

Caroline Haslett Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of Issue: June 2020

Date of next review: June 2023 (or earlier in the event of legislation changes)

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.

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.

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 annually on their child's attendance within the annual school report.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.

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 Absenteeism (PA)

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% 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 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. 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 or the parent/carer can call into school and report to

reception in person. 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 the child's absence every day, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;

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:

We expect our children to be in the playground, ready to line up at **8.45am**. 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 has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the 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.

Holidays in Term Time

Under legislation effective from 1st September 2013, Headteachers may no longer authorise absence for holiday during term time. Authorised leave may only be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher where there are exceptional circumstances. An application for leave of absence must be completed in advance on the appropriate form. These are available from the school office or can be downloaded from the school website [under 'Policies']. A meeting with the Headteacher must be arranged at least four weeks before the proposed date of travel wherever possible.

We strongly recommend that parents contact school to discuss the potential issues before booking any holiday to be taken during term time.

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 Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy, and the Governing Board is responsible for approving and monitoring its implementation.

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.

This policy was reviewed during the Covid-19 pandemic. At this time, there are different guidelines for attendance. If parents/carers decide not to send their children to school, they will not be fined.

After the wider reopening of schools on June 1st, Caroline Haslett Primary School introduced different [staggered] start and finish times for different groups of children. School attendance is recorded using different codes as directed by the DfE. A daily register is sent to the DfE for monitoring purposes.