

# Attendance Policy



## CAPENHURST C.E. (CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mrs Claire Green

Reviewed: September 2023

## **Introduction**

Capenhurst is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **Importance of regular attendance**

### **Learning**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **Safeguarding**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

Attendance

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety

Access to the Curriculum

Anti-bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## **Promoting regular attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter and encourage attendance from all children.
- Where attendance of individual pupils begins to cause concern, a letter detailing current attendance rates and the need for them to improve will be sent home.
- When a child becomes at risk of developing a pattern of persistent absenteeism, families will be notified and invited to meet with the headteacher to discuss ways school and home can work together to improve the attendance of the pupil with targets set for attendance raters thereafter.

## **The legal positions**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special education needs he/she may have*

*Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regards to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

### **Types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/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 given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions such as 'fixed penalty notices' and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteesim (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. School will also consult with the local authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through the School Information system (SIMS), including potential impact on attainment and progress. Advice may be sought from the EWO if there is persistent absence. There will be an expectation that attendance improves.

## **Absence procedures**

### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and give a clear reason for the absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the headteacher if absences persist;
- Seek advice from the Local Authority EWO if patterns of attendance/absence cause concern.

## **Telephone numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. It is essential that always have an up-to-date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. Contact details are reviewed at the start of the school year. If you move house or change contact details, it is your responsibility to inform school of the changes immediately.

## **Local Authority Education Welfare Officer**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may seek advice from the EWO from Cheshire West and Chester. School will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, sanctions may be sought such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court through the EWO at Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

## **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they will miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.55am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present

mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Term time holidays**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in term time to go on holiday. School will not authorise any term time holidays unless in exceptional circumstances. These are reserved for families of service personnel. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

### **Working together to secure good attendance for each child**

We believe our pupils are entitled to receive excellent schooling and teaching when they attend Capenhurst CE Primary School. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be shared in the school's weekly newsletter.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.