

# Cam Hopton Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Aided)

## Attendance Policy

Life in all its Fullness

### Document History

| Document Name:         | Attendance Policy                             |                  |                    |
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This policy is to be reviewed in line with other related policies and any other documentation from the DfE, Ofsted and Gloucestershire Diocese.

## Philosophy

At Cam Hopton C of E Primary Schools we promote a culture in which children enjoy coming to school and are able to experience 'Life in all its Fullness'. We are committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embrace the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

We believe that for a child to reach their full potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils, and their parents or carers, the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We aim to provide sensitive and appropriate guidance to parents and carers concerning pupil attendance, taking into account guidance from the Department for Education.

At Cam Hopton C of E Primary School we have high expectations for attendance. We are committed to providing an education of the highest standard for all our pupils and recognise this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually, will pupils be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment and good progress depend on good attendance.

## Aims and objectives

At Cam Hopton C of E Primary School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn, is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

**Parents/carers** are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance.

**Pupils** are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

**The governing body** are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Link governor for attendance meets with the school Attendance Champion (Melanie Tarren) on a termly basis to monitor pupil attendance and discuss strategies for ensuring attendance remains high for all pupils.

**The headteacher** is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

**The Senior Attendance Champion** (*Miss Melanie Tarren contact: FPN@camhopton.gloucs.sch.uk*) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- Collaborating with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher (*Mrs. Rebecca Harris*) when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

**The class teacher/form tutor** is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office *no later than the time the register is taken at 8:45am.*

**School administration/office staff** are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Texting and calling parents/carers of pupils who are absent with no reason given.
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents.

### **School processes for recording attendance and absence**

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present

- Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry.
- The amended entry.
- The reason for the amendment.
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8:40am** on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at **8:45am** and will be kept open until **9:00am**.

The register for the afternoon session will be taken at:

- Key Stage 1 **12:45pm** and will be kept open until **12:50pm**
- Reception **1:00pm** and will be kept open until **1:05pm**
- Key Stage 2 **1:05pm** and will be kept open until **1:10pm**

## Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by **9:00am**, or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

Parents/carers should call the school office and press 1 to report the absence. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

Pupils arriving after 8:40am must enter school via the main reception area, where the reason for lateness will be recorded. The class registers will remain open until 9.00am and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as U late after the register closed. This is considered an unauthorised absence. Parents or carers will be asked to explain persistent lateness and asked to remedy the cause.

Any pupils with ongoing punctuality issues will be referred to our Family Support Worker, who will make contact with parents to see if there is any further support we can offer. If after a programme of structured support persistent lateness continues, a request will be made to issue a *Penalty notice under the GCC/National Penalty Notice Code of Conduct*.

### **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents should inform the office of such absences, so that the relevant class teachers can be notified.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

If absence is required in 'exceptional circumstances', parents or carers must apply in writing to the Headteacher for permission for that absence. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence, using the school's leave of absence request form accessible on the school website, and available from the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

'Exceptional circumstances' are defined as one off events which are unavoidable. Examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral of a close relative, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

The Headteacher will inform the parents or carers of the decision in writing. Authorised absence will only be granted where the correct procedures have been followed and the permission given. It will not be granted retrospectively and remains at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)

- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (*see definition above*) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child, and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

## Procedures following unexplained absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences that have never been properly explained;
- holidays not agreed.

Following up unexplained absence where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Contact the pupil's parent/carer by text on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. This text requests the parent/carer to contact the school immediately.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may make an unannounced home visit or contact the police if there are significant Safeguarding concerns.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper Safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving Gloucestershire's attendance service, or if Safeguarding is a concern contact the police.

## Strategies for promoting attendance

In Cam Hopton School, we aim to promote attendance by following the Educational Endowment Fund's six evidence based successful themes for promoting attendance:

1. Build a holistic understanding of pupils and families and diagnose specific needs.

2. Build a culture of community and belonging for pupils.
3. Communicate effectively with families.
4. Improve universal provisions for all pupils.
5. Deliver targeted interventions to supplement universal provision.
6. Monitor the impact of approaches.

In addition, attendance is promoted fortnightly in the school newsletter, shared with parents and carers during parents' meetings, and kept at the forefront of daily routines by displaying promotional posters in the school office and on the school noticeboard.

### **Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing**

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels through phone calls, termly letter and end of year reports.
- Monitor attendance and absence data half termly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- Provide regular attendance reports to the headteacher, Family Support Worker, class teachers and SENCo, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Use the graduated pathway to identify and target support.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

- Provide access to wider support services to remove barriers to learning.
- Use home visits to carry out 'safe and well' checks on pupils.
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

## **Legal sanctions**

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not.

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil.

Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

## **Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy.

## **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year, by the Senior Attendance Champion, Melanie Skidmore (Deputy head). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Any appeals against this policy can be made through the governors' complaints procedure.

Cam Hopton C of E Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This school aims to serve the community by providing high quality education and promoting Christian Values.