

Clipston Endowed VC Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Be Kind ~ Be Your Best ~ Be Happy

In this policy, the role of the governor states that they are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy. This - in practical terms - means that this is a day to day management responsibility usually overseen by the Head Teacher, and governors receive a report on the effectiveness of the policy when a policy is reviewed.

Adopted by the Governing Body – January 2021
Updated following transition to West Northamptonshire – May 2021
Due for Review – Spring 2022

Signed
Mrs Helen Bellamy – Chair of Governors

Aims of Clipston Primary School

Clipston Endowed VC Primary School aims to provide every child with high quality teaching and learning. It is the school's philosophy to give our pupils a measure of independence, a high level of self-confidence, a deep sense of self worth, and an understanding and deeper appreciation of our Christian heritage. To achieve this, we aim to:

- a) Enable all children to achieve their full potential, both academically, socially, personally, and morally in order that children expect the best of themselves.
- b) Promote spiritual development and the ability to grow and flourish as human beings.
- c) Support children in building relationships that reflect Christian values.
- d) Deliver a broad, relevant and challenging education, which is of a high standard, and appropriate to an individual child's needs.
- e) Promote high standards of behaviour based on mutual trust and respect, developing responsibility and fostering self-discipline.
- f) Promote good citizenship, thus enabling individuals to make valuable contributions to wider society.
- g) Ensure equal opportunities for all.
- h) Provide a welcoming and stimulating learning environment in which everyone feels safe, happy and secure.
- i) Develop a sense of pride in belonging to Clipston Endowed VC Primary School.

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.

Statement of Intent

- Our school aims to maximise the attendance of our 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.
- Our school will endeavour to offer support where pupils experience attendance difficulties.

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 responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. Parents should inform the school by phone or email each day that their child is absent, by 9.15am. Parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments during school hours and holidays should not be taken in term time. Where this is unavoidable, requests for leave of absence should be made using the appropriate form, available from the office or school website.

What to do if your child is absent

Parents/carers must contact the school by 9.15am **on each day of absence**.

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 must 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 throughout the school.**

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 on the message pad and the class teacher informed.

School staff

School staff will endeavour to achieve good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Good attendance and the monitoring of attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just teaching or pastoral 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.

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.

Headteacher

The Head Teacher monitors individual pupil and whole school attendance and punctuality, and works in partnership with key agencies. 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 falls below 90%. The absence data trawl will be completed 6 times a year as close as possible to every school holiday.

If a child's attendance is below 90% over the previous 6-week term, the school will usually initiate the Absence Timetable – see **Appendix 2**.

Class teacher

The Class Teacher provides an accurate record of the attendance of each pupil in their class and brings issues of attendance or punctuality to the attention of the Head Teacher promptly.

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, and more frequent updates as requested.

The office administrative 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: www.northamptonshire.gov.uk

- Provides advice, support and challenge to schools, children and families, to maximise attendance at school.
- Takes enforcement action as appropriate including penalty notices and prosecutions.

Registration procedures

Times at which registers open and close:

Registers will be opened at 8:55am and 1:15pm. Registers will close at 9.05am and 1.20pm.

Once registration has ended, Register Boards must be sent to the office. Register Boards carry messages between the office and the class teacher.

Absence codes are attached to each class Register Board.

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. A list giving examples of such circumstances is attached in **Appendix 1**. The headteacher may also consult guidance from the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT).

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, minding the house, caring for brothers/sisters/relatives or because suitable child-care arrangements cannot be made.

Parents and staff 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.

If attendance drops below 85% in any one six-week term and where there is 10% or more of unauthorised absence, the school may involve the Local Authority. We may report unauthorised absences of 5 consecutive days or more to the Local Authority and they may then issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine to the parents. This means that if a parent requests an absence for a holiday that requires an unauthorised absence of 5 consecutive schools days, the school may refer the case to the Local Authority (unless the child is below statutory school age).

Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the authorised consent of the school.

Lateness

Pupils arriving after the playground gate is locked at 9.00am, must report to the school office so that their late arrival and an explanation can be recorded. Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the schools strategy to improve punctuality.

Sanctions for repeated lateness

Parents are contacted by letter if lateness becomes a persistent problem. Where a child is late on a regular basis e.g. more than twice every week for any six week term, parents will be contacted by letter.

Medical/dental appointments

Absence from school due to medical/dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. However, parents/carers are encouraged to make all such appointments out of school hours.

Persistent absence

The Department for Education focuses on both authorised and unauthorised absence. "Persistent absence" refers to absences totalling more than 20%, whether authorised or unauthorised.

Pupils with persistent absence are often those unlikely to attain at school or stay in education after the age of 16 years. They are also significantly more likely to engage in anti-social behaviour and youth crime and are more at risk of other negative outcomes (including teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol abuse). Our school notifies parents before their child is identified as a Persistent Absentee, when their attendance drops below 90% in any 6 week term (between autumn term 1 and summer term 6).

The school can make a decision not to authorise prolonged or repeated absences without doctor's note. Parents will be informed if the school seeks confirmation from the child's GP or other Medical Practitioner e.g. hospital consultant.

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

- Parents are required to inform the school office if their child is absent, by 9.15am, leaving 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 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 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 below 90%. Copies of these letters are kept in the Attendance File in the school office.
- Attendance figures will be provided with annual reports.
- Identification, monitoring and evaluation of attendance data collected regularly to establish patterns of irregular attendance (approximately every half term).

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 ceremonies;
- 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 and parents / carers are reminded that 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 6-week term (e.g. October half-term).
- If attendance has not improved by the end of the next term (e.g. the Christmas Holiday) i.e. is still below 90%, parents will receive a letter letting them know that if attendance does not improve by February half-term, they will be required to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher.
- If at the end of the next term (e.g. February half-term) the child's attendance is below the agreed target set, the school will arrange to meet with the parent/s.
- If at the end of the next term (e.g. the Easter Holiday) there has been no improvement, the school will refer the case to the Local Authority.

Appendix 3: Procedures for following up an Unexplained Absence or a child's 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.