



# Carfield

## Primary School

Attendance Policy and Procedures  
2022-2023

## Policy for Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality

### Why do we need a policy for attendance and punctuality?

Children come to school to learn and good attendance is important if they are to gain as much as possible from their time in school. When children miss lessons it is harder for them to reach their full potential. Poor attendance and punctuality can lead to children feeling unsettled at school, it can affect their friendships and reduce their confidence. Poor attendance can result in social and academic problems.

Punctuality is important so children can be registered, seated and listening to the teacher when the first lesson of the day begins.

It is the duty of the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. This duty is to ensure that your child receives full time education.

### Punctuality

Our school day officially begins at 8.40am when all children are expected to be in school, unless they have an authorised absence pass or parent/carers have informed the school that their child/children will be late. The school gates are closed at 9.00am for safety reasons. Children arriving between 8.40am and 9.00 am are to go straight to the classroom. Any children arriving after that time will need to enter at the main entrance via the intercom system and report to the office where they will be given a late mark on the register and will be able to book their lunch.

### Punctuality procedures

- The Attendance Officer and staff monitor lateness.
- Late arrivals are entered in the register and an arrival time is entered on our computerised attendance system.
- A letter is sent home for persistent lateness.
- Parents will be contacted to discuss any problem which may contribute to a lack of punctuality.
- A referral may be sent to MAST (Multi Agency Support Team) if necessary.

Punctuality when collecting children at the end of the school day is just as important. If a parent/carer is running late school should be notified by telephone, so that the child/children can be cared for by school until they are collected. If the school is not notified they will try to contact the parent/carer. If no contact can be made and the child/children are still in school one hour after the end of school the relevant Children's Social Care Area Team or the Police will be contacted.

Staff can not be requested to walk children back home.

The school day finishes at the following times:

FS1 (Nursery)	Am session 11.30	Pm session 3.20
FS2	3.00pm	
KS1	3.10pm	
KS2	3.20pm	

## Registers

Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning (8.50am) and the afternoon (1.10pm) sessions. The morning registers close at 9.30am.

## Absence

Parents/carers are expected to telephone school on the first day of absence to explain why their child is not in school. The appropriate code may then be entered in the attendance register. If a parent/carer fails to notify the school the Attendance Officer will phone them. This is known as 'First Day' absence calling. If no explanation is received a text is then sent requesting the parents/carers to get in touch with the school. If we get no reply a letter will be sent home requesting a reason and will be kept on file. If no explanation remains forthcoming then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

## Authorised/unauthorised absence

It is important to note that a letter or phone call from a parent does not authorise an absence, only the schools acceptance of the explanation can authorise the absence.

Absences from Carfield Primary School will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Days of religious observance (3 per year)
- Exceptional circumstances (agreed by the Head teacher)
- Medical/dental appointment\*
- Pre-arranged visits to another school\*
- Music exam\*

\*Absence passes are available at the school office and should be carried when out of school for appointments.

A medical appointment card or letter should be shown at the school office and the appropriate absence form must be completed when requesting a pass. If a letter or appointment card is not available school will supply a form for the practitioner to complete.

The school should be informed if a child has an emergency medical appointment and a pass has not been given and proof of the appointment should be obtained.

## Religious Observance:

The DCSF recommends the use of Code R when children are absent from school to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.

This is interpreted to mean that if the parent's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival then the school must authorise the absence. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

If the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave absence. Additional holidays and days off linked to the religious festival but not "exclusively set aside for religious observance" by the religious body are not marked using Code R.

## Roles and responsibilities:

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All members of the school community have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality

Role of the pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the education opportunities available.

All pupils will:

- Ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Be aware of their current attendance record and targets.
- Be aware of the consequences of poor attendance or truancy.
- Arrive to lessons punctually.
- Not leave school without permission.
- Follow correct procedures for known absences.
- Respect themselves and others.
- Encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- Be happy and encourage others to feel happy
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied or feel unhappy in school.

Role of parents:

Parents have an essential role in ensuring their child's good attendance.

We ask parents to:

- Establish good attendance habits by acting as a role model and showing the children that good attendance and punctuality is important.
- Praise and reward good attendance, even small successes, e.g. getting ready quickly, even if resisting going to school.
- Talk regularly with their child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- Contact the school by phone, text, email or letter as soon as possible to say why their child is absent, and when they are expected to return.
- Only grant days at home for genuine illness.
- If appropriate, arrange for a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick.
- Avoid taking holidays in school time.
- Ensure that wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. ensuring children have their P.E. kits on the right days.
- Establish a good bedtime routine, so that their child can sleep well, get enough sleep and make mornings less of a struggle.

Role of the Class Teacher:

We ask teachers to:

- Encourage good attendance.
- Ensure that registers are correctly and promptly marked.
- Set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Provide a safe and secure environment in which to learn.
- Provide engaging and worthwhile learning experiences that encourage students to regularly attend lessons.
- Ensure that children are informed of their current attendance record half termly.

- Listen to and value children's views.
- Make initial contact with parents when concerns arise.

#### Role of the School:

##### As a school we:

- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- Develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- Develop procedures leading to the formal referral to the Advice, Assessment and Early Intervention Service.
- Adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of the resources available, and ensure that appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

#### Role of Governing Body:

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

#### Role of the Local Authority:

The Local Authority provides an 'Advice, Assessment and Early Intervention Service', frequently referred to as the 'New Front Door'. The LA may also support the school with legal action to tackle poor attendance where appropriate.

#### Monitoring

The registers are continually monitored by the school's Attendance Officer. Any attendance issues or patterns are identified and parents informed. Attendance records of any child with an attendance of less than 90% will be tracked and action taken if necessary.

The Attendance Officer will also inform parents when children's names appear on the Authority's persistent absentee list because at that point the Authority will also be monitoring them and their attendance will be discussed at the half termly meeting with their representative in school.

Information on attendance is returned half termly to the DFE.

#### Attendance procedures

If a poor pattern of attendance is formed:

- The Head Teacher will be informed
- The Attendance Officer/Learning Mentor will contact parents/carers
- The Attendance Officer will look at strategies for improvement
- The Head Teacher/Attendance Officer/Learning Mentor will talk to or meet with parents/carers to discuss and agree strategies for improved attendance

- Parents may be invited to attend a SAP (School Attendance Panel) which will include Mrs Janet Betts from the Authority.
- The school may contact MAST (Multi Agency Support Team) to request the allocation of a Family Prevention or longer term Intervention Worker.
- The Family Prevention/Intervention Worker will keep in contact with parents/carers and if necessary send a warning letter if there is no improvement
- MAST may then issue a final warning letter if there is still no improvement
- Parents/carers may receive a Penalty Notice.

### Penalty Notices

Where a child's attendance is consistently poor (less than 90% with at least 20% of the absence being unauthorised) and all steps have been taken to rectify this by the school and the Family Intervention Worker working with the child and the parents/carers, but have been unsuccessful then the Authority will after consulting with the school, consider issuing a Penalty Notice (see appendix). This will only be issued after taking each case into consideration and taking into account any mitigating circumstances.

### Awards and rewards

All children achieving 100% attendance in a half term will receive a certificate for perfect attendance at the end of the half term and children who achieve 100% for the whole of the academic year will be presented with a medal. Any class where all the children have attended all week will receive a class star which will be displayed on the classroom door. At the end of the year all the children in the class with the most stars will receive a small prize. The class in each phase with the highest attendance each half term will be awarded an attendance cup.

Each class receives a certificate for achieving the highest attendance percentage of the week and will also receive a reward. An attendance and punctuality strategy (High 5) will be used throughout the year to encourage pupils with an attendance below 90% to attend school more often.

### Leave during term time

Leave in term time is **not an entitlement** and can only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the Head Teacher's discretion.

Schools are not permitted to authorise family holidays as they do not fall within the exceptional leave category.

All requests for term time leave must be submitted at least 20 days in advance, by the parents/carers, to enable the Head Teacher to have time to consider the request. Each request will be considered individually and on its own merits. The school will aim to reply in writing within 10 school days of receiving the request. Requests that do not include a start and end date, address where their child will be staying while taking leave or reason for the leave, cannot be considered. If a child is granted leave and does not return to school by the agreed return date or takes unauthorised leave parents will be at risk receiving a fine.

Please note that evidence of departure and return dates must be supplied when travelling abroad.

Before looking at issuing a fine, Carfield does take a child's normal attendance pattern into consideration.

Taking leave in term time is strongly discouraged, as it is disruptive to children's education and there is strong evidence to indicate that significant absence from school during term time can have a negative impact upon a child's attainment and learning'.

If a Leave of Absence form is not completed and another reason is given then a child returns from an absence and says they were on holiday a penalty notice/fine may be issued.

### Children under 5 years old

Children under 5 are not statutory school age until the term after their fifth birthday, this enables Head Teachers to be more flexible about authorising leave before the age of 5. A leave of absence form still needs to be completed and a reply will be given by the Head.

Please remember that if you have made the decision to send your child to school/nursery before they are 5 we do expect them to attend school regularly and we would like discourage periods of absence as it can affect progress and children can find it unsettling when they return. We have also found that a pattern of poor attendance and regular absences in early years can sometimes be difficult to change and sets a trend for them through school.

Children under 5 are just as much a part of Carfield as children that have reached statutory school age. They are always included in attendance reward strategies for good attendance and will receive certificates, prizes and medals along with the older children.

Their attendance is also monitored by school and the Authority along with the older children.

### Children under 5 – part time attendance (reception)

Parents can choose to send children to school on a part time basis until the term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. At Carfield, part time is five mornings a week 8.50am until lunch time. **We do not have a flexi school option.**

### CYPF Policy

For further information on term time leave please refer to:

Sheffield City Council, Children Young People and Families, Term Time Leave: Policy for schools August 2013. A copy of which is available by request from the school office.

### Children missing from education

The Attendance Officer will liaise with the Children Young People and Families Directorate, Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered as missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and they will pursue the matter in accordance with Authority procedures.

### Children in public care

The Head teacher is the school's co-ordinator for looked after children.

The Attendance Officer will monitor their attendance and report this to the Looked After Children's Team on request.

### *Appendix*

## Penalty Notices

The Local Authority has brought to the attention of every school in Sheffield the new powers made available in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

These came into force in February 2004 and include Penalty Notices, which mean that for pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e. any absences for which the school has not given permission) their parents/carers may be subject to a prompt fine.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absence developing. They will be issued simply by post to a pupil's home after a warning and in cases of absence without acceptable cause which will include pupils caught on truancy sweeps and also those taking unauthorised holidays in school time.

At Carfield School we consider that regular attendance is very important and these new powers so significant, that we are bringing this change in the law to the attention of every parent/carer with a child in this school. It means that any parent/carer of a pupil with a level of unauthorised absence may now have a potential liability in the form of a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence record from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice it is extremely important that you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance.

When considering the use of a Penalty Notice, a Sheffield Local Authority Officer's first response will be in the form of a written warning. In exceptional circumstances, however, a Penalty Notice may be used as a first response. This could be when an unauthorised absence was for an extended period and condoned by the parent/carer, for example when a parent/carer has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this or if you need any help to achieve an improvement then please contact us to discuss the situation.

Advice and support can also be made available to you through MAST by contacting 0114 2037485.