

Learner Attendance Policy



Learner Attendance Policy		Originator:	Chris Clements
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This policy should be read in conjunction with the Copper Fields School Safeguarding Policy

Attendance Lead: Rachel Moseley, Attendance Deputy Lead: Chris Clements

Reference: Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)

Aim of the policy

Students arrive at Copper Fields School with a varied attendance record. Many students have had periods out of education. This can vary from several months to one to two years. Attendance is therefore a crucial element in demonstrating progress in the engagement of their education.

Policy

Attendance

At Copper Fields School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important that students arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that students should not be at school if they are unwell.

Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All 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.

Why regular attendance is so important:

Learning: - 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 your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.



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Safeguarding: - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (2023):

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting regular attendance:

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:

- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by providing positive feedback;

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that '*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence:

Every absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. A absence request can be made to the Headteacher to seek approval. Previous absence and current attendance will be used to consider applications for authorised absence. Where either are a concern, absence may be declined and classed as unauthorised. You will be informed of this.



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

Please refer to this NHS guidance to help you assess whether your young person is well enough to attend school [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-should-i-worry-if-my-child-is-not-coming-to-school/) .

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 Local 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
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

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 your 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 usually makes things worse.

Parent(s) should provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that any period of absence was necessary, the absence for the evidenced period will be authorised.

Family holidays and school holidays

Children have 13 weeks annual holiday from school and school holiday dates are published well in advance online. As such, all parents/carers are expected wherever possible to plan and take their family holidays at this time so as not to disrupt their children's education. Education law states that parents **do not** have a right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time. Only in exceptional circumstances may a headteacher grant permission for leave; and it is the headteacher's decision on whether the absence is exceptional and how many days to approve.

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

[Attendance Codes](#)

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):



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

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed. An attendance plan would then be in place.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our tracking systems and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Absence procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and provide an explanation of the absence.
- Contact details:
 - School Reception: 01822 660342
- Or you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of senior leadership (SLT) staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone/text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of the senior leadership team or family support worker if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Head Teacher if attendance falls below 90%;
- If your child is absent for 5 days, and we are concerned, we may complete a welfare or other appropriate check.

Staff must report all unauthorised absences to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must make contact with the child or young person's parent/carer immediately to establish the child or young person's whereabouts. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must inform the placing authority of a pupil's poor attendance.

If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for contacting the parent or carer concerned to have an informal discussion about this. If there is an urgent concern, then this needs to be reported to Children's services and Local Authority.



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The Designated Safeguarding Lead is to ensure that:

Children's Services are notified if a child subject to a Child Protection Plan is absent for more than two days without explanation and the social worker is informed when a child subject to a Child Protection Plan or a Child in Need Plan moves to a new setting.

A child missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Local Authority guidance procedures will be followed for dealing with a child who is missing from education, particularly on repeated occasions.

It is important to monitor the welfare of those children with attendance concerns, particularly those with chronic poor attendance or persistent absentees. Attendance plans are in place for those with poor attendance and home visits would be arranged. Schools should also scrutinise the attendance of off-site provision. Similarly, the attendance of children who are vulnerable or with known welfare and safeguarding concerns such as children who have a Child Protection Plan, a Child In Need, are a Child Looked After and/or Special Educational Needs should be monitored on a weekly basis.

Social care should be informed immediately when there are unexplained absences or attendance concerns. It is important that the school's attendance team, including the Local Authority and Safer Schools Officer, are aware of any safeguarding concerns. It is critical that when a child is not attending school their welfare is confirmed and best practice would be for an appropriate professional to visit the home and speak to the child away from their parents/carers, particularly if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence. We need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't, then something important may be missed. **You have a duty to notify school as soon as possible of any changes to contact details.**

Family Support Worker:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority.

If your child's attendance falls below 90% it might be necessary to meet with you and/or your child to discuss the reason for absence, please be aware that we may not always give you prior warning of this contact, so please advise us if you would prefer contact before such action. Please be aware if your child's absences persist, (EWO) can use sanctions such as



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Penalty Notice fines or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court to address irregular school attendance.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality can affect progress and wellbeing. If your 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. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts between 9.20am – 9.40am (depending on transport arrangements) and we expect your child to be in school at that time.

Registers will be marked at that time and your child will receive a late mark if they are not present in the class.

The register will be closed 30 minutes after school's start time. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff and/or Education Welfare Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Should school be unable to resolve an ongoing lateness issue we reserve the right to bring forward the close of register. This would mean that your child's lateness would be recorded as unauthorised which could result in the Education Welfare Service considering enforcement proceedings against you. **We will always inform you in writing should this action be necessary.**

The School's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence:

- Identify students with attendance below 90% and create an attendance plan that supports their individual needs.
- Hold regular meetings with parents/carers and/or the student to review the plans and resolve any barriers to attendance.
- Signpost further support to parent/carers to help remove any barriers to attendance.
- Seek further support through outside agencies and attend TAF/ CIN meetings or work with other schools, to support this, and action plans to support good attendance.
- Ensure that staff are trained in how to support good attendance.
- Hold regular EHCP overview meetings to ensure that we are able to support our students needs and ability to attend and inform the annual review.
- Work with the LA should concerns continue.

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Equality Impact Statement

All relevant persons are required to comply with this policy and must demonstrate sensitivity and competence in relation to diversity in race, faith, age, gender, disability and sexual orientation. If you, or any other groups, believe you are disadvantaged by this policy please contact the Regional Director for Options Autism. Outcomes First Group will then actively respond to the enquiry.

This policy is written by Chris Clements (Headteacher)

Date: 1st December 2024

Signed: C. Clements