

# Clipston Endowed VC Primary School

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy



**Be Kind ~ Be Your Best ~ Be Happy**

Adopted by the Governing Body – November 2025

Due for Review – Autumn 2026

Signed .....

Mrs Sarah McElroy – Chair of Governors

## Clipston Primary School's Mission, Ethos and Aims

### Our Mission

Be Kind ~ Be Your Best ~ Be Happy

### Our Ethos

Recognising its historic foundation, Clipston Primary School seeks to serve its community by providing a rounded, connected and coherent education of the highest quality.

We endeavour to preserve and develop our distinct religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.

The school lives out its Christian virtues – Thankfulness, Kindness, Justice, Love, Forgiveness, Responsibility and Courage – and all those essential human values, which are common to good, kind and tolerant people of all faiths and none, through the experiences it offers to all its pupils.

### Our Aims

The school's aim, through its Christian ethos, is the creation of a safe, happy learning environment, which supports all children on their journey towards becoming:

- Successful engaged learners, who enjoy learning, who are knowledgeable and skilled, and who make progress and achieve their best;
- Confident, articulate individuals who can lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives in the communities in which they live now and in the future;
- Responsible, happy citizens of the world who have the capacity to make positive contributions to society.

**“Do to others as you would have them do unto you” Luke 6:31**

To achieve these aims, staff and governors will work in partnership with parents, carers and the local community for the benefit of all our pupils.

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

### Statement of Intent

- Our school aims to maximise the attendance of the children.
- Our school aims to provide an environment that encourages regular attendance and punctuality.
- Our school aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.
- Our school recognises that a good school attendance is essential for pupils to maximise their achievement and attainment at school and their life-chances in the longer term.
- Our school will endeavour to offer support where pupils experience attendance difficulties.

This policy has been updated to reflect the Department for Education's new statutory regulations for schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **Pupils**

All pupils are expected to attend school and all their lessons regularly and punctually. All pupils are expected to strive to achieve an attendance target of at least 96%, and to aim for 100%.

### **Parents/carers**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. **Parents should inform the school by phone 01858 525261 or email [office@clipston.northants.sch.uk](mailto:office@clipston.northants.sch.uk) by 9.15am if their child is unexpectedly absent.**

Parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments during school hours wherever possible and holidays should not be taken in term time. **Requests for leave of absence should be made using the appropriate form, available from the office, well in advance of the anticipated absence.**

### **What to do if your child is absent**

Parents/carers must contact the school by 9.15am to inform the school of the reason for the unexpected absence, usually for **each day of absence**, unless agreed otherwise.

If your child is absent because they have diarrhoea and/or vomiting, parents are not required to ring the school on day two of the absence. **Children with sickness and diarrhoea should remain absent from school for 48 hours after the last bout of vomiting or diarrhoea, in accordance with NHS Advice and to minimise the spread of the illness the resulting cost of staff absence. We ask that parents respect this NHS guidance.**

If your child is absent because of an infection or illness that will require several days of absence (e.g. chicken pox), parents are not required to ring the school on day two, three, four and five of the absence **if these days all fall in the same working week.**

Parent messages will be noted by office staff and the class teacher informed.

### **School staff**

Good attendance and the monitoring of attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just office staff). Staff will respond to pupil absenteeism firmly and consistently. Concerns over pupil attendance or punctuality will be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher.

Parents will be informed of any concerns that arise over their child's attendance. School will consider the individual circumstances of absences and inform parents if any request for absence is unauthorised.

Staff will promote good attendance and incentivise good attendance for example by awarding a sliding scale of House Points to the House Team with the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> attendance percentage each term.

### **Governors**

Governors monitor attendance to evaluate the effectiveness of the attendance policy, which is reviewed annually. Attendance figures are monitored by the Governing Body at Governing Body meetings, three times per year. Guidance may be sought from the Department for Education: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

### **Headteacher**

The Head Teacher monitors individual pupil and whole school attendance and punctuality, and works in partnership with key agencies, including the School Attendance Support Service and the Department for Education, which collects absence data. The Head Teacher provides Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and procedures, and communicates school policy to parents/carers. The Head Teacher will inform parents/carers by letter when a child's attendance is a cause for concern.

If a child's attendance is below 90% over a "Big Term", the school will usually initiate the Absence Timetable – see **Appendix 2**. The Big Terms are defined as: Autumn Terms 1 and 2 – September to Christmas, Spring Terms 1 and 2 – January to Easter and Summer Terms 1 and 2 – Easter to the end of the academic year in July.

### **Class teacher**

The Class Teacher provides an accurate record of the attendance of each pupil in their class, using the correct Absence Codes, and brings any concerns about attendance or punctuality to the attention of the Head Teacher promptly e.g. at a Staff Meeting.

### **Administrative staff**

The Bursar will ensure that the preparation, management and co-ordination of the use of SIMs (or other attendance management system) takes place, and that the Head Teacher is provided with attendance data on a termly basis, with more frequent updates as requested.

The office staff will co-ordinate the "First Morning Response" and make every reasonable effort to contact the parents of a child who is absent without the school having been informed, to be sure of the child's whereabouts.

### **The Local Authority**

West Northamptonshire Council provides advice, support and challenge to schools, children and families, to maximise attendance at school. Enforcement action may be appropriate, including penalty notices and prosecutions.

The name of our West Northants Schools' Attendance Officer is: **Melonie Walker**  
West Northamptonshire Council | One Angel Square | Angel Street | Northampton | NN1 1ED  
[melonie.walker@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:melonie.walker@westnorthants.gov.uk)

## **Registration Procedures**

Registers will be opened at 8:45am and 1:10pm. Registers will close at 9.15am and 1.40pm. If your child arrives at school after 9.15am (or after 1.40pm) it will be classed as an unauthorised absence (unless it can be classified as an authorised absence).

## **Authorised absence**

It is ultimately up to the Head Teacher whether or not to authorise an absence. Requests for Absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. We define “exceptional circumstances” as unexpected, unavoidable and outside of your control. Requests should be submitted **by the parent with whom the child lives for the majority of the school week** as soon as the exceptional circumstances are anticipated – at least a week before the absence. Forms are available from the school office. The headteacher may consult guidance from the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), the School Attendance Support Service or the Department for Education statutory guidance: “Working together to improve school attendance”.

A list giving examples of such circumstances is attached in **Appendix 1**.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments where these cannot be taken out of school time.
- Religious Observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents / carers belong.
- Pupils travelling for occupational purposes e.g. Roma, English & Welsh gypsies, Irish & Scottish travellers, fairground showmen and circus people, occupational boat dwellers / bargees and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and this has been agreed with the school.

## **Unauthorised absence**

It is a parent’s responsibility to ensure that their child attends school. Absence from school will not be authorised for holidays, parents working away from home, shopping, birthdays, taking part in protests, minding the house, caring for brothers/sisters/relatives or because suitable child-care arrangements cannot be made.

Absence for Medical Reasons is usually authorised. However, where there are concerns about a child’s attendance, not all medical absences will be authorised. These situations will be discussed with parents / carers.

Parents should understand that just because an explanatory letter from a parent has been received by the school, this does not mean that the absence will be authorised.

The school may report unauthorised absences to the Local Authority, in addition to the Local Authority being able to access attendance data itself. The Local Authority may then become involved with the family. This may involve a Home Visit and / or a meeting. The Local Authority has the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine to the parents.

## **Legal Sanctions**

From August 2024, the DfE sanctions are as follows:

- Parent fines for unauthorised absences will be brought under a national framework.
- Schools will have to consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (a session is a half-day) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 weeks. Councils retain the discretion to issue one before this threshold is met.
- Fines are £80 if paid within 21 days and £160 if paid within 28 days.
- Second notices (fines) will be charged at £160.
- “Notices to improve” will be issued as a “final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued”.
- The threshold can be arrived at with any combination of unauthorised absence e.g. 2 days of holiday and 6 late arrivals after 9.30am in one 10-week period.
- The period of 10-weeks can span different terms and school years – so 3 days of holiday in July, plus 4 late arrivals after 9.30am in September could tally 10 unauthorised sessions.
- Only two-fines can be issued to the same parent within a three-year rolling period. If a third (or subsequent) notice is required, another tool such as prosecution) must be considered.

## **Poor Attendance and Persistent Absence**

Persistent Absence is defined as absence at 20% or more. At Clipston, we have concerns before this - if a child’s attendance drops below 90%, parents usually receive a letter of concern from the school.

If the child’s attendance does not improve to above 90% in a specific time (e.g. before the next school holiday), parents usually receive a second communication.

If the child’s attendance continues to be a concern (e.g. it is still below 90% during the following half-term), parents will be invited to attend a meeting.

At this meeting, a Parent Contract will be considered, outlining the expectations for improvements to attendance. The school may involve the Local Authority School Attendance Support Service.

## **Lateness**

Pupils arriving after the 8.45am – 9.00am Morning Welcome at the front door, must report to the school office so that their late arrival and an explanation can be recorded.

Pupils arriving after 9.15am (or 1.40pm) will be recorded as absent for that session, unless the school office has been informed otherwise. If no reason that can be authorised is given, the session will be unauthorised.

## **Medical/dental appointments**

Absence from school due to medical/dental appointment will usually be considered as an authorised absence. If, however, there is a concern about a child’s attendance i.e. it has fallen below 90% for one Big Term, plus the following half-term, absence for medical reasons may be unauthorised. All parents/carers are encouraged to make medical appointments out of school hours.

### **Procedures for following up absence: First Morning Response**

- Parents are required to inform the school office via email if their child is absent, by 9.15am, or leave a message on the answer phone if necessary.
- **First Morning Response** – contact is made with the registered parent as soon as possible and at the latest by 10.00am on the first day of absence, if no reason is known.
- Reasonable attempts to contact a parent will be made and an answer phone/voice-mail/email message will be left if necessary.
- First Response contacts (and reply responses from parents) will be logged in the record book.
- If a response is not received from a parent by 12.00pm, arrangements may be made, wherever possible, to carry out a home visit.
- If a home visit cannot be made (e.g. the child lives in Northampton) or a home visit does not result in the safety and whereabouts of a child being known, the school could escalate the concern by contacting the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Team).
- Teachers will be informed by way of a message from the office, of instances where the office is unmanned and make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the child's whereabouts is accounted for.
- **"Children Missing from Education"** - procedures outlined on the West Northamptonshire website will be applied.
- **Non-collection of Children and Unexplained Absence** procedures outlined in **Appendix 3**.

### **Reporting to parents**

- Parents should be informed over concerns relating to attendance. Copies of these letters are kept in the Attendance File in the school office.
- Attendance figures will be provided with annual reports.

### **Reporting Attendance more widely**

- Every state school in England will share their daily attendance registers across the education sector – including with the Department for Education (DfE), councils and trusts. This data will be able to be accessed via an interactive secure data dashboard maintained by the DfE.

### **Appendix 1: Exceptional Circumstances**

The following list gives examples of situations whereby a request for absence may be considered exceptional and might therefore be authorised:

- Holidays where a family member (child or parent) has a terminal illness;
- Adoption, Wedding and Funeral ceremonies – for the day of the event and travel only;
- Holidays where a parent is a member of the armed forces and has served an extended period away from home in the last 12 months;
- Absence to attend a music exam or residential music course;
- Absence to view a prospective new school or sit an entrance exam;

- Approved sporting activities.

This list is not exhaustive. All absences are authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable', we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

### **Appendix 2: Absence Timetable.**

**Letter 1** – sent when attendance has dropped below 90% during the previous Big Term (The Big Terms are defined as: Autumn Terms 1 and 2 – September to Christmas, Spring Terms 1 and 2 – January to Easter and Summer Terms 1 and 2 – Easter to the end of the academic year in July.).

**Letter 2** - If the child's attendance does not improve to above 90% in the next half-term (before the next school holiday), parents usually receive a second communication. This letter will state that if attendance does not improve, to above 90%, in a specified time, they will be required to attend a meeting.

**Letter 3** - If the child's attendance continues to be a concern (i.e. it is still below 90% during the following half-term), parents will be invited to attend a meeting. At this meeting, a Parent Contract will be considered, outlining the expectations for improvements to attendance and making clear the procedures around unauthorised absence. The school may involve the Local Authority School Attendance Support Service. The Local Authority may then become involved with the family. This may involve a Home Visit and / or a meeting. The Local Authority has the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine to the parents.

The school monitors unauthorised absences every ten weeks during the school year and these figures are included in the letters sent out.

### **Appendix 3: Procedures for following up an Unexplained Absence or Non-Collection**

#### **First Morning Response**

- Parents are required to inform the school office if their child is absent by 9.15am, leaving an email or a message on the answer phone if necessary.
- **First Morning Response** – contact is made with the registered parent by the office as soon as possible and at the latest by 10.00am on the first day of absence if no reason for the child's absence is known.
- Reasonable attempts to contact the parent will be made and an answer phone/voice-mail/email message will be left if necessary.
- First Response contacts (and reply responses from parents) will be logged in the Absence Record Folder by the office staff.
- If a response is not received from a parent by 12.00pm, arrangements will be made, wherever possible, to carry out a home visit.
- If a home visit cannot be made (e.g. the child lives in Northampton) or a home visit does not result in the safety and whereabouts of a child being known, the school will escalate the concern by contacting the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Team): West Northants (Northampton, Daventry & South Northants): 0300 126 7000 – Option 1, Option 1

- Teachers will be informed by way of a message from the office or in the calendar, of instances where the office is completely unmanned and make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the child's whereabouts is accounted for. This will usually be with the Class Teacher (delegated to the TA).

### **Non-Collection of a Child at the End of The Day**

- Check with the office staff to see if a message has been received e.g. a parent is running late.
- Children waiting to be collected usually wait in the Library with an adult – this will usually be the Head Teacher, plus a second member of staff e.g. the class teacher.
- Depending on the age of the child, ask them who is collecting them today.
- After the Bus has left, from about 3.45pm, ring the child's first contact. Leave a message if necessary – "Just to let you know that X is safe at school but no one has arrived to collect them".
- If after a few minutes no reply is received, ring the first contact again.
- From 4pm ring the second contact.
- From 4.15pm ring both contact 1 & 2 again, plus any other contacts (Never No.10)
- Keep ringing at 15 minute intervals.
- The child must only be collected by someone for whom permission has been granted – NB this might not be a contact.
- If after an hour – by 5pm - there has been no response, ring the MASH for advice on: West Northants (Northampton, Daventry & South Northants): 0300 126 7000 – Option 1, Option 1
- Log the incident on the form in the Absence Record Folder in the office. Ensure that the Head Teacher is aware of the incident.

### **Appendix 4 Letter Templates**

#### **Letter 1**

Dear XXXXX ,

We are obliged to report absences for the school as a whole to the Local Authority.

This letter is to inform you that .....’s attendance record from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 to 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024 fell below 90% and was .....% (**rounded to 1 decimal place**).

Any figure below 90% is of significant concern and we are obliged to inform you when your child's attendance drops below this. We expect XXXXX's attendance to improve by (date e.g. the next school holiday). If your child's attendance remains below 90%, you will receive a second letter and the Local Authority's School Attendance Support Officer may become involved. The Local Authority has the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) for 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in any 10 week period.

We understand that your child's absence may be due to a variety of reasons, including illness, which obviously can't be helped. We do respectfully request that you consider carefully the effect of absence from school on your child's progress. Please endeavour to avoid routine check-ups and holidays during term time wherever possible. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,  
Head Teacher

## Letter 2:

Dear XXXXX ,

This letter is to inform you that .....’s attendance record from (dates) was again below 90% and was .....% (rounded to 1 decimal place).

Any figure below 90% is of significant concern and we are obliged to inform you when your child’s attendance drops below this. We expect XXXXX’s attendance to improve by (date e.g. the next school holiday). If your child’s attendance remains below 90%, you will be required to attend a meeting at school, to discuss a Parent Contract, outlining the expectations for improvements to attendance and making clear the procedures around unauthorised absence. The Local Authority’s School Attendance Support Officer may become involved. The Local Authority has the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) for 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in any 10-week period. Please find attached our Attendance and Punctuality Policy so that you are fully aware of the consequences of any continued poor attendance. If there is anything you would like to discuss or if there is any support you think we can offer, please let us know.

We understand that your child’s absence may be due to a variety of reasons, including illness, which obviously can’t be helped. Please be aware that not all absences due to medical reasons are necessarily authorised. We do respectfully request that you consider carefully the effect of absence from school on your child’s progress. Please endeavour to avoid routine check-ups and holidays during term time wherever possible. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,  
Head Teacher

## Letter 3

Dear XXXXX ,

This letter is to inform you that .....’s attendance record from (dates) was again below 90% and was .....% (rounded to 1 decimal place).

As previously advised in my letter (dated xxx), a meeting has been arranged at school, to discuss a Parent Contract, outlining the expectations for improvements to attendance. This meeting is on (date, time, location). Please confirm with the school office that you are able to attend.

As you already know, the Local Authority has the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) for 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in any 10 week period. Please find attached our Attendance and Punctuality Policy so that you are aware of the consequences of the Local Authority’s involvement.

Yours sincerely,  
Head Teacher

## Appendix 5 Attendance & Absence Codes

These codes reflect the Department for Education's statutory regulations for schools:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

	/	Morning	Pupil is in school at registration
	\	Afternoon	Pupil is in school at registration
	C	Absent – exceptional circumstances	At the school's discretion. Can only be agreed if applied for in advance by the parent with whom the child normally lives and the school is satisfied that it is exceptional circumstances.
	C1	Absent – participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	e.g. the child has a licence to perform in a production regulated by Section 37 (2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 or as above, but the child doesn't need a licence, or a Justice of the Peace has granted a licence for the pupil to travel abroad.
	C2	Absence due to a part-time timetable (Para 65 – 70)	<b>Temporary situation</b> e.g. where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school full-time and part-time timetable is used to enable them to access as much education as possible. Not to be used to manage behaviour. Children with an EHCP or Social Worker – school should discuss the part-time timetable with the LA or Social Worker.
	M	Medical / Dental	Can only be agreed if applied for in advance by the parent with whom the child normally lives and the school is satisfied that it is exceptional circumstances. If the pupil is at registration but leaves early, no absence is recorded for that session
	I	Illness	Absent due to illness – including physical or mental health related
	G	Absence – unauthorised Holiday	e.g. Holiday not granted by the school
	L	Late arrival	Arrival between the register opening at 8.45am (1.10pm) and closing at 9.15am (1.40pm)
	Q	Absent due to unavoidable cause – transport not in place	Lack of access arrangements due to LA's legal duty to provide transport for home-school travel for a pupil is not in place.
	Y1	Absent due to unavoidable cause – transport normally in place is unavailable	e.g. school bus didn't turn up
	Y2	Absent – widespread travel disruption	e.g. due to a local, national or international emergency
	Y3	Absent – school partially closed	e.g. snow day – collapsed classes

	Y4	Absent – school fully closed	e.g. snow day – fully closed
	Y5	Absent – Criminal Justice Detention	e.g. the pupil is detained by the police / on remand / in prison
	Y6	Absent – public health guidance / law to limit the spread of disease	e.g. the child is well enough to attend school but has covid and there are government rules or guidance which say they should not attend
	Y7	Absent – unavoidable absence not covered above	e.g. something of an emergency that affects the pupil (not the parent) such as Bail Conditions / Court Attendance
n/a	Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register (para 405 – 409)	Data not collected for statistical purposes
	E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded	
	N	Reason for absence not yet established <b>(before the register closes)</b>	All schools must use an electronic register. If the reason for absence is known – it can be changed within 5 days – if after 5 days, the reason still isn't known, Code O should be used.
	O	Absent in other unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that reason given is one that can be recorded using a code that can be classified as authorised.
	U	Arrived during the session but after the register closed.	e.g. arrived after 9.15am (or 1.40pm) but before lunch (or before the end of the school day)
	K	Attending education provision arranged by the LA	e.g. off-site special educational provision
	P	Approved Educational Provision arranged by the school e.g. Educational Sporting Activity supervised by a suitably qualified person	e.g. Rhino sports event off site / Pinnacle Climbing
	B	Other Approved Educational Provision	e.g. Transition Days
	V	Trip arranged by the school and supervised by school staff	Pupils will usually be Code / in the morning and Code V in the afternoon.
	W	Work Experience	
	D	Dual Registered at another school	e.g. PRU, Hospital School or Special School

	J1	Interview for employment or admission for another educational institution	Can only be agreed if applied for in advance by the parent with whom the child normally lives and the school is satisfied that it is exceptional circumstances.
	R	Religious Observance	e.g. absent on 1 day only – that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent belongs to (not the parents themselves).
	S	Studying for a public examination	Can only be agreed if applied for in advance by the parent with whom the child normally lives and the school is satisfied that it is exceptional circumstances.
	T	Absent – Parent Travelling for Occupational Purposes (para 353 – 358)	e.g. child is of no fixed abode / a mobile child – possibly dual registered
	X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend	e.g. part time EYFS pupils only (one afternoon only in Sept 2024 and thereafter none, unless arranged in writing with the parent/s)
n/a	#	Planned whole school closure	Training days, Polling station, Half-term etc. Not collected for statistical purposes.
<b>Key</b>			
session	=	Session means the time before lunch or after lunch	
	=	Authorised Absence	
	=	Not-possible attendance	
	=	Unauthorised absence	
	=	Attending / approved educational activity	