

Attendance and Absence Policy

Statutory Duty of Centre

Excellent attendance and punctuality is important if children are to benefit from everything school has to offer. There is a clear link between attendance, punctuality and achievement. If a child is not at school, we have to find out the reason by law.

It is our statutory duty to record students' daily attendance and as a Centre we are accountable to the DfE through the School Census each term. A register is a legal document and may be required in a court of law in a prosecution for non-school attendance. But more importantly, in the event of a fire or other incidents we **MUST** be aware of which students are in school.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance and we aim to provide an environment that encourages students to attend regularly and punctually.

School's responsibilities

All staff should support a whole school ethos which places a high value on regular attendance and punctuality, and set a good example by their own attendance and punctuality.

Parent/Carer's responsibilities

Parents/Carers are responsible for notifying the school if their child is not able to attend school due to sickness or other unavoidable cause. Ideally this should be by telephone, email or by text using Keep Kids Safe on the first day of absence and confirmed in writing. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical / dental appointments for their child during school hours.

- An *authorised absence* may include sickness, medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside school hours, days of religious observance.
- An *unauthorised absence* may include truancy, staying at home to look after younger children or sick relatives, going shopping or having a haircut.

Illness

We recognise that many of our students do have medical conditions and become ill on occasions and therefore some absence is unavoidable. Students may be away from school for a block of time due to a serious illness, at other times children have odd days of absence from school due to illness.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments.

School Times

The timings of the school day are detailed below and the support of parents is sought in ensuring students are at school on time each day. Parents are asked not to drop off their child prior to our start time and if collecting their child to arrive in time for the end of our school day.

Start of School Day	08.45	
Registration	08.45 – 09.00	Students who arrive after this time are late.
End of School Day	15.20	
After School Clubs (optional)	15.20 – 16.30	

Punctuality

Registration is at 8.45 – 9.00am. Whilst we are aware that most of our students arrive at school on time, parents may not be aware of the difficulties experienced by their children, even if they are only a few minutes late each day. For example:

- A student is likely to miss the routine which signals the start of the school day and may miss his/her teacher's instructions for the first lesson.
- Arriving late causes disruption to the whole class, as well as to the child who is late.
- 10 minutes late a day = almost a whole hour of lessons missed each week for your child.

Family Holidays During Term Time

Holidays during term time are discouraged and where possible, holidays should be taken during the school holiday periods. We do however recognise that for some families, a holiday is important for enjoying quality time together, particularly if their child has experienced prolonged illness or extended post-operative care.

Any family holiday request should be made in writing to the Headteacher using the form "Time Off in Term Time for Exceptional Circumstances", which is available from Reception.

Holiday absences will **not** usually be authorised in the following circumstances:

- The student has planned examinations.
- The student's attendance is giving cause for concern and there is no underlying medical problem affecting this.
- The holiday period exceeds 10 school days.

Staff

All Staff should let their Head of Department/Line Manager know as early as possible if they are going to be absent. As soon as Staff know a date for their return to school, they should telephone the office and let the school know. Please refer to Staff Absence Procedures for further details.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Local Authority guidelines are followed in relation to 'children missing education'. If we feel that one of our students is missing from education the school will make every effort to ascertain their whereabouts. This might include telephoning home, contacting the GP, friends or other relatives that are known. If we have reason to believe that a child has transferred to another school we will make every effort to contact that school to ascertain whether or not our information is true or false. If any members of the school staff have any reason to believe that there may be any child protection issues involved then we will contact our local office straight away and if necessary notify the police.

After 4 weeks, should the school and the LA be unable to locate where the child has moved to, the school should be advised by the LA to remove the child's name from its roll. No children are removed from the school roll unless authorised to do so by the relevant LA. See Appendix 1 for procedure.

Reporting to Parents and Carers

All absences, both authorised and unauthorised, and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year within their child's report. If requested, parents will be given an update on their children's attendance at the end of each term.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Education Leadership Team will monitor the attendance of our students and work closely with the relevant Local Authority to support children and young people whose attendance levels are causing concern.

The school will review this policy regularly and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Absences

All parents are asked to call, text or email the school office to report absences. This can be done by leaving a message on the answering machine if no one answers the call.

The School Receptionist will investigate all unexplained/unauthorised absences and will contact parents/carers to ask why a student is not in school and when they are expected to return. They will do this on the *first day of absence* if the child's absence is not reported. There is a customised letter that can be generated from Facility that can be sent home (often via the student) asking for an explanation for any absences. If no explanation is given it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If staff receive any further information regarding an absence they should pass it on to School Receptionist rather than altering any entries in the register, this will ensure that both the hard copy and electronic entry are identical.

School Responsibilities

School staff are responsible for ensuring that students have good attendance by:

- Completing attendance registers accurately
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence
- Responding to absenteeism consistently and with care
- Contacting parents when they are concerned about a student's absences and recording the contact
- Consulting with the Education Welfare Service for the relevant Local Authority if a student's attendance continues to give cause for concern

Implementation

Morning and Afternoon Registration (Main School & Carmel House)

- **8.45am – 9.00am:** Teacher/Senior Teaching Assistant should mark in registers which students are present or they know are not coming into school (info from parent or transport). **All other students should be left blank.**

- **9.00am – 9.30am:** All registers returned to Reception where Receptionist can complete the registers as students arrive. Receptionist can also enter the appropriate code as parents of absent students ring the school and if she finds the reason for their absence or lateness – *it is unfair to mark a student late if it is beyond their family’s control, e.g. Local Authority transport problems.*
- **From 1.10pm** - Registers are collected from Reception.
- **1.30pm** – All registers returned to Reception.

In the event of a fire or other incident, whoever is on reception will ensure that the register is delivered to the appropriate assembly point.

The School Receptionist will:

- Complete registers with absence codes where required and update Facility daily
- Enter dates in registers for staff each half term
- Transfer register codes to Facility.
- Enter codes in the register and Facility for absent/late students.
- Run report(s) for missing/unauthorised absences, print letters and put in registers.
- Enter codes in the register and on Facility for returned absence letters/calls.
- Ensure there is a relevant code for all students for relevant registration periods.
- Become familiar with attendance reports and print out any requests received.

Register Codes

All register codes can be found in the inside cover of registers.

Illness

Please also note that the **Code ‘M’ should be used for appointments only**; e.g. medical/dental/physio. If a student is having an operation/treatment it should be recorded with **Code ‘I’ for Illness**. Both are identified as being authorised absences.

Procedure for monitoring absence

Number of days off school:	Procedures to be used to inform the school:	Potential consequences if procedures not followed:	Completed/ Coordinated by:
1-5Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/Carer notifies school by telephone call, email or text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text message home using Keep Kids Safe • Phone call home at 	Class Teacher / Receptionist

	message using Keep Kids Safe	end of day	
	• Parental note	• Relevant code in register – no code if unauthorised	
6-10 Days	• Letter from parent/carer, this could be within home-school book or separate	• Relevant code in register – no code if unauthorised	Class Teacher / Key worker / Relevant therapist
	• Telephone discussion	• Phone calls home (Class teacher or key worker, Therapist, Nursing team, Assistant Head Teacher)	/ Nursing Team / AHT
		• Referral to Assistant Head Teacher if unauthorised absences	
10+ Days	• Letter from parent/carer plus medical evidence e.g. copy of prescription, medical appointment, doctors note	• Relevant code in register – no code if unauthorised	Class teacher / Nursing Team / Relevant Therapist / AHT
	• Information provided from hospital	• Letter sent to parents from Head Teacher	
		• LA Safeguarding (CME) procedures implemented	
		• Homework organised if relevant	

Extended Request by parents to Head Teacher for Authorisation.

Holiday: If unauthorised, meeting with parents to discuss further.

Governing Body

The Governing Body has responsibility for school attendance and should be familiar with current legislation.

They are acquainted with the registration system in the school.

They will request reports on attendance and procedures as necessary.

A member of the governing body will usually be part of the Safeguarding Sub Committee.

DATE/TIME SCALE: To be reviewed annually or as deemed necessary.

Revised: September 2018 Simon Brown	Due for Revision: September 2019
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