



# **Covingham Park Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

Our vision is to provide every child with an outstanding start to their education which will equip them with necessary skills to meet future changes and challenges throughout their life.

**Date Written: October 2017**

**Author: Headteacher/Governors**

**Reviewed: December 2017; November 2019; January 2022;  
November 2022**

**Review Date: Autumn 2024**

This policy should be read alongside Swindon Borough Council's documents: [Child attendance and absence enquiries](#) | [Educational welfare services](#) | [Swindon Borough Council](#) and DfE's School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

***Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.***

### **Aims of this policy:**

- School to work together with parents and carers to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually
- Encourage a school culture where children, parents/carers and the wider community value education and understand the importance of regular school attendance
- School to be responsive and proportionate when considering the appropriate action for non-attendance

### **Parents/Carers' Responsibilities**

- Inform school about a child's absence (eg for illness) by 9am on the first day of absence. This may be done by telephone, email ([head@cpps.swindon.sch.uk](mailto:head@cpps.swindon.sch.uk); [admin@cpps.swindon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@cpps.swindon.sch.uk)) by letter or in person. School should be kept informed on a day-to-day basis.
- Inform school in advance about medical appointments where children will be absent from school.
- Where possible, book medical appointments outside of the school day.
- Complete and return an absence request form for any absence other than illness or medical appointments. Parents/carers may not authorise their child's absence - only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents/carers. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school for 8:45am in time for the start of registration. If a child is late he/she should report directly to the school office.

### **Requesting absence**

If your child will be absent from school for reasons other than illness or medical appointments, an absence request form must be completed and returned to the school office. Forms are available in the school entrance and on school website. A copy is also included with this policy.

All requests for absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Factors taken into account will include (but are not exclusive to):

- Reason for the request
- Previous attendance (current and previous years)
- Previous requests
- Dates for the request (eg absence requests for during test weeks would not be agreed)
- Particular circumstances for the pupil or family (eg Bereavement, 'once in a lifetime' event,). Examples of this may include: a pupil is being a bridesmaid – this will probably be authorised for the day of the wedding, with evidence, but a holiday following the wedding would not be authorised.

### **Response to Absence Requests**

Absence request forms will be returned to parents/carers with the school's response to the request. There may also be a letter explaining the reasons for the authorised or unauthorised absence. The headteacher may request a meeting with parents/carers to discuss the absence request in more detail. Absence is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

- The absence may be agreed; your child's absence will be recorded as 'authorised'. The code will depend on the reason for the absence e.g: 'C' for leave of absence granted by school; 'H' leave of absence for the purposes of a family holiday granted by school; 'R' Religious observance.
- The absence may not be agreed; your child's absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. The code will depend on the reason for the absence eg: 'G' holiday not granted by school; 'O' absent without authorisation.
- Code 'M' is used for absence for medical appointments; code 'I' is used for absence for illness.

### **Actions following unauthorised absence**

If absence is unauthorised one or more of the following actions may be taken by school:

- No action
- Informal action and advice, identifying barriers to attendance and looking at ways to address these
- Referral to support services
- Referral to Educational Welfare Services
- Warning letter
- Legal intervention, including Fixed Penalty Notice

If all avenues of support have been facilitated and severe absence (less than 50% attendance) for unauthorised reasons continues, a referral to Children's Services may be considered, for safeguarding purposes.

### **School Responsibilities**

- School will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
- Registers will be called twice daily. Children arriving after the close of the register will be recorded as 'late' for that session. Any notes with reason for absence are returned to the office. If a child is absent, the class teacher or member of the office staff will enter the appropriate code in the register. A member of the office staff will phone or send a text/email to the parent/carer if the child is still absent at 10am. If no response to messages is received, school staff may make a home visit or contact other agencies. Please refer to information on our school website.
- If school has particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality the Headteacher should be informed. Regular meetings will be held between the Headteacher and Administration Officer (and if appropriate the SENCo and or/PP/Early Help lead) to monitor absences.

School will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:

- Good attendance will be encouraged
- Appropriate personal encouragement/congratulations will be offered to individual children
- School will work with parents/carers to identify barriers to good attendance and how these could be addressed
- The Swindon leaflet 'Every Day Counts' will be part of the introductory pack for all new children.
- Attendance will be given appropriate coverage at meetings for new September starters.

Regular monitoring of absence and patterns of absence will be completed

- Support to improve attendance will be offered to children/parents. This may be through school nurse, Teaching Assistant, SENDco, Early Help Process or through the Education Welfare Service.
- Attendance figures and a letter or phone call, showing the previous term's attendance, will be sent/made available to parents regularly if their child's attendance has fallen below 95%
- If further absence occurs within 2 weeks or attendance continues to fall below 95%, a follow up letter or phone call will take place. School may request medical evidence for any further absences.
- If absence occurs with medical evidence or there are no further absences then school review after 6 weeks.
- If absence occurs without medical evidence, school may hold a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) with parents and possibly our Education Welfare Officer (EWO). If appropriate an Early Help Assessment/ Report may be started. The School Attendance Meeting provides the opportunity to hear what sort of barriers exist regarding school attendance and to develop a strategy to improve attendance and agree a timely review period. We endeavour to capture the child's voice too.
- If there is no engagement from parents, school will either visit the child's address or contact EWO who will issue a 'Home Visit Letter' and visit the child's address.
- If a child has been absent for 10 school days or more, school will visit the child's address to establish their whereabouts and obtain sight of the child to check they are present and safe.
- If a child has 3 or more days of unauthorised absence following letters, school will inform EWO, who will send 'EWO Warning Letter'

**Non-Attendance causing concern:**

- Absence below 95% over time
- Persistent absence (below 90%)
- Severe absence (below 50%)
- Regular patterns of absence (eg Fridays)
- Regular absence for illness
- Falling attendance rates
- Regular lateness
- Any period of absence that is not due to illness

**Children missing education (CME)**

Education Welfare Service (EWS) will investigate the reasons for absenteeism from school. All schools are required to notify EWS when a child has not attended school for 10 consecutive days or more without authorisation. [Children missing education \(CME\) | Educational welfare services | Swindon Borough Council](#)

### Notification of absence

With effect from September 2013 requests for absence during term time will not be authorised unless in 'exceptional circumstances' as deemed by the Head teacher, this being in line with the revised government guidelines (<http://www.education.gov.uk/popularquestions/a005551/can-i-take-my-child-on-holiday-in-term-time?>) It is clear that cost, employment, extended family illnesses are not deemed as exceptional circumstances.

Any absence requested during term time needs to be accompanied by supporting evidence in writing. The Head teacher will then decide whether the circumstance is deemed 'exceptional'.

Parents do not have a right to take their children out of school during term time. By law you must ask permission for your child to miss school. Swindon Local Authority advise parents NOT to disadvantage their child's education by taking time off during term time. It is up to the head teacher of your child's school to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised. If the absence is not authorised you risk a £60 (with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012) penalty notice.

Parents wishing to apply for their child to have leave from school should complete this form and return it to school with supporting evidence in writing. At least 2 weeks notice prior to requested leave should be given. The Head teachers will then decide whether the circumstance is deemed 'exceptional'.

#### Parents' Section (please complete one form for each child)

|   |   |             |                  |           |  |
|---|---|-------------|------------------|-----------|--|
| Surname of child                                    |   |             | First name       |           |  |
| Date of birth                                       |   |             | Class            |           |  |
| Surname of parent / carer                           |   |             | First name       |           |  |
| Address of child                                    |   |             |                  |           |  |
| Postcode  |   |             | Telephone number |           |  |
| About the request for your child's leave of absence | Reason for taking absence during term time        |             |                  |           |  |
|   | Supporting evidence details (see attached letter) |             |                  |           |  |
| Length of absence (school days)                     |   | From (date) |                  | To (date) |  |

|                        |  |       |  |
|------------------------|--|-------|--|
| Telephone contact      |  |       |  |
| Parent/Carer signature |  | Date: |  |

### **School Section**

**Request received:.....**  
**(date)**

|  |                  |             |  |           |  |
|--|------------------|-------------|--|-----------|--|
| Requested leave of absence – total school days   |                  | From (date) |  | To (date) |  |
| Attendance this academic year  |                  |             |  |           |  |
| Attendance previous academic year  |                  |             |  |           |  |
| Persistent absence (authorised)  |                  |             |  |           |  |
| Persistent absence (unauthorised)  |                  |             |  |           |  |
| Any absence taken already/booked for future (this academic year)   |                  |             |  |           |  |
| Number of previous applications granted  |                  |             |  |           |  |
| Number of days Approved  | Code:            |             |  |           |  |
| Number of days Not approved  | Code:            |             |  |           |  |
| <b>Swindon Policy states that any unauthorised absence in term time may result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child.</b> |                  |             |  |           |  |
| Date of meeting with parents   |                  |             |  |           |  |
| Head Teacher's signature   |                  |             |  |           |  |
| Absence logged in Register/Sims  | (initial & date) |             |  |           |  |

## CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION FLOW CHART (CME) Schools responsibilities Day 1 – Day 9

