

Attendance and Punctuality

The Role of Parents/Carers



Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Taken from 'School Attendance - guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' Department for Education, Nov 2016

*We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that their attendance is **96% or better.***

Term time leave

Taking holidays in term time is no longer accepted. Only the Headteacher can give permission for term time leave in 'exceptional circumstances' and this must be applied for in advance. The request form is available from the school office.

Although the following list is not exhaustive, permission for term time leave will not be given for:

- family holidays
- day trips
- weddings
- trips to visit relatives abroad
- trips abroad that involve medical surgery for parents when other arrangements for childcare can be found.

Please note that where a request is made and is authorised, it will only be on the understanding that the following evidence will be requested and is provided:

- Any required trip abroad – proof of flight details, including a proposed date of return. If flights have to be changed by an airline which directly affect the return date, then proof of this will also be required.



Arriving late

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss learning and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons which can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Learning will not be stopped when late children arrive in the class as this is unfair on the children who are punctual to school. It is the responsibility of all parents and carers to ensure that their child/ren are in school on time.

8.30am: Playground gates open and pupils can go onto the playground and their classes

8.55am: School doors are closed

8.55am onwards: Children are registered as 'late' and their names will be taken by a member of staff before they enter their classroom

If your child arrives after 9:25am (except for absences that have been approved by the school), it will be recorded as absent from school on our registration system for that morning session.

Early Years Expectations

As attendance for children under 5 years of age is not statutory, there is not the same recourse to legal sanctions. However, the early years are a critical time to establish the good habits and routines needed throughout life and to get the key messages about the importance of attendance and punctuality at nursery and school across to parents and carers.

Regular attendance has a positive impact on all aspects of a young child's learning and development. A regular routine supports the young child to feel settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which, in turn, prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available.

Families should know that good attendance and being punctual are expected when their child takes up a place. As attendance is an issue that affects all age groups, there needs to be as much consistency as possible between early years and school settings. This includes expectations around holidays, which for school-aged children are not permissible in term time.

If a child has more than 20 sessions (10 days) unauthorised absences over one school year while in nursery or reception, they may be at risk of losing their place at the school.

Why is good attendance and punctuality important?

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly. Where the words *regular* and *regularly* are used in this policy, it refers to a minimum expected attendance of 96% or better. Therefore, your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

What is good attendance?

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
95-96%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4

90% attendance over a school year = ½ day absent every week!

It's your responsibility

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to optimise their learning, achieve the best they can and get the most out of their school experience. Failure to do so is an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Reporting an absence

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us (**01474 352488**) on the first day of absence, and then each day that your child is absent;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;

- Or, you can call into school and report to the school office, where a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Send you a letter requesting you to fill in our child absence slip, where you will need to explain your child's absence on the days they were not at school;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Assistant Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Kent Education Attendance Officer (EWO) if attendance moves below 90%.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised.

This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school. Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised until the school is satisfied that it should be authorised. ***Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that while calling the school or providing a note for an absence complies with safeguarding procedures, it does not automatically mean an absence will be authorised.***

What is an authorised absence?

These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes, if we have proof of these appointments.

Illness

Please contact the school office each morning your child is off ill informing us of the type of illness he/she has, and once your child has returned to school we may ask to see proof of a GP letter, prescription or prescribed medicine.

If we don't hear from you, we will try and make contact with you on the first day of absence. If after a few days we have had no message as to why your child is absent from school, we will record it as an unauthorised absence.

Medical Appointments

We will need to see proof of appointments before they are authorised, such as a copy of the appointment card/letter. Please bring these to the school office.

Whenever possible, please make GP, dentist, optician or any other medical appointments after school or in school holidays.

Religious observance

Copperfield Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will consider authorising absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should request the absence in the normal way by completing a term time leave request in advance (collected from school office).

What is an unauthorised absence?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily. This may include looking after brothers or sisters or ill relatives, attending appointments with parents or family members or caring for a disabled parent;
- 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;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time.