



Attendance Policy

Claregate Primary School

Approved by:	Governing Board	Date: 30/1/2023
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Forwarding fixed-penalty notices to the Local Authority, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Evans.

3.4 The attendance officer

The role of Child and Family Support Worker covers attendance and responsibilities include:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › First morning calls or contact
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Sending letters to parents/ carers (see appendix 4)
- › Promoting good attendance using rewards systems
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- › Support and advise teachers about pupil's attendance
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- › Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Involve multi-agency support where appropriate to improve attendance
- › Advising the Headteacher (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Fielding and can be contacted via absence@claregateprimaryschool.co.uk

3.5 Phase Leaders

- › Know which children in your phase are causing attendance concerns
- › Liaise with pastoral staff to remove barriers to good attendance in a solution focused approach

3.6 Class teachers

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance
- › Record attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office by 9am for morning session and by 1:30pm for afternoon session
- › Welcome back pupils and help in settling back on return from absence
- › Raise concerns about the attendance of children in your care
- › Stay in touch with the pastoral team and ask your own support staff to ring home if necessary

3.7 Admin/ office staff

Admin/office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents to the pastoral team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- › Support Pastoral Team when needed

3.7 Parents/carers

Section 576 Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person on a day-to-day basis

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time throughout the academic school year
- › Report child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence advising expected date of return. Email: absence@claregateprimaryschool.co.uk or call 01902 558575
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- › Provide medical evidence whenever possible for absences of more than 3 consecutive days
- › Provide medical evidence for absence of 5 days or more when absence is linked to holiday periods
- › Engage with school when encountering difficulties to work together in finding solutions
- › Download SIMS Parent app and "allow" notifications so messages from school can be read immediately
- › Follow rules for when it is permissible for children to be sent to school when ill [Children and young people settings: tools and resources - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time and be prepared for their studies
- › Co-operate with their parents when getting ready for school showing age appropriate independence

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first morning session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes and appendix 3 for recording attendance.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50. The register for the second session will be taken on return from the lunch play time, usually by 13:00.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by email: absence@claregateprimaryschool.co.uk or by calling the school office 01902 558575 (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorized, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card, screenshots of appointments or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

4.3 Planned absence

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents / carers should email school with attached appointment letters or bring appointment letters to the office to be seen.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 5 explained this in more details.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

It is important that pupils arrive to school on time as even slight delay will cause disruption to the lessons and missing out on learning not only of individual child, but for other pupils as well. Being punctual is a habit of a lifetime that will serve children well in their lives. If there is a particular valid reason for arriving late, this needs to be discussed and agreed with the school in advance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the 'L'
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the 'U'
- › School will challenge frequent late arrivals
- › 'Late gate' with Education Welfare Officer will be done every half term and parents/ carers may be challenged verbally about why your child is late, especially if this is a regular occurrence

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Attendance is closely linked to safeguarding and we need to know whereabouts of the children during school hours if they are not attending school.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- › Contact all the pupil's parent/carer by phone or email on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct home visits or inform Education Welfare.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained
- › If attempts of providing reason for absence are unsuccessful, absence will be marked as unauthorised- this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- › Contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will involve an Education Welfare Officer or the Police to undertake safe and well checks.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

- > All parents/ carers can access attendance levels on SIMs parent app.
- > Attendance levels are included in school reports and attendance from year 6 is forwarded to the secondary school. (appendix 2)
- > Weekly class attendance displayed on the website.
- > The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels when attendance falls below required level using SIMs Parent messaging system, emails, letters and reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Exceptional circumstances determined on individual cases
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. School needs to be informed about absence in advance.
- › Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school.

5.1 Term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Holidays are not considered as 'exceptional circumstances'

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence. Form is accessible via <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/education-and-schools/holiday-term-time> or by completing the paper form collected from the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence e.g. travel bookings

If the Headteacher, does not authorise the leave of absence but the child is absent during the requested time, referral is made to the Local Authority and parents may receive a Penalty Notice (fine).

In accordance with guidance from City of Wolverhampton Local Authority, Penalty Notices are a fine of:

- › £120 per parent per child if paid in full within 28 days (reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days)

- › If a Penalty Notice is not fully paid within 28 days, the Local Authority has no option but to prosecute a parent in the Magistrates' Court for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- › In Court, if a parent pleads guilty, or is found guilty, they will then have a criminal record. The court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a parenting order.

5.2 Legal sanctions

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

'If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence'

The court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a parenting order.

Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996:

Parents are aware their child is absent regularly from school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, they are guilty of an offence.

The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months, and order payment of the prosecution costs.

A referral may be made to Local Authority for statutory intervention:

- › Where school has exhausted all avenues to address attendance issues and have been unsuccessful and there are at least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absences in a half term period.
- › Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

N.B. Both parents are responsible for attendance of their child and are liable to a fine even if they do not live with the child.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

An award system for outstanding individual attendance as follows:

- › Bronze award: 100% attendance for one term
- › Silver award: 100% attendance for two terms
- › Gold award: 100% attendance during whole academic year
- › Improved attendance certificates

Collective awards:

- › Weekly awards to the best class
- › Termly awards to best class
- › Whole school display in the corridor visible to everyone

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- › Work closely with Education Welfare and share relevant information

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to the class teachers and other school leaders and Education Welfare team to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Notify parents/ carers when attendance drops below 90% (Letter 1)
- › Request medical evidence to authorise absence if attendance is not improving (Letter 2)
- › Hold regular meetings with Education Welfare and the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services and engage into multi-agency support to remove the barriers to attendance
- › Refer for statutory intervention if families do not engage or where improvement is not shown
- › School will challenge condoned absence where parents keep their child off school for no good reason, school will try to help to find solutions where there are significant barriers to good attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

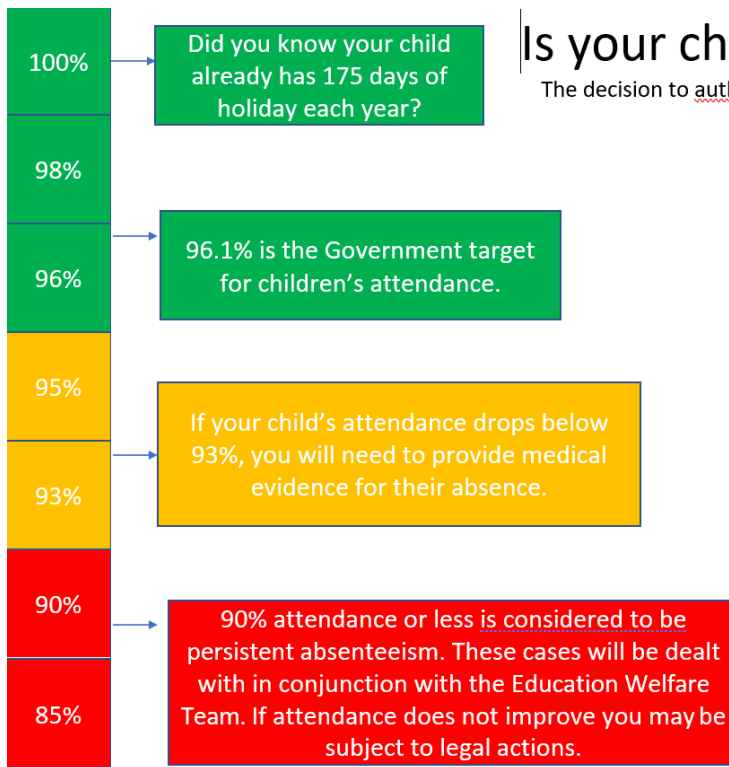
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Other authorised circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil who is not statutory school age or leave during term time due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil having a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code is amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time, usually 5 days)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: on track attendance



Is your child's attendance on track?

The decision to authorise an absence is at the Head's discretion on a case-by-case basis

Things to remember!

- Holidays in term time are not considered an exceptional circumstance.
- Non emergency dentist and optician appointments can easily be scheduled for outside the school day.
- Religious Observances will be considered, but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave.
- Bereavements of close family members are considered exceptional circumstances
- If you aren't sure talk to Mrs Fielding or Miss Evans.

Appendix 2: absence recording process

Claregate Primary School - Absence Recording Process



Appendix 4: letters

Headteacher: Mr M Murphy, Dip HE, B.Ed (Hons)



Pupil: _____

Dear Parent/Carer,

Claregate Primary School is committed to the ambition that all the pupils achieve very high levels of attendance. Research shows that regular attendance has a direct impact on your child's education, exam results, and social development.

The Government-set threshold for what is persistent absenteeism is 90%.

Any child who has attendance of less than this is therefore considered to be a persistent absentee regardless of whether it is authorised (you told us about it) or unauthorised (no reason was given for the absence) and we as a school have a duty to act upon this.

We therefore must inform you that your child's attendance has fallen below the expected level as last term their attendance was _____

We are unable to authorise any further absence without the support of medical evidence.

Medical evidence can include named prescriptions, hospital letters, and appointment cards or screenshots.

We are monitored fortnightly by the Education Welfare Service, who challenge all absences that fall below 90% and as a result may contact families directly to discuss attendance concerns.

Please may we remind you that you must contact the school by 9.30 am on every day of absence to report the reason for your child not being in school either by email: absence@claregateprimaryschool.co.uk or by calling 01902 558575.

We are keen to work with you in helping your children achieve good attendance and if there is any additional support that the school can provide in helping this improve, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Fielding and Miss Evans
Inclusion Team

Headteacher: Mr M Murphy, Dip HE, B.Ed (Hons)



Pupil: _____

Dear Parent/Carer,

All attendance below 90% is classed as a persistent absence regardless of whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

In previous correspondence, you have been informed that your child's attendance is a cause for concern.

Unfortunately, there has been no improvement and I must inform you that your child's current attendance is still below the required level.

You are invited to attend the meeting with Mrs Fielding and our Education Welfare Officer who monitors standards of attendance for the Local Authority.

The aim of the meeting will be to develop a plan to improve attendance and to see what areas of support you and your child need to achieve this.

It is hoped that if we all work together, we will be able to make improvements to your child's attendance.

The meeting will take place at Claregate Primary School.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Yours sincerely

Mrs Fielding and Miss Evans

Inclusion Team

Claregate Primary School, Chester Avenue, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton WV6 9JU Tel: (01902) 558575 Fax: (01902) 558581
Email: claregateprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk Web: www.claregateprimaryschool.org.uk Twitter: [@claregatepri](https://twitter.com/claregatepri)