

# **Coton-in-the-Elms Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

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## 1. Attendance Policy

At Coton-in-the-Elms CE Primary School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

Coton School is a happy school. Our school ethos reflects our belief that children learn best in an encouraging and happy atmosphere. Every member of the school staff show concern and care about each child's welfare.

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- Attainment in school
- Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

All children are sometimes 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 never better to 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 may make things worse

## 2. Communication

Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the School Prospectus. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

At the pre-school induction meetings held each year for children about to enter our Reception class the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which means they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this.

Again at this initial meeting parents are told/reminded that Government legislation now states that family holidays are not permitted in term time. The Headteacher will consistently remind the school community via newsletters and other communication of the legislation.

### 3. Support Systems:

It is recognised that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home, in the community or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school works closely with the authority's Education Welfare Officer in matters relating to poor school attendance and continuing late arrival at school. Other support services are requested to provide assistance on a needs led basis.

### 4. Lateness:

When children arrive in school late, or if they have to leave school early, the parent or carer should call at the school office to sign them in or out. The signing in/out register is used as an appendix to the online register as part of the school's health and safety procedures.

### 5. Categorising absence:

When a pupil is absent, the online register must show whether the absence is **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

**Illness:** The school office should be informed before 9.30 am on the first day of a child's absence due to illness with an expected date of return. Parents should keep in regular contact with the school if the absence continues. Children should return to school as soon as they are well enough to attend. Parents should put the reason for absence in writing and may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription, GP's note, etc.

**Medical appointments:-** Parents should make every possible effort to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day so as not to disrupt their child's education. If it is absolutely necessary to make an appointment during school time, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

**Other Authorised Circumstances:** The school will consider authorising absence on occasions where there is absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example a family bereavement.

**Lateness:** Late absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

**Exclusion from school:** Exclusion is counted as an authorised absence. Parents are responsible for educating their child during the first 6 days of exclusion and the child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

**Leave of Absence:** The school strongly discourages leave of absence during school time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time due to leave of absence. Under no circumstances will the school approve a holiday during school time. If your child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during the academic year.

The Head teacher has limited discretion to authorise leave of absence. Leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If a leave of absence for 'exceptional circumstances' is required, parents will be given an application form to apply for the leave of absence

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. If leave of absence is granted, you must make sure that your child attends on the expected date of return. The parent must contact the school if there is an unavoidable delay. If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still does not attend school the absence will be unauthorised. Unauthorised absence may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice to the parent or carer.

**Religious Observance:** The school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. The school will authorise absence on parental request for a day's absence for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

**Unauthorised absence:** Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. Unsatisfactory explanations include: Shopping for uniforms; A pupil's or family members birthday; Unauthorised holidays; Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes; "Couldn't get up"; Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school; Having their hair cut; Looking after the house or a sick member of the family. This is a general list and is not exhaustive.

## 6. Rewards

The school values its high level of attendance and rewards children who achieve 100% attendance on a yearly basis. A treat is often provided to children who have full attendance for a year. This is usually around 10% of the school population. The class with the best attendance is rewarded in assembly on a weekly basis. Rewarding attendance in the Friday assembly (attended by parents) helps keep it a high priority with the school community.

## 7. Concerns

If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent then the class teacher contacts the parent concerned to have an informal discussion about this. If this persists then the teacher registers their concern then the class teacher talks to the Headteacher immediately.

The attendance record is looked at regularly, patterns of absence worked out and the Educational Welfare Officer for the school is contacted.

## 8. Truancy

All the staff at Coton-in-the-Elms CE Primary School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it an extremely rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher will be notified at once. The Headteacher will then contact the parent. Parents would be encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend could be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Headteacher talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and the parents and any appropriate action is taken.

## 9. Roles and Responsibilities

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

Coton in the Elms Primary School believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

**The Governing Body**, in order to ensure that the school is complying with its statutory duties, will:

- Review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy;
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings;
- Ensure that there is a named senior member of staff to lead on attendance;

### **The School will:-**

- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- Monitor Attendance effectively and follow up absence appropriately;
- Raise awareness of regular school attendance by highlighting expectations in newsletters, the school prospectus, assemblies and parents meetings;

- Encourage a welcoming and positive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and their presence is valued;
- Reward pupils successes in achieving high attendance standards;
- Discuss appropriate strategies with pupils and parents to support those with attendance difficulties;
- Use appropriate resources and advise parents on accessing support to aid their child's social, emotional and behavioural development;
- Ensure staff receive training regarding supporting pupils with school attendance difficulties;
- Consider individual circumstances and discuss strategies with parents and pupils in the event of a child returning to school after a lengthy absence.

**The School response to Absence and lateness:**

- School will make immediate contact with parents if there is concern about an absent pupil;
- The school will work closely with the EWO to monitor all pupils absence;
- Parents of pupils who are regularly late for school or are consistently poor attendees will receive a letter from the school expressing concern;
- If there is no improvement in attendance following a letter the parents will be invited into school to discuss the situation with the Attendance Lead/Headteacher;
- If school interventions fail to resolve issues of poor attendance and punctuality, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer EWO from the Local Educational Authority.
- If a pupil is on the child protection register, the EWO will be notified on the first day of absence.
- The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.
- Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

**Parents and Guardians** have a very important part to play in supporting their children's education. Ultimately all those with parental responsibility are accountable for the regular and punctual attendance of children. In order to make a valuable contribution to their attendance parents are expected to: -

- Contact the school by 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note to the school;
- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress;
- See themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children and must endeavour to instil respect for education and those who deliver it;
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours or during school holidays;
- Parents are urged to contact the class teacherr should their child seem worried or upset about coming to school;

- Encourage good routines at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before;
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family;
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed, and in a condition to learn;
- Ensure the school are kept informed of the progress during continued absence at regular intervals;
- Should not take their children on holiday during school time;

**School expectations of Pupils:**

- Children must try their best to attend school regularly and punctually;
- Pupils arriving after 8.55 a.m. should always report to the school office.

## 10. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## 11. Glossary of Terms

**EWO Educational Welfare Officer**

**PC Reference:**

**Attendance Policy**

