

# Caroline Haslett Primary School



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Date of Issue:** January 2024

**Date of next review:** January 2027

**Approved by the Headteacher on:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher) **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by the Governing Board on:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Governors) **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Introduction and background**

Caroline Haslett Primary School recognises that good attendance is vital to raising standards and child attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that children succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that children have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and we will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At Caroline Haslett, we believe that promoting regular attendance cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff; it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff, the governing board, the local authority, and other local partners.

This attendance policy reflects our aim to ensure that all children, including those at risk of disaffection, have an equal opportunity to take part in the life of the school. As a school, we take positive steps so that disabled pupils and those with Special Educational Needs can access and participate in the education and other activities provided by the school in line with the Equality Act of 2010.

## **Statutory Framework**

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

*'The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education*

*suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.*

*Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.’ (Working together to improve school attendance 2022)*

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not, in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) ‘School attendance’
- DfE (2015) ‘Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England’
- DfE (2022) ‘Keeping children safe in education 2022’
- DfE (2016) ‘Children missing education’
- DfE (2021) ‘Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities’
- DfE (2022) ‘Working together to improve school attendance’ 2022

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility - parents, children and all members of school staff.

#### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters.
- Report to parents/carers termly on their child’s attendance within the school report.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying whole school overall attendance.
- Award the best class attendance in celebration assemblies weekly.

## **Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day 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.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no written confirmation of leave has been given by the headteacher.

This includes, but not exclusively:

- 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 after 9.15 [too late to get a mark]
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- holidays during term time

This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

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 a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

### **Persistent (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)**

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10%, and a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling at any point during the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's education and we need parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA/SA mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA children are tracked and monitored carefully. Attendance letters are sent to parents to highlight the overall attendance percentage. We also combine this with academic tracking.

### **Absence Procedures**

- If your child is absent, the parent/carer must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.15 am.
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to

- take the call
- The parent/carer can call into school and report to reception in person.
- The parent/carer can log the absence on Parent Mail.

The parent/carer must follow this procedure for every day of their child's absence unless the period of absence is referenced in the 'Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and Other Childcare Settings'. If we are not given a reason for your child's absence every day, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

**If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will:**

- telephone or text you
- send a Parent Mail email

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a 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 children also disrupt lessons; this can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

**How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.50am**. Your child will receive a late mark if they arrive between 8.50am and 9.15am.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. 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 is late on two occasions in a half term, they will miss a break time; if they are consistently late a late letter will be sent. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Learning Mentor/Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrating good class punctuality.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

Under legislation effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, Headteachers may no longer authorise absence for holiday during term time.

The school will require parents to observe the term dates as published on the school website. The Headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.

Authorised leave may only be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher alongside our Learning Mentor where there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances must be requested in writing by emailing: [schooloffice@carolinehaslett.milton-keynes.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@carolinehaslett.milton-keynes.sch.uk) at least four weeks in advance. A meeting with our Learning Mentor will be necessary.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. The death or terminal illness of immediate family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of immediate family.

Please note: relevant documentation is required in every case

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. In the event of any child being unauthorised absent for 5 days, the matter has to be referred to the Senior Attendance officer (Legal Interventions) at Milton Keynes Council for the local authority to consider appropriate action. In the instance of an extended period of unauthorised leave being taken, the school may commence action to remove the place at the school.

## **Targets**

The minimum expected level of attendance for any child at Caroline Haslett Primary School is 96.5% attendance.

Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Our whole school attendance target is 96.7%

## **People responsible for this policy and its implementation**

**The governing board** is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

**The headteacher** is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and will liaise with the local authority regarding fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

**The Learning Mentor** monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level. They arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues. They report concerns about attendance to the headteacher.

**Teachers** are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, for each session AM and PM.

**Office staff** record information, provided by parents/carers regarding absence, on the MIS. They provide attendance data on a weekly basis or as required, for analysis/action by the Learning Mentor/Headteacher, and submit data weekly to the Department for Education.

## **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and children as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## APPENDIX

Attendance Codes as per Department for Education guidance -

Code	Full name	Description
<b>The student is counted as present.</b>		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed.
<b>The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity</b>		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
J	Interview	At a job interview, or interviewing with another educational establishment.
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
<b>The student is counted as absent, authorised.</b>		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
I01	Illness	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for



		students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.
<b>The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.</b>		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they should record it as unauthorized.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
<b>These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.</b>		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1 <sup>st</sup> January, 1 <sup>st</sup> April, or 1 <sup>st</sup> September following their 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to school. It can also be used where the pupil is in custody (for less than four months). This code is collected for statistical purposes but does not contribute to attendance figures.
Z	Pupil Not on Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed to Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.