

Cam Hopton Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Aided)

Attendance Policy

Life in all its Fullness

Document History

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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 collective responsibility in order to ensure that all children are provided the opportunity to experience 'Life in All its Fullness'. We believe 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.

At Cam Hopton C of E Primary School, we recognise the clear links between attendance and progress, and attendance and Safeguarding children. 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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.

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
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
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The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Liaising with the Family Support Worker to deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with school staff, Family Support Worker and SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Melanie Skidmore, Deputy Headteacher.

The class teacher 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 in order 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 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
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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
- 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 3 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:

- 12:45pm Key Stage 1 and will be kept open until 12:50pm
- 1:00pm Reception and will be kept open until 1:05pm
- 1:05pm Key Stage 2 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, using the appropriate L code.
- After the register has closed at 9:00am will be marked as absent, using the appropriate U code.

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.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school office in advance of the appointment.

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.

Exceptional circumstances

If absence is required in exceptional circumstances, parents or carers must apply in writing to the Head teacher 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 Head teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

The Head teacher 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 Head teacher.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

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.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the Head teacher, class teachers and the Family Support Worker, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels through phone calls, termly letters and end of year reports.
- 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
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Where attendance is highlighted as a concern, weekly attendance will be monitored with the Family Support Worker following up concerns with weekly phone calls
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

- 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.

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 the barriers to attendance
- 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 can request Gloucestershire County Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. 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 £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 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.

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 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 designated senior leader for attendance, 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.