

Attendance Policy and Strategy September 2022



Cannon Park Primary School

To be reviewed September 2024

Attendance Policy and Strategy 2022 onwards (in accordance with DfE Guide May 2022)

‘pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education’

Expectation

Every child in our school must have high attendance (**above 96.5%**) to benefit from the high quality teaching and rich learning opportunities that we provide to enable them to achieve academic excellence and personal growth.

Rationale

We believe that ensuring the best possible school attendance for all pupils (**above 96.5%**) is a school priority in order to enable children to achieve their best. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. We **EXPECT** all children in school every day and on time (**08:55am**).

Our aims

- All children achieve the Government minimum target of **96.5%** attendance in an academic year.
- Reduce the percentage of authorised absences to below **4%**
- Support parents in performing their legal duty by ensuring that their children attend school regularly (**96.5%+**)
- Follow the Government guidance (September 2022) to not authorise any request of leave of absence during term time for holiday purposes
- To proactively manage and improve attendance for all of our children
- To support families and work in partnership with them to improve attendance
- Reduce the percentage of persistent absences (below 90%) and ensure we have no severely absent children (below 50%)

Objectives

In order to achieve our aims the following objectives have to be put into practice: -

- Ensure all children feel safe, welcomed and are able to learn at school.
- Work in partnership with parents to ensure that education and school attendance is valued.
- Maintain an up to date admission and attendance register.
- Keep parents informed at all stages of attendance (at least termly updates).
- Ensure that school procedures are in place for the monitoring of pupil absence to keep parents informed.
- Ensure that school procedures are in place and reflect those of Government guidance (September 2022).
- Ensure that the school procedures are in place for working with the Health Service when a pupil has been identified as having persistent absences due to illness.
- Ensure that all attendance is above the Government threshold for being persistently absent from school (attendance must be 90% and above).
- To work with the local authority to formalise support and where necessary enforce attendance via statutory intervention to protect a child’s right to an education

Partnerships

Our school values working in partnership with parents/carers and with the wider school community and sees this as an essential part of promoting good attendance. Partnership working will be promoted through discussion with the parents/carers, working with professionals e.g. Early Help Team, School Nurse etc; liaising with parents and organizing termly attendance awards for classes and individuals. Parents will receive regular communications from the school, some of which will include advice and support options within our community that are available to our families. Coventry prides itself on a multi disciplinary approach to family support and at Cannon Park we excel in providing excellent pastoral support to all families regardless of a child’s attendance level.

Children that are Looked After or have a social worker will have a closer scrutiny over their attendance data in order to ensure that those children are receiving the best possible support to improve life chances quickly.

School responsibilities:

- Ensure that the school is welcoming and every child feels they belong, are listened to, valued and feels safe in school.

- Ensure the regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance. This will be done by every class teacher every day.
- Ensure parents have up to date information about their child's attendance and are notified promptly when school have concerns over attendance levels.
- Work with families to overcome any barriers to poor attendance and support rapid improvements
- Regularly celebrate and teach children the importance of good attendance and punctuality routines.
- Provide personalised and individual support where needed to ensure all children can attend school.
- Signpost to external agencies where further support to improve attendance is required.
- Regularly monitor every child's attendance so any concerns are swiftly identified and addressed.
- Report to the Attendance Governor each term and discuss any concerns or issues.
- Report attendance figures termly to Governors and at the end of each academic year in the Headteacher's Report.

Parents responsibilities:

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive a full-time education, ensuring they are in school, on time and ready to learn unless they are too unwell to attend.
- Parents/carers should wherever possible make all medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for all parts of the day except the appointment time. Appointment cards should always be provided as evidence of medical/dental appointments.
- Parents/carers must provide a minimum of two emergency contacts for their child – this is essential for establish reasons for absence and safeguarding.
- Always inform school before the start of the school day if a child will be absent from school and provide daily updates until the child returns
- Inform school promptly of any barriers preventing their child from having good attendance in school.
- Do not book leave from school during term time. If this is essential leave, an application must be submitted through the school office. Holiday leave will not be authorised and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued after 5 days.

Child responsibilities:

- To do their best to attend school every day, coming to school unless they are unwell.
- Follow good routines at home to ensure they are ready to learn when in school
- Take responsibility for helping to be ready for learning and on time each day.
- Tell school staff or family if something is making it difficult to attend school regularly

School Procedures to celebrate and encourage high attendance – maintaining a culture of high attendance

- Good attendance is a high priority in school as it will help children make the best progress socially and academically.
- Good attendance is celebrated weekly at whole school assemblies, as well as recognising pupils with significant improvement in attendance. Reward systems are reviewed regularly to ensure they are kept fresh and motivational. They celebrate and reward whole class achievements and give individual recognition and awards.
- The school will look for every opportunity to raise the profile of the importance of good attendance with pupils and parents.
- All staff in school take an active role in monitoring and promoting school attendance and punctuality and aim to help pupils develop their own motivation for daily, punctual attendance.

Absence from school

1. **Reporting absence** – we expect all parents/carers to notify school on the first day of absence and continue to keep school informed for the duration of the absence (speak in person or by phone to a member of office staff or leave a message on the school's answer phone).
2. Any **medical appointments** must be reported to the school office in advance if possible and you may be asked to provide evidence for the appointment.
3. **Any child arriving after the school gates close (8.55am)** will be marked as late unless the school have been given a sufficient reason as to why a child is absent either by email, phone or previous arrangement. If a child arrives after the close of register, they will be marked late and minutes will be recorded. All parents bringing children late to school must sign them in the late book in the main reception.
4. **First day calling** – we call and text all parents on a daily basis if we have not been given a reason for a child's non-attendance, when we get no response from parents, we may complete a home visit to ensure proper safeguarding action can be taken if required.

Monitoring attendance

All attendance records are monitored weekly to identify any areas of concern and agree any action to be taken. This is to ensure that our school's attendance figures are in line with and are meeting the school's target for attendance (2022-23) which is **96.5%+**). The Learning Mentor, Admin Lead and Attendance Lead meet weekly and discuss daily any concerns. Weekly reports are provided to the team of each class's attendance, individual pupil attendance is also closely monitored so any improvements can be celebrated and concerns can be swiftly identified.

Procedures and strategies used to promote and encourage good attendance in our school will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Learning Mentor, Admin staff, HT and Governors. We are required to regularly share and report attendance data with the Local Authority and take action as deemed necessary by them. The admissions register will be accurately kept and when a child moves schools or across authorities, their data will be deleted promptly and transferred to the onward school. Any deletion should be carried out on the day that they start their next school. No child will be deleted from Cannon Park Primary School's registers without receiving notification that it is to do so from either – the onward school; the local authority; the Missing from Education team at Coventry City Council. There are several grounds upon which a child may or may not be deleted from registers, we will not undertake to do any other than to transfer a child unless given permission from local authority attendance team.

Actions to be taken if absence is a concern:

- Parents will be informed of any concerns of poor or declining attendance and will discuss this with; class teacher, school leaders or a member of the pastoral team.
- Learning Mentors will support children in school when their attendance begins to decline or reaches **94%**.
- When a child's attendance falls below **94%** a letter will be sent to parents requesting a further meeting to inform them that all future absences will may require medical evidence. Failure to provide medical evidence may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- When attendance drops below **94%** we will meet families to inform them of a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Support Officer and or a referral to Early Help to address or improve attendance.
- When attendance drops below 85% we will inform parents that the Early Help team will be making contact with them to discuss/offer further support, this is in the form of a Parent Contract agreed by all parties to bring improvement in attendance and to avoid prosecution and Legal Proceedings.
- Chronic illness/special circumstances letter recognises that there are exceptional circumstances for a child's low attendance whilst informing parents of their child's percentage attendance it also offers support and a link with the Learning Mentor. Any child with ongoing medical issues or additional needs that prevent regular attendance will not be penalised as we recognise that this would be both unfair and go against our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Solution focused actions to support families to improve attendance.

All children and families will be supported in a personalised way to help them improve attendance and all improvements will be celebrated. Solutions offered to support may include:

- Providing an alarm clock, additional uniform or other practical support for family
- Support with establishing good sleep routines
- Routine charts to help with morning routines
- Sticker charts for home or school
- School nurse referral
- Learning mentor support in school

Children educated off site

When children are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school, they will be given code B, as we are certifying that the education is supervised and appropriate, the alternative provider notifies us of the child's non-attendance and our procedures are then followed.

Term Time Leave of Absence

We aim to work with parents to ensure that all parents understand the importance of uninterrupted education. Leave of absence request during term time will not be authorised by the Headteacher. Amendments to The Education (Pupil registration) (England) 2006 regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We do not believe holidays during term constitute as an exceptional circumstance.

Parents are required to complete a form notifying the reason for the absence from school and the dates, including the expected date of return. The Headteacher will consider all requests on an individual basis and respond in writing with the decision. If a child has more than 10 days absence from school, any further unreasonable absences will be recorded as unauthorised. All absences authorised and unauthorised will go on a child's record. Long term absences will be tracked by the Governing Board. All absence due to holiday will incur a fine per pupil once the absence is over 5 days. If a pupil fails to return (after one month) and contact with the parent has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education(Pupil registration)(England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child may lose their school place.

Safeguarding Procedures and Attendance

We set high expectations for attendance at school. As a result of this, we monitor carefully any period of absence and visit the family home of any child whose parent or carer has not contacted the school to explain the absence. After three days absence we will visit the family home regardless of contact made. If we are unable to locate a child, we will contact the police to complete 'concern for safety' checks. We will undertake every reasonable task to find a child and support them back into school, including - using all contact details supplied to us by parents and carers, asking friends and their parents for information and asking neighbours or siblings/relatives' schools or workplaces for further information. Should we have further concerns, and a child is absent for 20 days, we will complete the CME documentation as set out in DfE guidance - Children Missing Education 2019 DfE.

Where we have concerns that children and their families have moved out of the area, or are unable to attend school for reasons that cause concern – fleeing DV; FGM; criminal behaviour; substance misuse; poor mental health etc, then we will refer to MASH as appropriate. Staff are fully aware of all concerns that may lead to absences from school and receive regular updates on the various issues during staff training.

Guidance given in 2022 asks that we consider whether persistent or severely absent children are victims of neglect within the home and whether we should refer to Children's Services. At Cannon Park Primary School, staff will work tirelessly with families to provide support but sometimes we may need additional support from other agencies, we will always seek consent from parents to make these referrals and will make it clear why we are referring and point out how it will help a family. It is not a punitive measure.

Children missing in Education

Where the parent of a child notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address and will move to a new school, we will record in the admission register the new address, and the date from when it is expected the child will attend this new school. The child will only be removed from register once the new school has confirmed their attendance. If we receive no such confirmation, we will continue to complete safe and well checks and will inform the local authority that the child is missing. Any child missing ten consecutive days of education shall be reported as missing to the local authority and they shall then begin to take action to ensure that attendance improves.

Home Educated Children

On receipt of written notification to home educate, we will inform the local authority that the child is to be deleted from the admission register. However, prior to submitting this we will make every effort to support the child being educated in school.

LA Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed penalty notices will be applied for in the following circumstances:

- A child has a period of ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a 25-day period (5 school weeks)
- If a parent takes a child out of school that will incur 5 days absence from school
- If a pupil has not returned to school after a school holiday within 5 days

Lateness after **9.15 a.m.** will incur an unauthorised absence mark in the register and therefore count towards any fixed penalty application. The current LA fine for fixed penalty notices is £60 per parent, per child. Non payment of this amount within 21 days will lead to the fine doubling in amount. Non payment at this point may lead to prosecution.

We value our relationships with parents and will always do everything we can to support families who are unable to improve attendance.

Data usage and storage

We use daily register data across school to monitor attendance and recognise our legal responsibility to ensure that registers are accurate. We keep registers for three years from the date of entry as part of legal responsibility to record attendance over time. These registers are backed up electronically and deleted after three years. Register entries are shared within the local authority across partner agencies where deemed necessary. We will share statistical data within our schools network – this will not include personal data belonging to any individual child.

Training

All staff will be clear on their role in maintaining a culture of high attendance and will be given training during INSET days as part of their CPD. The Attendance Team may have specific attendance training that allows them to make well informed decisions for children and act in a timely manner to ensure improvements can be made.

Date of policy: Sept. 2022

Date of next Review: Sept. 2024