



CLIFTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

'Enjoy and Achieve Together'

Head Teacher L. Jones	Sign and Date	July 22
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Headteacher – Ms L.M.Jones
Chair of Governors – Ms J. Elliott

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education:

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

(Working Together to improve school attendance May 2022)

At Clifton Primary School we do our best to ensure that every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. We will continue to encourage excellent school attendance because we see your child's potential and we know that attending school consistently on a daily basis will provide them with the opportunity to achieve their best outcomes. Our aim is to support our families and reduce absence, including persistent absence through a working partnership with Parents / Carers and the children.

Roles and Responsibilities

Our Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of the policy throughout school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting to governors
- Supporting attendance lead in day to day monitoring of individual pupils

Our Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data across school and at an individual pupil level
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher
- Arranging calls and meetings with Parents / Carers to discuss any issues they be having
- Work alongside education welfare to ensure support is offered at the correct level and escalation is followed as per guidelines.

Class Teacher are responsible for:

- Completing the register accurately for both morning and afternoon session

Parents / Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring attendance at school on a daily basis when school is open
- Ensuring good punctuality at both ends of the school day
- Reporting absence via the correct method as soon as possible – preferably before 9.30am
- Book medical appointments around the school day where possible
- Only request leave of absence in an exceptional circumstance and do so in advance
- Raising concerns they may have around attendance and punctuality with attendance lead.

Legal sanctions:

Clifton Primary School aims to support our families to reduce absence and improve attendance however, there are occasions where legal sanctions are required.

Truancy penalty notice – school will send a warning letter out to parents when a child (of compulsory school age) has 10 or more sessions recorded as unauthorised. These may be 'O' codes or 'U' codes. If attendance does not improve within the next 15 days, then a referral will be sent to the authority. A fixed penalty fine will then be issued.

Holiday penalty notice – this will be issued where your child has 5 or more school days absence to due to a family holiday in term time.

Penalty notices are issued at £60 per parent, per child and should be paid within 21 days of the date of the official letter from the local authority.

Fast track Process – this is a process lasting 12 weeks during which attendance is closely monitored and expected to be 96% from start to finish. Should there be little if any improvement the Parent / Carer will be taken to court under Education Act Sct 444(1) for failing to ensure that a pupil registered at school attends regularly.

What are the times for the school day?

The bell will ring at **8.40am**; this is to signal that the children should be on the playground and ready to enter the building for registration.

The school day ends at **3.15pm**, all EYFS and KS1 children **must** be collected by a responsible adult.

Punctuality

Being on time for school is just as important as regular attendance. Children who are late are often embarrassed by their lateness and this can make it difficult for them to enter the classroom. More importantly they miss valuable lesson time, if this is persistent they can form gaps in their learning.

Children should all be in **school by 8.40am** however the school gates are left open **until 8.55am when registers and the school gate close.**

All children arriving after this time will have to walk round to the office entrance to sign in. This includes Early Years children. Children arriving through the front entrance **before 9.20am should sign in via the Inventory system** will be marked with an **L** mark.

Children arriving after **9.20am** should also sign in via the Inventory system and will be given a **U** mark (unless they have had a medical appointment. Appointment letter or text should be shown to the office) – this records your child's attendance as an unauthorised late, affecting their overall attendance for the Academic Year.

Procedure for persistent late arrival

If your child is late on two or more occasions in a week you will receive a letter with the late arrival stickers attached which will serve to illustrate the amount of learning time lost. This will be repeated the following week if lateness persists. If this continues for two weeks or more consecutively you will be invited in to meet with the Headteacher and Family Support Worker to discuss any issues you are having and how school can help support punctuality for example a parent may be offered a place at Breakfast Club to support.

Failure to improve attendance or non-engagement with the school over punctuality could result in a referral to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer).

Punctuality at the end of the school day is just as important for your child as the morning. All children should be collected at 3.15pm unless they are:

- Attending Clifton Owls or
- Attending an extra-curricular club

If your child is not collected by 3.25pm they will be taken to a classroom close to the school office while we try to make contact with you. When you collect them you will need to sign them out via the Inventory system in the foyer. If you know you are running late e.g. stuck in traffic, please call the school office so that we can reassure your child while they wait.

Persistent late collection will be considered a safeguarding concern and may result in a referral to Bridge social services team.

Why do I have to inform school if my child is going to be absent?

As a parent you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends school on a daily basis. As a school we need to know where your child is for safeguarding reasons and for this reason ALL absences need to have an explanation; unexplained absences are regarded as truancy in line with

government guidelines. Absences can now be reported on the school app via the Absence Reporting tab, you can upload images of medical appointments and medication here too.

- **No explanation on the day = absence coded N on the register**
- **No explanation following text from school or telephone call = unauthorised absence with an O code on the register**
- **Explanation by telephone, email, voicemail (may) = authorised absence indicated by I or C (other authorised circumstance)** All illnesses should be supported with medical evidence where appropriate. This may be an appointment card for the GP or medication prescribed by the GP.
- **Explanation via a medical appointment card = M**
- **10 unauthorised sessions i.e. 5 school days (includes O and U) = A Fixed Penalty Warning will be issued and an invitation to meet with Mrs Shepherd and our Education Welfare Officer.**

Should your child's attendance drop below 90% we will ask for you to provide proof of attendance at a GP for all future absences; failure to provide this will result in unauthorised absences being recorded and will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer from Children's Services Early Intervention & Prevention Team for consideration of further action.

Who can authorise an absence from school?

It must be understood that absences **can only be approved by school not parents/carers.**

Absence for reasons such as shopping, visiting relatives, over sleeping are **unacceptable** and **will not be authorised except for extreme circumstances.**

Absence for illness of brother, sister or parent will be deemed **unacceptable** except in exceptional circumstances. Even in exceptional circumstances only **one day's** authorised absence will be granted.

As a parent/carer it is your duty not your child's to ensure that your child attends school on a regular basis and that they arrive on time.

How do I let school know my child is going to be absent?

Absences can be reported to school in several ways

- Verbal communication by the parent/carer to the class teacher/or a member of staff
- A telephone call to the school office before 9.30am on the first day of absence, telephone 0161 921 1845. If you call before 8.15am you will be able to leave a voice mail.
- Via the school app
- By email – clifton.primaryschool@salford.gov.uk / ellen.shepherd@salford.gov.uk

If you do not contact school, you will be contacted by Mrs. Shepherd (Attendance Lead) the main office staff in her absence. This will be by telephone or our text service; it is **vital** that we have up to date contact numbers for parents/carers at all times.

If there is no contact between school and home then members of school staff will endeavour to visit the home address of the child.

What if my child has an appointment during the day?

Of course we understand that appointments during the school day cannot always be avoided but we ask that if you are arranging appointments please try to arrange them outside of school hours, or during the school holidays.

If you do need to take your child out of school during the school day please let us know in advance and provide us with an appointment card. This can be done via the school app in the Absence Reporting tab.

Holidays / Leave of Absence

A term time leave of absence will only be granted for Exceptional Circumstances and will be considered on an individual basis. A family holiday does not come into this and **will not** be granted authorised leave of absence, this will incur a penalty notice being issued.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- **Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling** – School will use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled.
- **Sudden loss of housing** through eviction or domestic violence- up to a maximum of 3 days.
- **Serious illness of a close relative** – only if Head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional and absence is necessary.
- **Out of school programmes** such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA – where appropriate.
- **Time- off relating to Child Entertainment Performances**, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service
- **Religious observance** – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”.
- **Weddings of parents and siblings** – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Head Teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Head Teacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Whilst each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child, it is unlikely that school will grant more than three days. In such circumstances (e.g. Weddings abroad) invites will need to be shared with school.

What are not considered exceptional circumstances?

- **Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative**, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- **Pilgrimages by parents** (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- **Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.**

Procedure

- Leave of Absence in term time for all children must be requested in advance where you are able. This can be done via the school app using the Leave of Absence request tab.
- The Head Teacher/Deputy/Attendance Lead will then consider if the leave can be considered as an exceptional circumstance.
- Further information may be requested to confirm shift patterns / exceptional circumstance where appropriate.
- Should the request be declined and the Parent/Carer continues to take the leave / holiday, the absence will be marked **as unauthorised, 'G' code**. This will lead to a request being made to the Local Authority for the implementation of a fixed penalty fine. This will be dependant on the length of absence. In accordance with the Local Authority code of practise a fine can be implemented for 5 days unauthorised absence which can be accumulative over the academic year.
- When paid within 21 days of receipt the fine is £60 per parent, per child, this will become £120 if paid within 28 days.

What about Religious observance?

Your child is allowed time off for religious observance but their absence will be authorised only for the days of observance and not extended time around it. Please complete a leave of absence form beforehand so that the correct code can be entered on the register.

A word of thanks to the many families who support our Attendance Policy by maintaining regular attendance, good punctuality and the high standards we expect from our children.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of our policy on school attendance please feel free to contact Ms. Jones (Head Teacher) or Mrs. Shepherd who will be happy to explain our procedures further.

A few facts and figures for you

- * In total there are 175 NON school days in a calendar year
- * 10 days of absence = 95% attendance
- * 19 days of absence = 90% attendance
- * 29 days of absence = 85% attendance
- * 8 sessions of unauthorised absence = a letter home to alert you of the situation
- * 10 sessions of unauthorised absence = fixed penalty warning from local authority
- * Further unauthorised absence = appearance in court and fine of upto £2,500
- * 5 minutes late every day for school adds up to over 3 days lost each year
- * 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year
- * 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year

If your child attends school regularly they are more likely to get on in life

**If your child regularly misses school they are more likely to become involved in anti-social
behaviour**

(<http://www.salford.gov.uk/truancy.htm>)