



This policy reflects the school's practice during COVID-19 closure and phased re-opening of schools

For a child to reach their potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

During COVID-19 phased re-opening of schools (June 2020), the school will inform parents of which children are expected in. Once registers are formulated with the children we have been informed are attending school, the usual attendance procedures apply in terms of 1st day, 2nd day, 3rd day absence phone calls.

Responsibility of the parents/carers

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. Parents/carers are also responsible for ensuring that their child stay at school once they have registered. Parents/carers are required to inform the school if their child is unable to attend on the first day of absence before 9:30am and every day after that.

Responsibility of the School

- The school is responsible for following up absences of pupils whose parents/carers have failed to inform the school with a reason why the pupil is absent. On the first day of absence, the school will contact each named adult with parental responsibility on the pupil's file via phone, text or email. On the second day of absence, if the school has failed to make contact with those listed as having parental responsibility, phone calls to other people listed on the child's file will be made.
- The school is responsible for working with pupils to improve their attitudes around attendance.
- The school is responsible for tracking pupils who do not achieve satisfactory attendance.
- An Attendance Officer is employed by the school to track attendance, provide data analysis to the SLT, liaise with teachers and work with the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) to improve attendance.



- The school is responsible for sharing information on attendance with parents/carers regularly through parent consultations, meetings and written communication.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised (code 0).

The Attendance Officer keeps a record of reasons for children's absence. As phone calls are taken by the school office, names and reasons are recorded. Once the absence code is decided, it is entered onto the electronic register. Sometimes, the teachers are aware of the reason for absence and enter the appropriate code in the register. The teacher will also inform the Attendance Officer of the reason for absence.

All parents/carers new to the school are given information on attendance in the welcome pack. (***See appendix 1 – Attendance letter to parents and carers***).

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day. The registers remain open until 9:25am.

During COVID-19 re-opening, doors will open at 8:50am and registration will be at 9:00am. Any child arriving after 9:00am will be marked as late. School gates close at 9:10am.

Pupils who arrive after the gate has closed, will not be able to come into school, as we will not be admitting children into school via the main School Office.

In cases where the school is monitoring lateness of individual pupils more closely, the Attendance Officer will add a note to the electronic register with the reason for lateness. Pupils who are late are monitored and parents/carers will be contacted if their child is late for school regularly. Afternoon registration is taken at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils who are late after the registers have closed will receive a U code (this is an unauthorised absence).

First Day Absence

On the first day of absence, parents/carers are required to contact the school before 9:25am. If there are absent pupils whose parents have not contacted the school, the Attendance Officer will contact each named adult with parental responsibility on the pupil's file. This will be a phone call, text or email.

Teachers are responsible for communicating any relevant information about an absent child, in their class, to the Attendance Officer (through email, in person or written in the absence book which is kept in the school office).

Should a child be subject to a child protection plan, the school will inform the named social worker and/or designated person. If the parents/carers are engaging with a family worker, the Attendance Officer may also make contact with the family worker.



Second Day Absence

Parents/carers are expected to make contact with the school on each day of absence. If no contact has been received from parents/carers regarding a pupil's absence on the first day, the school will telephone all named adults on the pupil's file to find out where they are.

Third Day Absence

If no contact has been received from the parents/carers regarding a child's absence, the school will telephone all named adults on the pupil's file to find out where they are. A designated person from the school will be informed that we haven't heard anything from parents/carers about the child's whereabouts. The designated person will then arrange for a welfare check to be made by visiting the pupil's home address. The designated person will also contact social care and the LAAO for further advice where necessary.

Ten Days of Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team, following the guidance in appendix 2 (CME Policy CCC, Sept 2017).

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer and teacher to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers. If this is unsuccessful, the school will seek advice from the school's LAAO. Every week, the Attendance Officer and a senior leader meet to monitor pupils' attendance. The school carries out informal and formal actions with parents with the aim of improving attendance. During the informal actions, the school may make phone calls, have face-to-face conversations or send letters. The school will explore possible reasons for absence and offer support to parents to resolve any issues. When attendance does not improve, medical evidence is requested from parents/carers before the absence is authorised.

The LAAO meets regularly with the school to monitor its actions to improve attendance. The next step is decided in consultation with the senior leadership team. **A penalty notice is issued in cases where insufficient improvements in attendance have been made. *During COVID-19 reopening of schools period, no penalty notices will be issued.**

**COVID-19****CHILDREN ACCESSING HOME LEARNING AND NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL**

- Parents/carers are expected to make weekly contact with the school via the class teacher email address or school telephone.

- The school keeps a central spreadsheet of all the children on roll. Staff enter all contact they have on there. Each week, the child is highlighted a colour (red, amber, yellow, green). Designated persons and the Attendance Officer monitors the contact from parents/carers in the following ways and the listed actions are carried out:

	Children are given a colour every Monday.	Action (this is a minimum and we would encourage the class teacher to continue to make contact with the parents/carers throughout)
GREEN	<p>In the last week there has been one of the following types of contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work has been handed in - Parent/carer has been spoken to by a member of staff - Parent/carer has emailed the school - Child has been seen to be safe and well by a member of staff <p>- the parent has been in contact with the teacher of a sibling, living at the same home address.</p>	<p>Record date and type of contact on the parent/carer contact record</p> <p>Monitor contact</p>
YELLOW	<p>In the last fortnight, there has been one of the following types of contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work has been handed in - Parent/carer has been spoken to - Parent/carer has emailed the school - Child has been seen to be safe and well by a member of staff 	<p>1. Class teacher to email by Tuesday of that week.</p> <p>2. Text by Friday and explain that they need to make contact with the school office asap.</p> <p>Wording as per previous email</p>
ORANGE	<p>In the last 3 weeks, there has been one of the following types of contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work has been handed in - Parent/carer has been spoken to - Parent/carer has emailed the school - Child has been seen to be safe and well by a member of staff 	<p>1. Attendance officer makes phone calls to all named contacts.</p> <p>2. Where possible, adults in school try all phone numbers on the child's file.</p>
RED	<p>No contact for over 3 weeks in any form. OR The last 'safe and well' indicator was actually via a 3rd party and not with the parent/carer e.g. member of staff saw them in the local area but there's been <i>no</i> other contact.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final attempts made by DPs to make contact with any named contact (preferably from the school telephone number) 2. Text sent to explain that a welfare check will be made 2. Welfare check made to the home address 3. If unsuccessful, referral is made



In addition to the above, designated persons in school initiate contact with some vulnerable families via phone calls and emails to ensure that regular contact is maintained.

Persistent absence

A persistent absentee is defined as a pupil who is absent for more than 10% of all possible sessions. This is all absence, authorised or not. A pupil with an attendance of 90% or less is deemed to be a 'persistent absentee.' The Attendance Officer monitors the school's persistent absence list regularly and shares it with the LAEO and head teacher. *During COVID-19 phased reopening, pupils who are expected to be at school are monitored. If their attendance falls below 90%, a conversation takes place with parents/carers to explore the possible reason for non-attendance to identify if the school can support in any way.

Long-term absence

Whenever possible, the school will work with the parents/carers of persistent absentees to provide work and support to minimise the disruption to their education. For example, a child may have a medical condition which affects their attendance. Distance learning packs are given to any pupils where a planned, long-term authorised absence takes place.

A Welcome Back

It is important that all pupils are made to feel welcome when they return to school following an absence. This ensures that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been shared with the other pupils. Teachers work with their TAs to ensure that this happens. A brief conversation is expected to take place between the teacher and parent or pupil on return, depending on the child's age and maturity. Teachers and TAs pass on any concerns over the reasons for absence onto a member of the Leadership Team (LT).

Absence notes

Notes received from parents /carers explaining absence are recorded and kept on the pupil's file. On receiving any written explanations for absence, the teacher should sign and date the letter. Emails detailing pupils' absence are kept electronically on the office email account.

Other absence

Leave of absence during term time will not be authorised. The school will consider authorising individual requests for absence (see appendix 3, exception absence request form) in *exceptional circumstances* but parents /carers must apply in *advance* for permission. Leave of absence taken without permission will be counted as unauthorised absence. This is the same as truancy and there may be a consequence of a Penalty Notice. We refer to guidance from the [Cambridgeshire County Council's website](#).

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities, as they arise, to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. Information on attendance and the school's systems for absence are included in all new parent/carer packs when a child joins the school. Information from Cambridgeshire County Council is available if required ([Cambridgeshire County Council's website](#)).



Systems for improving attendance

The school works extremely hard to promote good attendance through discussions with pupils and parents. Regular analysis is presented to staff to keep them informed. This is done through staff briefings, team meetings and emails.

Working with families

The school works with families to improve attendance. Support may be offered and this may be in the form of a Family Worker or completion of an Education Health Assessment (EHA) to involve more professionals.

Interventions

Support for individuals is put into place in school for pupils with low attendance. These pupils have discussions with a member of the teaching assistant team who act as a 'buddy' to improve attendance. The pupils review their attendance and explore reasons behind low attendance and the importance of improving it.

Class teachers regularly access individual attendance figures for all the children in their class. Teachers are expected to communicate with parent/carers through informal conversations or parent consultations about attendance. Throughout each academic year, the leader for attendance may bring in new initiatives to improve attendance. This may be intervention groups with the children or strategies to work with parents/carers. These are recorded in the annual Attendance Improvement Plan.

Early Intervention takes place with non-statutory age pupils in pre-school and reception to explore possible reasons for absence so that any issues can be addressed prior to the pupil becoming statutory school age. This is in the form of telephone discussions or informal meetings between the school and parents/carers.

The registration system

The School will use an electronic register system for keeping the school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence



I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Shirley School completes electronic registers. Registers, by law, must be kept for at least 3 years. Information held on the school's MIS is backed up every night. Staff receive regular updates and training on taking electronic registers to ensure that they are completed consistently and correctly.

During COVID-19, daily returns of pupils attending schools are completed and sent to the DfE.

During Covid-19 phased re-opening, the following codes will be used to record the attendance information:-

X Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session.

Y Pupils who are eligible to attend a session but do not as they are shielding, self-isolating or have an EHCP

plan.

I Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness.

C Despite being eligible and not shielding or self-isolating, the pupil doesn't attend school.

Where other specific authorised absence and attendance codes are more appropriate the school will use these, such as M (medical appointment)

Children will be placed into Bubble registration groups for the register to be taken each morning and afternoon.



Useful information:

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in category 3 are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

Appendices

1. Attendance letter to parents/carers for admission packs
2. CME Policy CCC September 2017
3. Exceptional absence request form [Cambridgeshire County Council's website](#).

Adopted by Standards Committee as a delegated responsibility on behalf of the Governing Body:

Signed by the Chair of the Standards Committee

Date: