

Cumberworth C of E First School Attendance Policy

Cumberworth C of E First School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students.

It recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting regular school attendance and excellent punctuality so that all young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on excellent attendance.

Aim

To promote a culture where excellent attendance and punctuality are seen as a fundamental requirement for all learners.

Objectives

To have systems and procedures in place that:

- Encourage attendance and punctuality to school and lessons
- Inform parents/carers of absences and involve them in any attendance concerns for their children
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Promote effective partnerships with the Attendance and Pupil Support Service (APSS) and with any other relevant services and agencies.
- Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Monitoring and Review

This policy was written by the Shelley Pyramid Family of Schools, **adapted** by Cumberworth First School and will be reviewed annually by Cumberworth First School governing body.

Appendix A - Attendance Guidance for Parents and Carers

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the parents'/carer's responsibility and

permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Promoting regular attendance and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate good attendance.
- Make sure parents/carers have access to attendance data (annual reports and throughout the year by request)

2. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why we will always need to be given a reason for any absence.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carer's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our persistently absent pupils and their parents may be subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include:

- Allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.
- All PA cases may be made known to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service and the school's Education Social Worker (at the Head Teacher's discretion).
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3. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Report reason for continued absence;

If a child is absent school will:

- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Invite parents/carers in to school to discuss the situation with our Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service if attendance falls below 90% (at the Head Teachers' discretion)
- Refer to the authority any pupil who has been absent without school's permission for a continuous period of ten school days or more.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about a number of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times.

There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

4. LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher, getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in registration.
- All children arriving after registration period will be required to sign in at the office. The reason for lateness is also recorded.
- If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked in to school to meet with a member of staff to resolve the problem, but

parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

5. HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME - see Appendix B

6. ATTENDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT **SERVICE (APSS)**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problem together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer (APSO) from the Local Authority. He/She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the APSS 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 Authority.

The table below is a guide to indicate what may happen when a student's attendance falls below a certain percentage. Previous attendance history, the reason for any absence (illness for example) and the time of the year will be taken into consideration.

First day absence: Phone call home

91-95% attendance: Letter home/or invitation to meet with Head teacher

90% or below attendance: Letter home, Parental interview, APSO involvement, Use of Action Plan/Parenting Contract by APSS, Warning letter from APSO, Fixed Penalty Notice

7. 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 regularly. All school staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix B - Term Time Holidays

It is well recognised that good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to a child or young person's future prospects and reducing absence from school continues to be a priority for the Shelley Pyramid Family of Schools. Reflecting national concerns around attendance, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now the Department for Education) issued revised guidance in October 2007 strengthening the view that as a general rule, children should not be taken out of school for the purposes of a holiday.

Time off school for family holidays is not a right, but schools have discretion to allow absences in exceptional circumstances. There is no formal definition of what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' but might include:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education;
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

All requests from parents for holiday absence must be made in writing to **the school in advance, at least two weeks prior to the holiday being booked**. The request should be sent for the attention of the head teacher and outline the specific reasons why the request meets the requirements of "special circumstances".

The school will not authorise holidays, which are requested for the following reasons:

- Availability of cheap holidays;
- Availability of the desired accommodation;
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with beginning of term.

The head teacher will determine if the request is reasonable. Unless there are exceptional circumstances the school will not approve any term time holiday:

- For any student in full time education (years Reception-Y5) where current attendance is less than 95%.
- At the beginning of any term.

Where family holidays or extended holidays are taken without proper authorisation, the school may respond as follows:

- The absence will be treated as unauthorised and recorded on the child's records.
- Parents can be given a Kirklees Penalty Notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised holidays.
- In certain circumstances, the school may delete pupils from the register who fail to return on the date they were expected back from extended leave.

This was last reviewed by the full Governing Body: September 2018
Next review Sept 2019