



Cooper Perry Primary School

Attendance Policy

Administrative Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 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.

2. Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason, their attendance so far in the academic year is 90% or above and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent either telephones the school or uploads an absence message on parentmail to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go on a family day out during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of their parents / carers *and* the Headteacher. Therefore, when a request for leave of absence is made by a parent/carer and subsequently taken, even though it has not been approved by the Headteacher, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

When the total number of unauthorised absences reaches 10 sessions (i.e. 5 days' absence) referrals to the Local Authority will be made by the Headteacher to ask them to consider issuing a penalty notice.

2.3 Persistent absence

A child is described as having persistent absence when their attendance falls below 90%.

3. Absence

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 3.2 Parents / carers should endeavour to contact school by Parentmail, e-mail or by telephone on each morning of a child's absence.
- 3.3 Notification may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. If no contact can be made further safeguarding reports may be made.

3.5 Absence due to illness

If you have been notified that your child's attendance has fallen below 90% you will also be informed that any further absences due to illness must be supported by some form of medical evidence. Medical evidence does not need to be a doctors' note; it could, for example, be an appointment card or sight of a prescribed medicine. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to provide this evidence once their child's attendance has fallen below 90%. If a parent does not provide such medical evidence by the time the child has returned to school, then the absence will be deemed unauthorised and automatically recorded on the register as such. Once a child reaches 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence parents will be faced with the possibility of penalty notice proceedings from the Local Authority.

3.6 Repeated unauthorised absences

If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

3.7 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

3.8 In all cases of repeated unauthorised absence parents / carers will be informed by letter if any of the conditions are being met that will result in a referral needing to be made to the Local Authority. You will then be aware of what you need to do to satisfy the authority's requirements and to possibly avoid receiving a Penalty Notice from them. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct.

4. Punctuality

4.1 Registration begins at 8.45am and finishes at 9am; however, the registers can remain open until 9.15am. Registration happens in the classroom and not as the child arrives on the school site.

4.2 If a child arrives in the classroom before 9am, they will be marked as present. If they arrive in school after 9am, but before 9.15am they will be given an authorised late mark (code L).

4.3 If a child arrives in school after 9.15am, they must be accompanied by their parent / carer who must sign them in at the school office giving a reason for the lateness. Lateness after 9.15am will be given an unauthorised late mark (code U). The only exception to this will be late arrival due to a medical appointment, which will be given an authorised absence mark (code M).

4.4 Persistent lateness: when a child has been late (arriving after 9am) on more than 10 occasions, not due to medical appointments, then the parent / carer will be notified by letter that the privilege of having authorised late arrivals is withdrawn rendering all future late arrivals unauthorised (code U).

- 4.5 Persistent unauthorised lateness: when a child has been registered with unauthorised lateness on more than 10 occasions the school will refer the matter to the Local Authority who may wish to issue a Penalty Notice.

5. Requests for leave of absence

- 5.1 Leave of absence during term time is not permitted unless under exceptional circumstances – in line with DfE (2024) ‘Working together to improve school attendance.’

The school follows Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices (2024), this includes a range of letters advising parents / carers of their legal responsibility in relation to their child’s attendance.

- 5.2 Where a child has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the Local Authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.
- 5.3 The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to complete the Request for Leave of Absence form, at least two weeks prior to the proposed date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.
- 5.4 Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil’s previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not permitted to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.
- 5.5 Procedures for applying
- a) Parents / carers will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. The Headteacher will handle all requests for absence: the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil’s education into account. The Headteacher’s decision is not subject to appeal.
 - b) The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to complete the Request for Leave of Absence form at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence. This form should provide the reason for the proposed absence (with supporting evidence where applicable) and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. Forms can be obtained from the school office or from the school website.

5.6 Exceptional circumstances

- a) The definition of exceptional circumstances is considered on an individual basis.
- b) It is not possible to define exceptional circumstances, but examples of what might be considered as such are:

- Where it is company / organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the organisation.
 - Service personnel returning from / scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
 - Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided, from qualified professionals, such as a doctor.
- c) Where there are other factors which the Headteacher may consider to be exceptional, this may be referred to the Local Authority for advice. The following examples will *not* be considered exceptional; "trip of a lifetime", "special family birthday", "cheaper holiday deal", "visiting relatives abroad".
- d) Even with exceptional circumstances the following factors will be considered before an application for absence is authorised:
- Current level of school attendance including punctuality
 - Current progress being made towards academic targets
 - The time and length of the requested leave of absence
 - The amount of exceptional absence that has been authorised previously

5.7 Consequences of taking an unauthorised holiday

The school will follow the national guidance regarding issuing penalty fines for unauthorised leave in term time (DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance 2024' – Chapter 6)

The changes to the law are introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and came into effect on the 19th August 2024. This means that any unauthorised leave taken after this date will be dealt with under the new Regulations.

6. **Penalty Notices**

New two penalty notice limit in a three-year period

The three-year rolling period starts for parents / carers when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19th August 2024.

The first Penalty Notices for leave in term time will increase to £160 per parent per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment. A third penalty notice **cannot** be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1000.

National threshold for issuing penalty notices

The national threshold for issuing penalty notices has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

However, if an individual case the local authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

When the school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected in every case to consider whether to request the county council issue a penalty notice. Therefore, the council will continue to ask schools to notify them of all unauthorised leave in term time that meets the threshold of 5 school days, and any below this threshold that you want us to consider if it falls within our discretionary powers to issue one.

Refer to [Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices](#).

7. Long-term absence

- 7.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 7.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given tuition outside school.

8. Rewards for good attendance

- The class with the highest weekly attendance within their key stage will have 15 minutes extra play on a Friday.
- Cooper Perry use the [Staffordshire Helpful Heroes campaign](#) to promote good attendance.

9. Attendance targets

Cooper Perry use the DfE View School Attendance Tool to monitor attendance and compare with other schools. We aim to exceed the government attendance target of 95%

10. Monitoring and review

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 10.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 10.3 The rates of attendance will be reported on the school website, and in the annual governors' report.
- 10.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a

particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

10.5 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body annually.

Signed:

[Headteacher]

Date:

Signed:

[Chair of Governors]

Date: