



Clifford Primary School

Attendance Policy

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Philosophy

At Clifford Primary School we promote a culture in which children enjoy coming to school, and do not want to miss out. We are committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embrace the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. (The home/school agreement can be used in this way) We aim to provide sensitive and appropriate guidance to parents concerning pupil attendance, taking into account guidance from Department for Education.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DfE.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets. These will reflect both national and Herefordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Objectives

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- to minimise the occurrence of poor attendance and absenteeism
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

Principles

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will:

- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued.
- Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.
- Work with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance. (SEE APPENDIX 3)

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues.

Attendance will be an important feature of Clifford Primary School's Development Plan. Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

The Registration System

The School will use a computerised system (SIMs) for keeping the school attendance records. The national codes given in appendix 1 will be used to record attendance information. Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes. (Phoenix report AO2). Alternatively electronic back-ups can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years.

In the event of computer failure paper registers will be kept. Entries in paper registers must be in ink.

All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning session (9am) and the beginning of the afternoon session (1pm).

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. These include:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Lateness

Morning registration will take between the start of school at 9am and 9.15am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes after the end of registration (9.45am). Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close. Pupils who arrive after registration closes will be coded as an unauthorised absence.

Absence

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents are asked to contact the school on each day of absence as early as possible. If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation by the close of registration the office is informed and our office staff will contact the parent/carer as a matter of concern.

Five Days' Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 5 consecutive days (10 sessions) will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Education Legal Team (*This is a legal requirement*). The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that reasons for absence are recorded accurately and kept up to date. In addition they should be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/ carers. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the Activate Attendance Network

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Planned and Unplanned Absences

There is overwhelming evidence that a high level of consistent school attendance is essential if children are to reach their full educational potential and achieve their targets.

Clifford Primary School aims for all children to be in attendance for all of the 190 school days in the year. It is expected nationally that primary school age children will have an attendance of at least 95%, after allowing for illness, (this equals to 180 school days) and as a school we aspire to achieve or better this. Children whose attendance drops below the 95% level fall into the 'worrying' category and are less likely to achieve their full educational potential. We have rigorous procedures for monitoring attendance and poor attendance is never ignored.

Planned Absences

In line with Government and Herefordshire Local Authority policy, planned absences during term time are actively discouraged by Clifford Primary School.

ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME FOR HOLIDAYS ARE NOT A RIGHT AND WILL NOT BE APPROVED.

- Leave will not be granted retrospectively
- All written requests for **Leave of Absence** will be reviewed on an individual basis. Requests will **not** be unreasonably refused if the headteacher is convinced that there are sufficiently strong or compelling reasons that are genuine and unavoidable.

If a holiday is taken after the school has refused authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (code G). After 5 days (10 unauthorised sessions) the Education Legal Service will be notified and a fixed penalty notice warning will be issued.

Compassionate Leave

We understand that there may, on rare occasions, be unavoidable cause for absence, e.g. illness of a close relative. Although it is important that children's education suffers as little as possible, such requests will be viewed with compassion. Parents should talk directly with the Headteacher.

In School Procedures

All written requests for leave of absence are to be forwarded to the Headteacher. The decision to authorise the leave will be made by the Head teacher in consultation with the class teacher and any other relevant member of staff. A decision will normally be made on requests within 10 working days. If a longer consultation period is required in a particular case the parents will be notified accordingly.

Unplanned Absences

When a child is absent from school and no request for leave has been received or if no reason has been given for the absence, the absence will be recorded by the school as 'unauthorised'. In instances where the child's absence is 5 consecutive days (10 sessions) or more, the school is required by law to inform the Local Authority Education Legal Service who has the power to issue penalty notices or fines.

Monitoring

In instances where a child's attendance either falls below an acceptable level or shows a regular pattern of absence or poor punctuality, parents will be informed of the school's concerns. If attendance remains poor, the situation may be referred to the Local Authority Education Legal Service for further action.

A Welcome Back

At Clifford Primary School we promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence. It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Unauthorised Absence

Each week attendance records are checked and a letter is sent to each child recording an unauthorised absence asking for a reason for the absence. If there is still no response a second letter is sent.

Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence is marked as unauthorised.

Where the parents keep a child away for longer than agreed, then the extra time is also marked as unauthorised.

It follows that leave of absence for more than two weeks must be seen as exceptional. The School will explore with parents why such leave of absence is necessary. Where such leave is sanctioned, it constitutes authorised absence.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Regular newsletters keep parents in touch with school events and helps to foster the sense of a community.

Termly and annual attendance certificates are awarded to pupils achieving 100% throughout the year.

We regularly monitor and review absences

Monitoring attendance

Each term children's attendance rates are examined. If there is a problem with a child's attendance, either falling below acceptable rates (95% in 2015/2016) or showing a regular pattern of absence or punctuality, then parents are informed of the school's concerns. The attendance of these children is monitored and if no improvement is noted a further letter is sent once again expressing concern and offering support. If attendance remains poor the situation may then lead to a referral being made to the ELS.

(Standard letters Appendix 2)

Attendance Target

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our schools target for 2015/2016 is: 97%

Date: September 2015

Review date: September 2016

APPENDIX 1 – CODES FOR ABSENCE

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

APPENDIX 2 -ATTENDANCE LETTERS

Letter 1

Dear

After reviewing our attendance figure for last term, I was concerned to see that *(name)* missed *(number)* of sessions out of *(number)*. This equates to an attendance rate of *(percentage figure)* for the term.

There may be good reasons for such low attendance but any figure below 90% automatically triggers concern since there is a very strong link between high levels of attendance and high levels of achievement.

If there is difficulty with *(name's)* attendance which you feel is affecting the situation please contact me so that we can discuss and agree a way forward.

If you have already contacted the school, thank you for informing us of the reasons for the absences and we look forward to an improvement in *(name's)* attendance.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. M. Thomas
Head teacher

Letter 2

Dear

Further to my previous letter regarding *(name's)* attendance, I remain concerned to see that *(name)* has missed a further *(number)* sessions out of *(number)*. This equates to an attendance rate of *(percentage figure)* for the term.

I would like opportunity to speak to you regarding *(name's)* attendance and would be grateful if you could contact me at school to arrange a mutually convenient time. We are sufficiently concerned that if the situation persists we may well involve the Education Welfare officer in any further discussions.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. M Thomas.
Head teacher

Letter 3

Dear

Despite my previous contact with you regarding *(name's)* poor attendance, I am concerned because there has not been any improvement. *(Name)* still missed *(number)* of sessions out of *(number)*.

I am writing to inform you that we will be making a formal referral to our Educational Welfare officer who will be in contact with you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. M Thomas
Head teacher

APPENDIX 3 - THE LAW

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006



Every School Day Counts

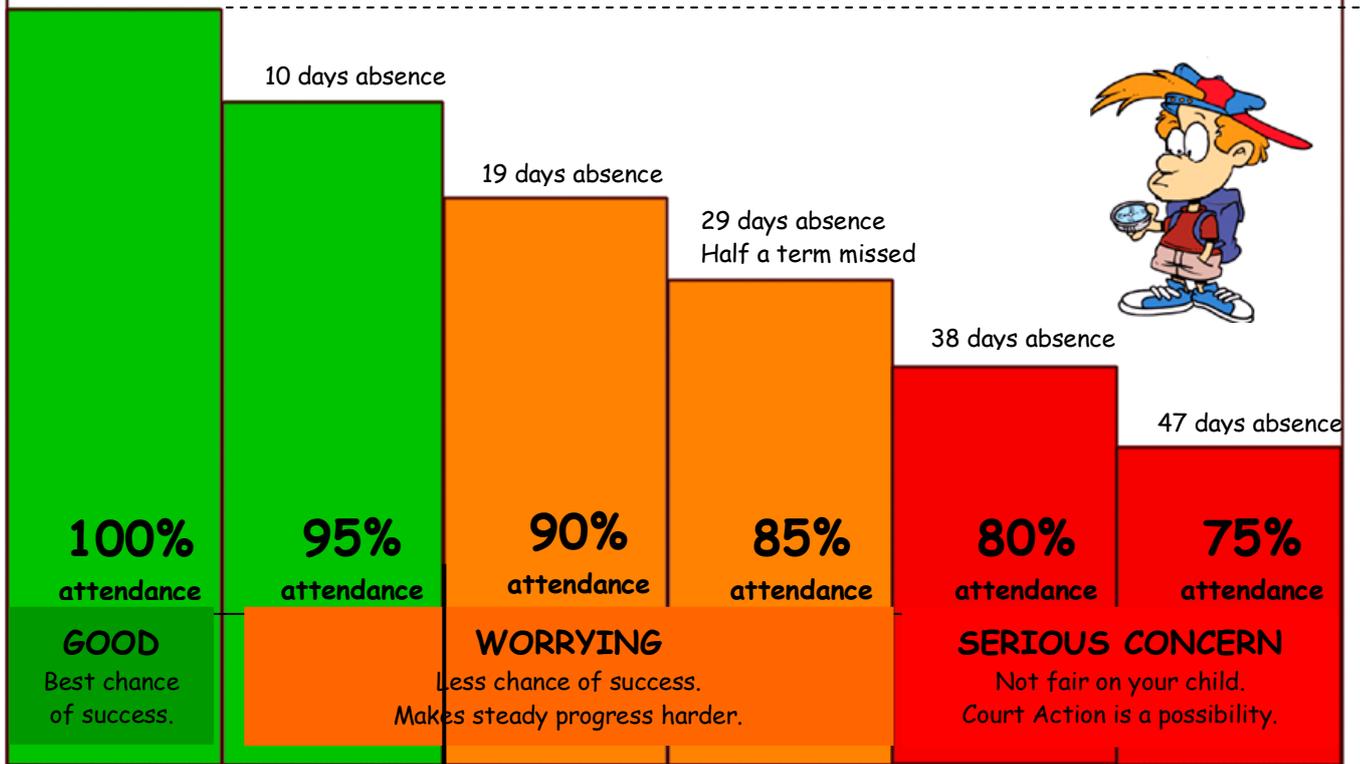
Days off school add up to lost learning.

Did you know that an attendance of **85%** each year means that **1 whole year** of primary education is missed?

365 days in each year

190 days are school days

175 days a year are non-school days to spend on family time, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments



- Please don't let your child miss out on the education they deserve.
- Every school day counts.

To School