

# ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY



**CLAINES**  
CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

AT CLAINES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, WE HAVE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO ENSURING CHILDREN FLOURISH AND SUCCEED TOGETHER AS PART OF A STRONG SCHOOL COMMUNITY. DRIVEN BY SOME OF OUR KEY VALUES OF RESPECT AND COMPASSION, WE ARE INCLUSIVE AND COMMITTED TO THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD. WE AIM FOR A SCHOOL WHERE EVERYONE IS TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND VALUED FOR THEIR PLACE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND THE WIDER WORLD. AT THE HEART OF OUR LEARNING, ARE THE VALUES OF PERSEVERANCE AND COURAGE. WE STRIVE FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE GREAT ASPIRATIONS: ENSURING NEW CHALLENGES ARE MET WITH CONFIDENCE AND 'NO ONE SETTLES FOR LESS THAN THEIR BEST'.

WE DO ALL OF THIS WHILST FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHRIST.

<b>Approved by:</b>	Full Governing Body	<b>Date:</b> 9.12.24
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	9.12.24	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	November 2025	

## CLAINES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

**(This policy is to read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy, SEND and Inclusion Policy and Child Protection Policy)**

At Claines CE Primary School we believe in promoting excellent attendance and punctuality for all of our pupils in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that school has to offer. We believe that regular attendance is vitally important in promoting successful learning, as well as developing key life skills which are essential for success in the world beyond school. It has been proven that attainment can be closely linked to attendance and in order to achieve their full potential children should aim for the highest levels of attendance and punctuality.

As stated in Working together to improve school attendance 2024,

- *The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.*
- *Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.*

We rely on our partnership with parents and recognise that it is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school in a regular and committed manner. In support of this, the following information outlines our commitments in ensuring that attendance at Claines CE Primary continues to be of the highest priority.

#### AIMS

- To ensure excellent levels of pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To establish an ethos of 'school attendance matters' through proactive strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- To work closely with parents/carers to fulfil our obligations to the children by placing high priority on the regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- To ensure procedures within the school identify and follow up all absences and patterns of absence at the earliest opportunity.
- To have a clear and consistently applied escalation process.
- To continuously develop the school's celebration of good attendance and punctuality.
- To provide a school that has a "calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn" (*Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024*).

#### TARGET

We recognise that it "is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment" (*Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024*).

Therefore, we expect all pupils to strive for 100% attendance and to arrive punctually by 8.45 a.m. each day.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **PUPILS**

- Pupils should strive to attend school every day and be on time.
- Pupils should have a clear understanding of the importance of attending school as well as acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence.
- Pupils should tell their parents/carers or class teacher of any reason that prevents them attending/wanting to attend school.
- In instances of lateness, pupils should report to the school office upon arrival.

### **PARENTS/CARERS**

- Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Parents/carers should have a clear understanding of the importance of attending school, acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence, and the fact that an absence will remain unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been given.
- Parents/carers should work closely with the school and inform the office on the first day of their child's absence and where necessary all other days thereafter.
- In circumstances where a parent is having difficulty getting the child to attend, please seek the support of the school as quickly as possible. This can be done by phoning the school office.
- For further information about how parents/carers can work with school and Worcestershire Local Authority to support their child's attendance, follow the link below to a short guide written by members of the Attendance Action Alliance, together with the Department for Education. <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/>

The Headteacher is the named senior member of staff with the lead responsibility for attendance and punctuality. Governors have a responsibility for monitoring attendance targets. The admin staff are the attendance administrative support.

Members of school staff; the Senior Leadership Team, Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff all have responsibility for attendance and punctuality in school. *"Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families" (Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024).*

Attendance matters are reviewed by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, SENDCo and Mental Health Lead. Attendance monitoring is reported termly to the Governing body. The school will consult with any other relevant agencies such as the School Nurse, Early Help Team, Educational Psychologist, Children and Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Children's Services, Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and others to seek to support individual cases as appropriate.

### **ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

- Parents/carers are asked to inform the school by telephone (01905 451235) if a pupil is absent, because of illness, on the first day of absence *no later than 9.30a.m.* - providing the reason and where necessary on each subsequent day of absence.

- If school has **not** been contacted by the parents/carers, the office will make contact by telephone. This will be recorded on the school system with the reason for absence.
- Where a pupil returns to school following an absence and school has not received a written or verbal explanation in response to requests for this from school, an unauthorised mark will be recorded on the child's attendance register.
- After 2 days' absence, where there has been no contact from parents/carers the pupil's name will be referred to the Headteacher and/or the Deputy Head Teacher who will try to make contact with the parents/carers or any of the named contacts. If no contact is made, the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher could conduct a home visit with another member of staff.
- If no contact can be made a letter will be delivered by hand to the home address and where there are concerns the police may be asked to do a 'welfare check' which may then be reported to Worcestershire Children's Services.
- Should there be frequent absence due to illness, the Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher will ask to meet parents and may ask for medical evidence, such as prescription/prescribed medication /appointment letter/letter from GP or consultant. If these are not provided the absence could be recorded as unauthorised.
- If a pupil is going to be absent from school for a long period of time due to illness or other authorised extenuating circumstances, school will liaise with an Education Welfare Officer in order to best support the pupil.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher should be informed.
- In relation to absences for religious observance, as set out under the 1996 Act "*a pupil has not failed to attend school regularly and therefore the parent has not committed an offence under section 444(1) or (1A) of the Act (the statutory defences) as the absence was on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong.*) Parents are requested to complete a Leave of Absence Request form for this in advance.
- After 10 consecutive days' absence, we are required to report this on the Worcestershire Children's Services Portal. In line with the Education Regulation Act (1996) if a child is absent from school for longer than 20 days with no authorised reason the child's name could be taken off roll.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that their child was ill, for example, can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's absence may be requested. However, schools can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

- We encourage parents/carers to make appointments outside of school hours. Many GP surgeries, dentists and hospitals offer before and after school appointments.
- We accept occasionally there will be the need for emergency appointments, however these will be rare. Parents/carers are requested to provide written or verbal confirmation of these appointments.
- Pupils must be signed in and out at the office and these absences will be recorded as appropriate.
- We do not expect pupils to be absent all day for a medical appointment, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## PLANNED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

- Government legislation states that no planned absence from school will be authorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Parents must notify school of any planned absence from school in writing using the 'Leave of Absence Request Form' available at the office. This must be made prior to the absence taking place. **Absence requests for exceptional circumstances will only be accepted by the Headteacher when completed on this form.**
- If necessary, school may liaise with an Education Welfare Officer in addressing unauthorised absence linked to planned absence from school.
- Only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence. We will consider each application for a leave of absence individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.

## PUNCTUALITY

- Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8.45 a.m. each day. The school gates close at 8.45 a.m., arriving after this up to 9.30 a.m. will be considered as late.
- Pupils arriving after 8.45a.m. must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Pupils arriving after 9.30 a.m. will receive an unauthorised late mark unless a satisfactory reason is given. This results in the pupil being absent on the attendance report for the morning session.
- Action to address lateness will be the responsibility of the Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher. Class registers **MUST** reflect the correct late code ('L' to be used prior to 9.30am, 'U' to be used after 9.30am and 'M' to be used if a medical / dental appointment has resulted in the late arrival of a pupil). For further guidance on register codes please see Appendix 1.
- Valid reasons for lateness could include medical appointments, which have been agreed with school prior to the appointment.

## REPORTING TO PARENTS/CARERS

A child's overall attendance will be reported to the parents/carers at the end of the academic year distributed within the end of year school report. Attendance certificates can be requested via the school office if required. Parents will receive up to date Attendance Certificates if their child's attendance is raised as a concern.

## REWARDS

We have a number of attendance rewards in order to promote the importance of attendance and punctuality and our ethos that 'school attendance matters.'

- All staff reward good attendance and punctuality on a daily basis through praise and encouragement.
- Weekly assemblies promote attendance and the 'Attendance Class of the Week' will be rewarded with an extra 15 minute playtime.
- School website displays the current attendance figures for each class.

- The weekly and overall school attendance figure is displayed on the weekly newsletter, with the school target.
- Attendance HERO postcards are awarded on a monthly basis, to all children who have been Here Everyday Ready On time.
- At the end of the each term, anyone with 99-100% attendance for that term will receive a certificate.
- Pupils who have previously had poor attendance/punctuality and make significant improvement following intervention will be issued with a praise letter or postcard acknowledging their improvements.

## PROCEDURES

### Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions. If completed incorrectly this can constitute a risk in the event of an emergency evacuation. The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately.

Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations. Claines CE Primary School use a combination of paper and electronic registration to keep registers and the procedures for marking registers are as follows:

<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>
1. Registers must be taken by 9.00 a.m. and 1.15 p.m. promptly.	<b>Class teacher</b>
2. On each occasion a school must record whether a child was present, absent or present at approved educational activity. No pupil should be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is called or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher.	<b>Class teacher</b>
3. A code must be entered for every child for the two daily registers, spaces must not be left in the register.	<b>Class teacher</b>
4. Record reasons for absence if known including who informed.	<b>Admin Staff</b>
5. If unsure of code – leave as ‘N’ code – the code will be amended by Admin support team.	<b>Class teacher/ Admin Staff</b>
6. Daily – First Day Calling and updates to registers.	<b>Admin Staff</b>
7. Weekly – checking for consistency in recording.	<b>Admin Staff</b>

Every half a day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the Headteacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Headteacher. At Claines CE Primary School the Deputy Headteacher has been designated to authorise absence in the absence of the Headteacher

If the school is forced to close due to circumstances beyond our control this does not affect pupils' attendance.

Attendance registers may be kept manually or electronically. School complies with and uses the DfE compulsory national attendance codes, see Appendix 1.

## **POOR ATTENDANCE**

School attendance of 95% or less is below average and therefore, children whose attendance falls below this, will be closely monitored by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher and further action considered. School will challenge the attitude of those pupils and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance.

Schools will analyse individual pupil data to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern and parents will be informed by the school where their child's attendance causes concern.

School has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance including letters home, phone calls, regular meetings with parents/carers and home visits.

After school has attempted to address attendance issues with the parents/carers and there is no improvement, external agencies may be involved including the Education Engagement Team (EET).

## **PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM**

Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be identified (pupils with more than 10% absence rate) and a 'Attendance Plan' will be put in place through a formal Attendance Meeting to address the underlying reasons for the absence level. Where the child's attendance remains a concern following supportive strategies further referrals may be made to an EET and may result in penalty action.

## **ATTENDANCE MEETING**

Parents of pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern may be invited to attend an Attendance Meeting. An Attendance Meeting is a formal meeting to discuss the child's school attendance, identify barriers and agree a formal 'Attendance Plan,' with clear actions, in order to improve school attendance.

An Attendance Meeting is chaired by the Headteacher (or member of the Senior Leadership Team). In addition, where appropriate, Governors and other school representatives who are involved with the child/ren will be invited to attend.

## **POOR PUNCTUALITY**

A child who is 10 minutes late for school every day effectively misses out on 6 full days of their education over a year, having an impact on their achievement.

Persistent lateness is a form of absence and requires the Headteacher to speak with parents/carers to try and understand and support reasons for lateness. It is important that parents/carers are aware that persistent lateness can make a significant difference to their child's achievement. Persistent lateness is monitored by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, who will send lateness concern letters if there is an issue. If lateness persists the parents/carers will be invited in for a formal meeting to discuss it further. In some cases, where persistent lateness does not improve a referral will be made to the Education Engagement Team (EET) and could lead to penalty action.

## **EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

For those families where poor attendance continues, a referral may be made to the Education Engagement Team for further support. Where no significant improvements are seen a decision could be made to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. These are fines issued to parents where a child has an amount of unauthorised absences over a certain period of time. In some cases, the same procedure will be followed for those families taking a leave of unauthorised absence. In certain circumstances, extremely low attendance with unexplained absences may also result in prosecution of parents for not ensuring their child's attendance at school.

## **FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

*Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.  
(Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024)*

Fixed penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends school. Fixed penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and will only be used where a fixed penalty notice is deemed likely to change parental behaviour. As stated in 'Working together to improve school attendance,' (August 2024), fixed penalty notices could be issued for the following reasons;

- *Penalty notices can be used by all schools (with the exception of independent schools) where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).*
- *Where absence was unauthorised and support has been provided but has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).*

For more information on Fixed Penalty Notices, please use the link below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)



## **REINTEGRATION**

We recognise that reintegration for children that have had a long term absence (such as a prolonged stay in hospital) or for those that have shared provision could be challenging. We also recognise that there may be other groups of children that may need support in the school environment. These may include pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), medical needs, Children Looked After (CLA), children with Emotionally Based School Non Attendance (EBSNA) and vulnerable and safeguarded pupils. In accordance with our Equal Opportunities policy all of these cases will be supported by the school; individual needs will be assessed in order to seek support from relevant agencies as deemed appropriate.

If issues to do with absence are centred around allegations including peer on peer abuse such as bullying or racial abuse, the school will draw on its Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy, Inclusion Policy, SEND Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Peer on Peer Abuse Policy to work through these issues with both the parents/carers and the children concerned. Please contact school immediately if these problems are suspected.

## **CONCLUSION**

This policy highlights the importance of attendance and punctuality of all our pupils at Claines CE Primary School. We consistently use a whole school approach to support and encourage parents/carers and pupils to attend school every day. We operate an open-door policy and will always address individual needs to the best of our ability. In return, we expect the support of both parents/carers and children in achieving the best possible levels of attendance.

## Appendix 1: ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANING

### ATTENDANCE CODES (SEPT 2024)

ATTENDING THE SCHOOL	
/\	present during registration
L	late arrival before the register is closed
ATTENDING A PLACE OTHER THAN THE SCHOOL	
V	attending an educational visit or trip
P	participating in a sporting activity
W	attending work experience
B	attending any other approved education activity
D	dual registered at another school
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
ABSENT – LEAVE OF ABSENCE	
C1	in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	medical or dental appointment
J1	interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
S	absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	compulsory school age pupil absent due to part-time timetable
C	exceptional circumstances
ABSENT – OTHER AUTHORISED REASONS	
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	religious observance
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
E	suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
ABSENT – UNABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL BECAUSE OF UNAVOIDABLE CAUSE (CLASSIFIED FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSE AS NOT A POSSIBLE ATTENDANCE)	
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to any other unavoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
ABSENT – UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE	
G	holiday not granted by the school
N	reason for absence not yet established
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	arrived in school after registration has closed
ADMINISTRATIVE CODES	
Z	prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

## Appendix 2: WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

### Providing support first before attendance legal intervention

