 hours absence is required for any pupil vomiting or having diarrhoea; such absence due to illness is authorised

- We give clear guidance to parents or carers that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**
- We have clear referral routes, with designated staff roles and responsibilities for pupils with emerging attendance problems; parents or carers of children with attendance below 90% will be contacted
- We monitoring progress towards attendance targets
- We evaluate the impact of this Attendance Policy and will plan any improvements needed in our practice in the Schools Improvement Plan (SIP)
- We include attendance information in school documentation, e.g the prospectus, reports, newsletters, Home School Agreements
- Annual reports to parents or carers include a record of their child's attendance
- The Headteacher's termly report to the Governing Body records the attendance figures for the academic year to date

## **Practice**

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Ensuring prompt follow up action in cases of non-attendance and lateness
- Reporting missing children to the Local Authority
- The school absence line is checked daily and parents are contacted if no message has been received explaining the child's absence for that day
- Monthly report are generated highlighting any children who have dropped below 95% attendance, letters are sent to these families and meetings are arranged to discuss how the school can support
- Attendance Action Plans are put in place if no improvement is made following the early support offered through the meetings.

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the importance of this issue in raising standards and improving school effectiveness. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school.

**Any unauthorised absence is damaging to a child's education as well as reflecting badly on the school. It also gives children the wrong message about the importance of education, which may lead to problems later in their schooling. Good attendance and punctuality are important values for later life.**

## **Notes for parent's or carers completing an application for Leave of Absence during term time, in exceptional circumstances only. (See form at Appendix B)**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents or carers) as either *authorised* or *unauthorised*. The 2013 DfE amendments make it clear that:

**'Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'**

**Any application of leave during term time must be made at least 3 weeks in advance.**

1. Illness – If a child is absent as a result of illness the absence is **authorised** providing that it is reported to the school on each day of the sickness by telephone, in person or in writing by the parents or carers. Extended illness may need to be evidenced with doctor's notes.
2. Medical and dental appointments: as far as possible, appointments should be made out of school hours. If a medical or dental appointment has to be made during the school day, the school must be informed beforehand stating the time of appointment in order that the absence can be **authorised**. Appointments should be made to miss as little of school as a possible. All children must be signed out before they leave school to attend the appointment and signed in when they return.
3. Parents or carers do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

4. Family bereavements, critical operations, hospital visits: the school recognises that the death or serious illness of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event and the school has the discretion to **authorise** such an absence. *A Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstance form must be completed and supported by the any relevant supporting documents.*
5. Days of religious observance: absence due to participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents or carers belongs is **authorised** by the school. A minimum of 3 weeks advance notice is required. **A Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances form must be completed and returned to the office, and supported by any relevant supporting documents.**
6. Absences for social occasions such a birthday, weddings and family outings will not normally be authorised by the school and would therefore be *unauthorised absence, unless supported by evidence, which highlights the unique nature of the event.* **A Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances form must be completed and returned to the office.**
7. Family holidays: **family holidays during term time will not be authorised.**

**Applications for leave of absence, which are made in advance and refused, will result in the absence being unauthorised. Unauthorised absence may result in action against the parent or carer, either by a fixed penalty notice or if there is a failure to pay then followed through by the courts.**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is importance to set realistic attendance targets; these may be set in consultation with the Local Authority or with the Governing Body. The school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process. Our school target for school attendance is currently 96%. The Governor responsible for overseeing attendance is Phil Robbins.

When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not:

- Patterns and trends in the school's attendance and children's punctuality are improving
- Parental response to children's absence has improved
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance by celebrating good attendance within the school, governing body and the local community
- Children and parents or carers are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance, and are aware of the attendance procedures operating within school
- Parents or carers and governors are made aware of the current law on attendance
- Attendance issues have been included in topics in school assemblies or PSHE lessons

**The Curriculum and Standards Committee of the Governing Body will review this policy every three years, or earlier, if necessary, or if there are changes to attendance guidelines.**

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME 2016-2017 – INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, govern all requests for leave within term-time. When considering such requests for a leave of absence, the school are obliged to act within the law.

The amended regulations removed references to 'holiday' and 'extended leave', as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. It is now clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. If the leave is granted, head teachers are able to determine the number of school days a child can be absent for.

The Government has not defined 'exceptional circumstances' as referred to in the 2013 regulations. It is for the Head Teacher to decide what he/she views as 'exceptional' and it is at their discretion if the circumstances warrant the leave to be granted.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent.

*Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.*

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may result in legal action being taken against the parent(s), by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Failure to make an application for leave in advance can also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service of Warwickshire County Council

**It is important to note**, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £80 per child if paid within 21 days).

Where a Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within the required timeframe as set out on the notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal proceedings under S444 Education Act 1996.

Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices.

**Warwickshire Primary School pupils recorded 47,552 half day sessions of absence due to holiday in the academic year 2014/15. This is a decrease of 13,122 on the previous year. This is a positive outcome as it means that 6,561 extra days of education were achieved when compared with the previous academic year.**

We greatly appreciate parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. We are committed to working in partnership with you to enable your child to reach their academic targets and to support their social development. For this to happen we need to keep individual attendance as high as possible - we all need to play our part.

**Your child's progress academically as well as socially is our shared priority**

## Appendix B

### Warwickshire County Council Communities Group

#### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

##### Important Information for Parents/Carers

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in exceptional circumstances
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- If Leave of Absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- This form **MUST** be completed by the resident parent(s)/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child
- Failure to make a request for a Leave of absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised

**Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.**

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Form Group: \_\_\_\_\_

First Date of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Last date of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of return to school: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence (*they can only be exceptional circumstances*) (see overleaf before completing)

.....  
.....  
.....

Total number of school days requested on this occasion

(For siblings) I have also applied to \_\_\_\_\_ School/Academy for leave of absence for \_\_\_\_\_ (Insert child/children's name)

Signature of resident Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For school use only: NAME OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_ Date received by school: \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> date of absence requested: ..... Last date of absence requested:.....

Absence Authorised: Yes/No If absence authorised, expected date of return to school: .....

The reasons for this decision are:.....

- LOA record sheet to be completed by school and submitted where verbal requests made/ for other relevant information

Head Teacher/Attendance Lead: ..... Date: .....

- Copy of this completed section to be sent back to parent with appropriate letter

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 state:**

1. Head Teachers shall not grant any leave of absence during term time unless:
  - A) *An application has been made in advance, by the parent with whom the child normally resides*
  - AND**
  - B) *They consider there to be exceptional circumstances relating to the application.*
2. The Head Teacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.
3. The Head Teacher can determine how long an absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.

- 
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (ie home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996).
  - If a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996).
  - Parents whose children have unauthorised absence may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.
  - Any Fixed Penalty Notices issued and/or prosecution will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend school.

---

**Parents:**

1. The application must be made in advance by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with.
2. Any leave of absences taken which have not been requested in advance will recorded as unauthorised.
3. Parents can be issued with a Fixed [Penalty Notice or prosecuted](#) for unauthorised absence including holidays.

***We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.***

