

## **Cambridge Primary Education Trust (CPET)**



### **Attendance Policy**

**2017/18**

#### **Introduction**

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. All the schools in Cambridge Primary Education Trust (CPET) fully recognise their responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school at the start of the school day and therefore have access to their full educational entitlement.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteachers and Governors at our schools work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent can quickly fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Our policy applies to all children at CPET schools and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our schools on our school websites.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

#### **Aims**

Through this Policy we aim to:

- improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality;
- achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with significant health issues;
- create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school;
- raise awareness with parents/carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education;
- ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age;

- work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence;
- promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility;
- establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties;
- recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

**We aim to maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:**

- raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and pupils;
- ensuring that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually;
- equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development;
- maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters;
- developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness;
- supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance;
- developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school;
- following the clear 'three letter system' supported by the Local Authority and the Education Welfare Officer and making parents/carers aware of how this works.

**Procedures**

Please refer to Appendix 3 for the procedures that reflect the implementation of this policy.

**Monitoring**

The Office staff, have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents/carers or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parent/carers.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.  
As schools join CPET this policy will be amended to reflect individual settings.

April 2017

April 2017

## Appendix 1

### **Definitions**

#### **Authorised absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carer telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.
- Legitimate reasons for an authorised absence include illness, attendance at medical appointments, religious observance or attendance at an approving sporting activity.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

#### **Exceptional Leave of Absence**

- Parents/carers can request for 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' for their child.
- They are expected to complete the 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form available from the School Offices.
- The Headteacher will consider each request on a case by case basis.
- In line with Government Policy, holidays in term time will not be authorised.

#### **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

- CPET schools use the EWO service provided by the Local Authority.
- The EWO makes regular visits to our schools to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to monitor and track attendance.

## Appendix 2

### **Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

#### **Class teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Leadership team where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring attendance once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

#### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Sharing the attendance policy and expectations with all stakeholders.
- Overall monitoring of school attendance, including looking at trends of authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues and provision of appropriate support if needed.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the EWO service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

### **Administration staff**

Staff in the School Offices are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- Ensuring reasons for absence and lateness are clearly recorded on the school information management system
- Contacting parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made by the parents/carers
- Recording details of children who arrive late or need to leave school during the school day because of illness or other legitimate reasons such as attending medical appointments.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding absences in line with the Local Authority's '3 Letter system'.

### **Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the School Office on the first morning of any absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time and for providing appropriate evidence of the appointment such as an appointment card or letter.
- Avoiding taking any holiday during term time. (Holidays are not authorised and such absence from school has a negative impact on a child's learning.)
- Completing an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form for any absences during term time.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any reluctance on the part of their child to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## Appendix 3

### Specific Procedures

#### Registration

At Histon and Impington Junior School, the School gates open at 8:40am. Between 8:50am and 9:05am, the children are in their classrooms for registration.

At Histon and Impington Infant School, the School gates open at 8:45am. Between 8:55am and 9:00am, the children are in their classrooms for registration.

At Hatton Park Primary School, the School gates open at 8:40am. Between 8:50am and 9:05am, the children are in their classrooms for registration.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.05am and by 1.30pm. (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present)

All attendance records are documented using attendance software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these are kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Any child not present in the classroom when the register is completed by the class teacher is recorded with attendance code 'N'. Office staff update the absence code as appropriate, in light of information received.

#### Lateness

Once the gates are closed at 9:00am the only way to enter school is via the School Office. Any pupil who comes into school this way after 9:05am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 30 minutes after the start of school is marked as 'U', late after registers closed.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M) as long as medical evidence is provided.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

## **Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

## **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and the school has not received any verbal or written communication from the parent/carer, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.25am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

## **Illness**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek permission from you for the school to make enquiries.

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

Where attendance concerns arise and the percentage attendance falls below the expected 95%, the EWO may become involved. The EWO can convene Parent Contract Meetings to help support parents/carers to improve attendance. The EWO can also issue penalty notices to parents/carers.