



Doing our best to achieve our best

Clarendon Primary School, Nursery & Children's Centre

Attendance Policy

Introduction

At Clarendon Primary School we convey the importance of regular attendance to parents and children through:

- Our school newsletter
- Discussions with parents at parent consultation evenings, induction meetings and parent visits to the school prior to their child's admission
- Weekly school assemblies, half termly attendance raffles and termly attendance rewards
- Regular daily contact with parents when entering school in the morning
- Attendance monitoring letters and specifically arranged meetings to discuss reasons for lower than expected rates of attendance

Children quickly learn that their attendance is important to their learning and to experiencing the full life of the school.

Types of absence

At Clarendon children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised absence – where the school approves the absence
- Unauthorised absence – where the school will not approve the absence

Reporting an absence

If a child is absent from school, parents should email or phone the school office, before registration, or as early as practicable using our answer phone system. This should be on the first day of the absence and clearly state the reason for it. Parents should continue to contact the school on a daily basis until their child has returned.

If the school is not contacted then the School Office will endeavour to contact parents by telephone as any unexplained absence cannot be legally authorised unless a valid reason has been provided.

If a child is on the Child Protection register, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, (DSL) will be informed and act as appropriate. Where a child is in the care of the Local Authority, daily contact will be made by the relevant authority to check whether the child is in school.

Completing the Register

At Clarendon we understand the importance of correct marking of registers and know that incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable. Registers provide a daily record of attendance for each pupil and may be required by the Education Welfare Officer, (EWO) or in a court of law as evidence, particularly where a fixed penalty notice has been issued. They also contribute to a pupil's end of year report.

Daily and weekly attendance figures are completed by the School Office and analysed by the Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis. Running totals of authorised and unauthorised absence are maintained and reported to parents when they fall below a certain level or raise possible concerns. All registers at Clarendon are kept electronically and reviewed on a half termly basis by the Education Welfare Officer.

All staff are aware that it is crucial that registers are kept up to date and accurate. This is particularly important on Health & Safety / Safeguarding grounds as, in the event of a fire or other emergency, staff need to be able to quickly account for all children who are present in the school.

Family Holidays during Term Time

As a school we know that a pupil's absence, during term time, can seriously disrupt their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away from school, but are also less prepared for subsequent lessons that build on these sessions after their return. This can subsequently result in a risk of underachievement.

Clarendon Primary School adheres to the attendance policy guidelines outlined by the Local Authority. This guidance clearly states that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for a family holiday.

In exceptional circumstances, planned periods of absence can be granted / authorised by the Headteacher; however this must be requested in writing with a minimum of 48 hours' advance notice by a parent with whom the pupil resides. Once the request has been considered, written acknowledgement will be provided by the school.

The Local Authority policy states that where unauthorised absence exceeds 20 school days' and where reasonable endeavours to make contact with the family have been unsuccessful, the child's name can be removed from the school roll. Furthermore, if any period of absence has been authorised and the child does not return to school after this period, the child's name can be removed from roll after 10 school days. Once a child's name has been removed, the parents will have to reapply to the Local Authority for a new school place.

If a parent takes an unauthorised holiday, teachers will not be expected to provide work for the pupils.

Lateness

The school day begins at 8.45am and all pupils are expected to be in school and in their classroom by this time ready for registration. The registration period is from 8.45 to 9am. Any child arriving at school after 8.45am, but before the end of registration period, will be recorded as 'late before close of registration'. Any child arriving after 9.30am will be marked as 'late after the close of registration' which is statistically an unauthorised absence for that session.

Any child arriving later than 8.45am must be accompanied by a parent or carer and should provide a reason for the lateness. This will be recorded on the child's individual attendance record.

Pupils who are consistently late are not only disrupting their education but also the education of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed.

Fixed Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carers for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

- Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions (5 school days) or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued:

1. A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.
2. Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more or for 5 days over a 3 month period without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child**. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
3. Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers as being out of school for no valid reason and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
4. Late arrival after the close of registration on 5 occasions during a half term where the pupil's attendance falls below 90%. The lateness will be recorded in accordance with this policy.
5. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are

excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion period. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Parental advice for supporting good attendance

What can parents do to help?

- Parents must let the school know as soon as possible why their child is away.
- Parents should try to make appointments outside of the school day wherever possible. Where appointments during the school day are unavoidable, parents will be required to provide evidence of their time and date.

What can parents do if they are worried about their child's attendance?

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple.
- Talk to the class teacher or the staff at school.

If low attendance continues:

- The school will make an appointment for the parents to meet with a member of the SLT to discuss any concerns or worries.
- The school may make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer for advice and support.
(N.B – As a parent or carer you may also make contact with the Education Welfare Office, who will work with you and the school in order to try to resolve any possible reasons for your child's low attendance.)

Review:

Date reviewed by governing body: Spring term 2018

Date due for review: Spring term 2019