



Attendance Policy

Approved by:

Date

Last reviewed : 01.09.25

Next review due by: 01.09.27

Introduction

Clifford Road Primary School and Nursery acknowledges there are clear links between:

- Attendance and attainment
- Attendance and safeguarding

The school is committed to providing a high-quality education for all its pupils. By attending school every day and on time children and young people can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility to ensure good school attendance and all have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

This policy applies to all children registered at Clifford Road Primary School and Nursery and is based on current Government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it.

The school encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that “parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly” Education Act 1996.

Clifford Road Primary School uses the Local Authority recommended attendance codes. (**Appendix 1**)

Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Throughout this policy Clifford Road Primary School aims to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve **at least** 95% attendance (DfE minimal standard) for all pupils, apart from those with acute or chronic health issues.

- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to non-statutory school age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)
- It also refers to:
 - [School census guidance](#)
 - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
 - [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

School's Responsibilities

All Clifford Road Primary School and Nursery staff place a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality. Staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:

- Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately.
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence).
- Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care.
- Promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school).
- Develop positive and supportive relationships with parents/carers and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance responsibilities:

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school.
- Liase with the Headteacher to provide updates and strategic oversight to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to attendance management

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Vincia Whitehouse** and can be contacted via **01473 251605** or **VWhitehouse@clifford.school**

Responsibility of Parents/Carers

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. This will then lead to their future life chances being hindered where they may find thriving in adult life challenging.

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day and on time
- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:00am or as soon as possible on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return. Parents can report an absence on ParentMail via the Absence tab or telephoning the school office and leaving a message on the dedicated absence line on 01473 251605 (option 0 followed by option 1)
- To provide medical evidence, if requested, on the child's return to school.
- 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. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the class teacher, senior leader for attendance or the Headteacher

Registration and Punctuality

At Clifford Road Primary School and Nursery, we recognise that attendance registers are legal documents and must be completed with accuracy and consistency. Registers are taken promptly at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions and are available for inspection by authorised personnel during school hours. Morning registration also serves as an important opportunity to warmly welcome pupils, help them settle for the day ahead, and share any updates or changes to the usual routine.

- **School gates open** at 8:30am and **close** at 8:40am. Any pupils arriving after this time must report to the school office to sign in.
- **Morning registration:** 8:40
- **Any child arriving after 8.50am** will be counted as late (after the register has closed) which will be counted as an unauthorised absence on the child's attendance record

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an unauthorised absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- day trips;
- any other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Reporting absence

Parents are expected to:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:00am or as soon as possible on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return. Parents can report an absence on ParentMail via the Absence tab or telephoning the school office and leaving a message on the dedicated absence line on 01473 251605 (option 0 followed by option 1)
- To provide medical evidence, if requested, on the child's return to school.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer. Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:00am.

Illness/Medical Absences

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card or text, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc. In the case of a chronic illness or other long term illness issue then a letter or note from the GP or other health professional to state the child is not fit for school or stating the times and days each week the child will be fit for school will be required. This will give clarity to both the school and the child, plus the parent/carer. The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday or if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

If a child has had sickness and/or diarrhoea, they must stay off school **48 hours** after their symptoms disappear to prevent the spread of illness, even if they appear to feel better before the **48 hour** period has ended.

Term-Time Holiday / Absences

Parents/carers are expected to take their child(ren) on holiday during the 14 weeks' school holidays to minimise the impact of their child(ren) missing their education. Parents/carers requesting a term time holiday must complete a Leave of Absence Request Form in advance of the trip (at least 3 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Senior Leadership Group. **(Appendix 2)**

Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. If, however, parents apply to the school in advance the school may authorise some absence but only in exceptional circumstances.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.

- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (3 weeks prior).

Unexplained Absence

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular monitoring of all pupil's attendance is carried out by the **designated senior leader responsible for attendance**. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays etc. will be contacted by the attendance lead and will be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

Persistent Latecomers

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after the register has closed are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect their child's attendance figures. Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after the times of 8.50am or 1.10pm.

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8.50am or after 1.10pm will be brought to the attention of the attendance lead, who will invite parents to attend a meeting in school to discuss the persistent lateness.

Attendance monitoring

Attendance will be regularly monitored by the Attendance Lead. At specific attendance thresholds, different actions will be taken to support and improve attendance:

Attendance level	School Action
96% - 100%	Attendance will be praised and encouraged to continue
94%	Class teacher will contact parents to discuss the drop and to offer support to increase the attendance
92%	A formal letter will be sent home to raise awareness of the concern (appendix 3)
90% or below	Pupil is now classed as Persistently Absent • Vincia Whitehouse (attendance lead) will contact the family • A meeting will be arranged, with home visits where necessary (appendix 4) • An attendance agreement will be created alongside the parent/carers.
80% or below	This would now be classified as Severe Absence • Intensified intervention, including multi-agency support • Early Help referrals may be initiated

Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the reasons for absences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Fixed Penalty Fines & Court

A Fixed Penalty Notice fine may be issued when 10 or more unauthorised absence sessions (not necessarily consecutively) have occurred (a total of 5 school days) in a rolling 10 school week period.

If parents/carers choose to take their child(ren) on a term-time holiday without the Senior Leadership Group's authorisation, the child(ren)'s absences will be marked as unauthorised.

The Fixed Penalty Notice is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, or £160 per parent, per child if paid between after 21 days but before 28 days (for the first offence)

For a second offence within a 3 year period the charge is: £160 per parent, per child

Subsequent offences may be referred to the Local Authority for legal action. In these cases, an Education Welfare Officer will be asked to investigate and will decide with the school what the best course of action should be.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	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	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday 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 is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
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 that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
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, there is 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



Absence Request Form

Head Teachers have been given the following directive by the Suffolk Director for Children & Young People, regarding requests for holiday/absence during term time.

Clifford Road Primary School & Nursery will consider every application individually; our policy is to **NOT** grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**.

An application must be made on the form overleaf, with appropriate evidence and returned to the school office **at least three weeks in advance** of the absence.

We will consider authorising holidays for:

- Service personnel
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis e.g. bereavement
- Religious Observance.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons **will not** be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of holiday
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked without knowledge of term dates (regardless of who made the booking).

We will **NOT** authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS.

If permission is refused and your child is absent for the dates requested or reported as unwell, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and medical evidence will be requested.

The Education Attendance Service, on behalf of Clifford Road Primary School & Nursery, may issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) when **10 or more unauthorised absence sessions (not necessarily consecutively) have occurred (a total of 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period.**

The penalty is payable to the Local Authority (details for the payment will be contained in the notice).

The amount of the penalty for the **First Offence** is:

- **£160 per parent**, per child paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice.
- **Reduced to £80 per parent**, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice.

Please read our Attendance Policy for further information and subsequent offence details.

Cieran Dadds
Head Teacher

Absence Request Form

For the Parents to fill in:

I would like to request a Leave of Absence for:

Name:	Class:	School:

Please inform us if you have a child in another local school – we will need to contact the school to discuss the absence request. Please note, we will need to share information about your child with the other school.

First Day of Absence:	Last Day of Absence:	Total School Days:

Please give a reason for the absence:

Parent 1	Parent 2
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Postcode:	Postcode:
Email Address:	Email Address:
Signed:	

Please return this form to the school office at least **three weeks** before absence starts.

For the School to fill in:

Attendance record: _____%

Date Received: ____/____/20____

Authorised:	Reason:
Unauthorised:	
FPN: Y / N	

Other Authorised Circumstances	Family Holiday: Not agreed	Medical: Evidence seen	Unauthorised Circumstances	Religious Observance
C	G	M	O	R

Appendix 3

[Date]

To the Parent/Carer of [Child's Full Name]

[Child's Class/Year Group]

Re: Attendance Concern – [Child's Name] (Current Attendance: 92%)

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

I am writing to follow up on our ongoing concerns regarding [Child's Name]'s school attendance, which currently stands at 92%.

You may recall that [Class Teacher's Name], [Child's Name]'s class teacher, has already been in contact with you to offer support and discuss how we can work together to improve attendance. Despite this conversation, we have not yet seen an improvement.

While we fully understand that children may occasionally be unwell or absent for valid reasons, regular school attendance is vital for academic progress, social development, and overall wellbeing. Attendance below 95% is monitored closely, and at 92%, [Child's Name] is missing a significant amount of valuable learning time.

At this stage, we are not initiating formal attendance procedures, but we want to highlight the importance of addressing this early. We are keen to work in partnership with you to identify any barriers and offer appropriate support.

If there are any underlying issues that are affecting [Child's Name]'s ability to attend regularly, please let us know so we can help. We would be happy to arrange a meeting or phone call at your convenience.

We will continue to monitor [Child's Name]'s attendance over the coming weeks. Should it continue to decline or not show improvement, we may need to take further steps in line with our attendance policy.

Thank you for your attention and support.

Kind regards,

Vincia Whitehouse

Attendance Lead

Appendix 4:

Re: Persistent Absence – Attendance Meeting for [Child's Name]

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

I am writing to express our serious concern regarding [Child's Name]'s school attendance, which has now fallen below **90%**, placing them in the category of **Persistent Absence** as defined by the Department for Education.

As you are aware, [Class Teacher's Name] has already contacted you regarding these concerns and to offer support. Unfortunately, despite this, [Child's Name]'s attendance has not improved and continues to impact their education and progress.

We would now like to invite you to an **attendance meeting** to discuss the situation in more detail and to work together on a plan to improve [Child's Name]'s attendance. The meeting will be held in school, on:

Date:

Time:

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Explore any underlying issues that may be contributing to [Child's Name]'s absences
- Offer support where appropriate
- Set clear expectations for improved attendance
- Discuss the potential next steps if attendance does not improve, which may include formal intervention in line with the local authority's attendance policy

If you are unable to attend this meeting at the proposed time, please contact the school office as soon as possible so that we can arrange an alternative.

We are committed to supporting [Child's Name] and your family in overcoming any difficulties that may be preventing regular school attendance. Your cooperation is essential in ensuring your child's success.

Kind regards,

Vincia Whitehouse
Attendance Lead