

Clipston Endowed VC Primary School and Great Creaton Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

To be presented to Governors: October 2016

To be reviewed: Summer 2017

Signed
Mr Graham Leah – Chair of Governors

AIMS OF CLIPSTON 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 which 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.

AIMS OF GREAT CREATON SCHOOL

Great Creaton 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 and a deep sense of self-worth. 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, moral, social and cultural development to support the ability to grow and flourish as human beings.
- c) Deliver a broad, relevant and challenging education which is of a high standard and appropriate to an individual child's needs.
- d) Promote high standards of behaviour based on mutual trust and respect, developing responsibility and fostering self-discipline.
- e) Promote good citizenship, thus enabling individuals to make valuable contributions to wider society.
- f) Ensure equal opportunities for all.
- g) Provide a welcoming and stimulating learning environment in which everyone feels safe, happy and secure.
- h) Develop a sense of pride in belonging to Great Creaton 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 schools aim to maximise the attendance of our children
- Our schools aim to provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and punctuality
- Our schools aim to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all students to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them
- Our schools recognise that a good school attendance is essential for pupils to maximise their achievement and attainment at school
- Our schools will offer prompt support where pupils experience attendance difficulties at school

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 on the first day that their child is absent, by 9.15am and, where an absence exceeds one week or more, should provide a letter on return explaining the reason for absence. 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.

School staff

School staff will endeavour to achieve good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just teaching or pastoral staff). The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance including appropriate rewards. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently. School will consider the individual circumstances of absences and parents will be informed of any concerns that arise over their child's attendance.

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 Full Governing Body meetings. Guidance may be sought from the Department for Education: www.education.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% in any half-term period.

If a child's attendance is below 90% over the previous 6 week term, the school will 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 provide the Head Teacher with attendance data on a termly basis, and give more frequent updates as requested. The office administrative staff will co-ordinate the "First Morning Response" procedures 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

- 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.
- Supports the whole school response to attendance. www.northamptonshire.gov.uk

Registration procedures

Times at which registers open and close:

Registers will be opened at 8:55am and 1:15pm (Clipston) and 8.55am and 1.00pm (Creaton).

Registers will close at 9.05am and 1.05pm (Creaton) and 9.05am and 1.20pm (Clipston).

Once registration has ended registers must be sent to the office.

Absence codes are attached to each class register.

Authorised absence

It is up to the Head Teacher ultimately whether 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 Head Teacher 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, 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 unauthorised absence, the school may involve the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team. In line with Northamptonshire County Council guidance, the County's Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine to the parents for unauthorised absence of 10 consecutive sessions or more. Each school day is made up of two sessions. This means that if a parent requests an absence for a holiday that requires an unauthorised absence of 5 consecutive schools days, the Head Teacher can refer the case to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team

Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the authorised consent of the school. Information relating to the amount of the fine per parent and per child is available on the County's website:
www.northamptonshire.gov.uk

Illness

Parents/carers are asked to contact the school by 9.15am on each day of absence. Where it is clear from the outset that the illness will last for several days, the parent is not required to phone in every morning, but instead will give an estimated day of return to school. This will be noted on the message pad and the class teacher informed. The school can make a decision not to authorise prolonged or repeated absences without doctor's note.

Lateness

Pupils arriving after the register has been closed will be considered as late. Pupils arriving after the playground gate is locked at 9.00am, must report to the school office so that attendance can be recorded. The Late Book in the office should be completed. 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 i.e. more than twice every week in any half-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 absence of more than 10%, whether authorised or unauthorised. Pupils with persistent absence are often those unlikely to attain at school and 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 schools notify parents before their child is identified as a Persistent Absentee, when attendance drops below 90% in any 6 week term (autumn term 1 to summer term 6). The Local Authority may decide to become involved in these cases.

Procedures for following up absence

- 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/text 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 will escalate the concern by contacting the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Team).
- Teachers will be informed by way of a message from the office on the signing in book, of instances where the office is unmanned and they should make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the child's whereabouts is accounted for.
- "Children Missing from Education" - procedures outlined on the Northamptonshire County Council website will be applied.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Regular (termly) attendance figures for each class will be announced in the school 'Connect' newsletter.

Transition arrangements

Liaison with secondary schools includes electronic transfer of attendance concerns and is also discussed one-to-one when necessary.

Reporting to parents

- Parents should be informed promptly over concerns relating to attendance.
- Attendance figures to be provided with annual reports.
- Identification, monitoring and evaluation of attendance data collected regularly to establish patterns of irregular attendance (approximately every half term).
- Parents will be provided with information relating to children with less than 90% attendance.

In the School Office in the attendance file - hard and electronic copies are kept of sample letters and Leave of Absence Request Forms.

Appendix 1

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;
- Approved sporting activities.

This list is not exhaustive and parents / carers are reminded that all absences are authorised at the discretion of the Head Teacher. 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 be invited to attend a Parent Contract Meeting at the school to set an improved target for attendance.
- If at the end of the next term (e.g. February half-term) there has been no response from the parent, the school will arrange another meeting and set a target for improved attendance, regardless of parental attendance at the meeting.
- 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 Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team.

Requests for leave of absence for holidays which amount to 10 consecutive school sessions (5 days) or more will be referred to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team and they may decide to issue a Penalty Notice.