



Cirrus Primary Academy Trust

Attendance

11 January 2018

Attendance Policy

This Review: January 2018
Next Review: January 2021

At Cirrus Primary Academy Trust we believe that good attendance is not simply a legal requirement. It is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of the range of opportunities that school offers and gain the skills that will equip them for their next stage of education and for adult life. All children are entitled to receive the full benefits of education; poor attendance is therefore a safeguarding issue. We recognise punctuality as an important related issue as frequent lateness will cause children to miss aspects of their education, is upsetting for the child, and is disruptive to others. We recognise the importance of a clear understanding of the need for regular and punctual attendance in preparing children for the workplace.

We expect all children to have good attendance, classed as 96% or above.

By law, all children of compulsory school age (five to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. For most parents, this means registering their child at a school - though some choose to make other arrangements to provide a suitable, full-time education. Under The Education Act (1996), parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority. The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. All absence figures must be reported to the Local Authority and DfE and are recorded on child annual reports.

Once a child is registered at a school, the parent is legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If the child fails to do so, the parents risk legal proceedings being instigated by way of a **penalty notice** or being brought before the Magistrates Court (Section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996).

Parents/carers should encourage good attendance by:

- making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- taking an interest in their education - ask about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities;
- discussing any problems they may have at school - inform their Class Teacher/Head Teacher/Head of School about anything serious;
- not letting their children take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not prevent an adult from going to work.
- ensuring that their children must attend school for 190 days each year.
- arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays will help to prevent disruption to a child's education and to the school.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the School Attendance Officer so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Definitions of Attendance and Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required on the school's absence line or in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or any other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'permission' is given. This type of absence can lead to the school and the Local Authority using sanctions i.e. penalty notices and/or legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the school
- Parents or siblings feeling unwell

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is important that parents don't cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold, or is at risk of moving towards it is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately. All PA pupils are made known to the School Attendance Officer who will meet with the parents along with the Head teacher/Head of School. As with all persistent absence, advice will be taken from Children's Services.

Guidance for parents/carers

What to do if your child is sick?

When your child is unwell please call the school office on the first morning of absence. Your child will receive an unauthorised code if we have not heard from you by 9.30am. If your child has shown symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting it is important they stay at home for 48 hours after the last episode (see the 'Sickness 48 hour rule' under Policies' on our website).

What to do for dental and medical treatment?

It is expected that these are taken outside of school hours where possible, however we appreciate that in some cases there may be emergencies. Children will be expected to be in school before and after their appointments where possible. Leave for medical or dental appointments will be authorised where evidence has been received from the parents (either a letter, text or email confirming the appointment from the dentist, doctor or hospital or a stamped appointment card for example).

Request for Leave of Absence

This will need to be put in writing with as much information as possible regarding the request. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time affects children's schooling as much as any other absence and the school expects parents to help us by not taking their children away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance, in writing. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Clearly no policy can cover all contingencies or the complexities of family life and individual circumstances.

Holidays are never authorised under the following circumstances:

- Where the holiday is during the Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 SATs tests.

Any holiday taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised. This could result in your child being removed from the school roll or parents being issued with a penalty notice.

Relocating or transferring schools

If you relocate or withdraw your child from school, we must have in writing the following information:

- Forwarding address
- Date of leaving
- New school details

If we do not have these details then a referral to the Children Missing in Education Officer will be made by the school as part of statutory safeguarding procedures.

What does the School do when a child is absent with no reason given?

- Phone, text or email on the day
- Write to parent and continue to call
- Get the teacher to ask for a reason at the beginning/end of day

Monitoring attendance

Attendance is monitored initially by a member of the schools administration team. A member of the Senior Leadership Team oversees the monitoring process and meets regularly with the School Attendance Officer. Attendance/lateness is monitored half-termly and any issues identified concerning absence, illness or lateness will be addressed initially by letter and if necessary a subsequent meeting with strategies put in place to improve attendance.

A pupil may be referred to the School Attendance Officer where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The School Attendance Officer will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However if attendance fails to improve, the parents risk legal proceedings being instigated by way of a **penalty notice** or being brought before the Magistrates Court (Section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996).

Good attendance is recognised and rewarded across the trust.