



# Attendance Policy

**Reviewed Date: September 2021**

# Attendance Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Clements Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Research suggests that high attainment is related to good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of this policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.
- 1.3 The policy is based on current government and local authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it.

## 2. School’s roles and responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Clements Primary Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### 2.2 Attendance Leader

The Headteacher/Deputy Head along with the Admin & Data Officer will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared regularly with the senior leadership team, are made available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that governors are informed about attendance termly. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### 2.3 Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown in Appendix 1).

- i) The register will be called promptly at **9.00 am for Key Stage 2, 9:00 am for Key Stage 1** and **1.00 pm** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during this registration period in respect of each child.
- ii) The registers will close at **9.20 am for Key Stage 2, 9:30 for Key Stage 1** and **1.15 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school’s policy on punctuality and lateness.

## 2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the headteacher.
- ii) Clements Primary Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Clements Primary Academy will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
  - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
    - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
    - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's / student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
    - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see the school's policy on term-time holidays);
  - (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
  - (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand);
  - (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
  - (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
  - (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
  - (g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

(h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.
- The pupil is absent due to parent or sibling being unwell.

#### 2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

#### 2.6 Staff Training

The school will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

### 3. **Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Admin & Data Officer will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored weekly as a whole school. Within this monitoring, focus is given to, gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

### 4. **Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Clements Primary Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class groups. Good attendance is promoted in each class and attendance boards are updated regularly. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment. Registration certificates are sent to all parents in the spring term and with annual reports at the end of the academic year so that parents are aware of their child's attendance percentage. Weekly attendance is celebrated and a certificate is given to the class with the highest attendance. A certificate is given to the class with the highest attendance at the end of each half term. Gold attendance certificates (99-100%) are awarded at the end of each term to pupils and the class with the highest attendance at the end of each term will have a celebration within class. Those children who have Gold attendance for the whole academic year have a special awarded.

#### 4.2 First-day calling

Clements Primary Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify, at an early stage, pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first

day of absence, the school will follow up with a Dojo message if no reason has been given for the absence in the meantime.

#### 4.3 Letters to parents

The school will contact parents by phone/Dojo or Parentpay when a pupil's attendance falls below 95% and there is no permissible reason for this. This message states that the school will monitor the pupil's attendance. If no improvement is seen over a half term a contact will be made again to parents asking that they provide medical evidence for any future absences. This will remain in place until attendance improves. Copies of these letters/messages can be found in Appendix 2.

#### 4.4 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If attendance continues to fall or there are 6 sessions of unauthorised absence the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service. Fines may be issued after 6 sessions of unauthorised absence, in line with other local schools.

#### 4.5 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4-week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

#### 4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school for registration, on time every day. Classroom doors open every day at 8:40am. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.7 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be marked as late (L). Pupils who are persistently late will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.9 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to the office to be signed out/in.

#### 4.10 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Clements Primary Academy takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately. If we are unable to contact the parents, we will call the police.

## 5. Term-time Holidays

- 5.1 Clements Primary Academy will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday. No more than 6 sessions will be authorised in the most extreme circumstances.
- 5.2 Clements Primary Academy will consider authorising holidays for:
- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
  - when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
  - parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.
- 5.3 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:
- cheaper cost of holiday;
  - availability of the desired accommodation;
  - poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
  - overlap with beginning or end of term.
- 5.4 Clements Primary Academy will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.
- 5.5 Clements Primary Academy will NOT normally authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATs.
- 5.6 Any 2<sup>nd</sup> term time holidays in an academic year, will result in a referral to the Local Authority for Final Notice and legal action.

## 6. Extended leave of absence

- 6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas Clements Primary Academy will take account of the following:
- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal ‘holiday’;
  - such visits may be important in terms of children’s identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
  - parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child’s uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
  - the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;
  - where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period, such as keeping a diary and reading.

## **7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Clements Primary Academy.

7.2 Clements Primary Academy expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Clements Primary Academy on the first day of absence.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing reading records when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Clements Primary Academy will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## **8. Pupils' responsibilities**

8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school, without explanation, they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

8.3 A Guide for Pupils/Students is attached.

## **9. Governors' responsibilities**

Section 175 (2)

9.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.



**Reviewing the policy**

The school will review this policy each year.

**Reviewed by the Governing Body on:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_



## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### 1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. Classroom doors open at **8:40am in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.**

The register will be called promptly at:

**8:50 am for Key Stage 2, 9:00 for Key Stage 1,** and the afternoon register at **1:00pm.**

### 2. What happens if my child is late?

Key Stage 2: If your child arrives between **9:00am** and **9:20am** he/she will be marked **late.**

Key Stage 1: If your child arrives between **9:10am** and **9:30am** he/she will be marked **late.**

If your child arrives after **9:20am (KS2), 9:30 (KS1)** he/she will be marked as unauthorised late (unless a valid reason is given).

If your child arrives between **1pm and 1:15pm** he/she will be marked **late.**

If your child arrives after **1:15pm** he/she will be marked as unauthorised late (unless a valid reason is given).

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office.

If a pupil is continuously late a meeting will be arranged with the Headteacher/Deputy Head to discuss reasons / difficulties for lateness

### 3. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you and continue to work down the contact list until we are able to speak to someone.

However, if we are unable to contact you, we will need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

### 4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce medical evidence.

**5. What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc. or for general term time holidays.

**6. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?**

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

**7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?**

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact the headteacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the headteacher then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away.

As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

**8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education. Your child will bring home a reading record each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

**9. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher or the headteacher, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Education Attendance Service is based at:

Western Area Education Office  
West Suffolk House  
Western Way  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP33 3YU

Tel. No. 01284758753



## ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY

### A GUIDE FOR PUPILS

#### 1. Attending regularly and on time

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Clements Primary Academy. It will help you:

- keep up with your school work and get the best results you can;
- make friends;

#### 2. Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- illness
- emergency dental / medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement

Looking after your brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

You will also need a note from your parents to explain ALL absences from school. You will also need a note if you arrive at school after 9.20 am in the morning. If you do not bring a note, or the explanation on the note is unsatisfactory, the absence will count as unauthorised and will be shown on your end of year report.

#### 3. Need help?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. **TALK TO SOMEONE** – your class teacher, another member of staff, your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

## REGISTER CODES

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

## Appendix 2

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear,

As stated in my letter dated \_\_\_\_\_, we have been monitoring \_\_\_\_\_ attendance over the last few weeks. The attached registration certificate shows that \_\_\_\_\_ attendance is still below 93%.

Most of the absences have been due to illness and with this level of absence we know parents will be concerned and probably consult the family doctor.

For any future absences, we will now expect confirmation that \_\_\_\_\_ has been to the doctor - evidence, such as a named appointment card or a copy of a prescription will be acceptable to show that the illness has been addressed. Absences without medical evidence will be marked as unauthorised and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

We would ask you to encourage excellent attendance from this point forward so that \_\_\_\_\_ overall attendance rate improves over the next few weeks. Research shows that poor attendance has a detrimental effect on the progress children make at school.

Thank you for your support in helping your child to improve their attendance.

If you wish to discuss this matter, please contact me on 01440 702946 or make an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher/Deputy Head

DATE

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The attached registration certificate shows that your child's attendance has fallen below 93%.

Most of the absences have been due to illness and with this level of absence we know parents will be concerned and probably consult the family doctor.

We will monitor your child's attendance over the next few weeks and may, in future, request confirmation that they have been to the doctor - evidence, such as a named appointment card or a copy of a prescription will be acceptable to show that the illness has been addressed.

We would ask you to encourage excellent attendance from this point forward so that your child's overall attendance rate improves over the next half term. Research shows that poor attendance has a detrimental effect on the progress children make at school.

Thank you for your support in helping your child to improve their attendance.

If you wish to discuss this matter, please contact me on 01440 702946 or make an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher/Deputy Head

Dojo/ParentPay messages:

Attendance update (date)

We are informing you that name attendance has fallen below 95%. It is currently 93.67%. Please contact Mrs Jennings if you have any worries or concerns. Many thanks

Attendance Update (date)

We have continued to monitor name attendance and it has fallen below 93%. It is currently 91.62%. For any further absences please could you provide the school with evidence to support the absence. If there is anything we can do to support you or If you would like to discuss this, please make an appointment to speak with Mrs Jennings. Many thanks

Attendance Update (date)

We are still concerned about name. Please can you attend an appointment to discuss this further with Mrs Jennings on date. If there is anything we can do to help support you in the meantime, please do let us know. Many thanks