



Attendance Policy and Procedures

Ratified on 23rd January 2019

Policy Authorisation

Authorised Date	By	Version
January 2018	Full Governors	1.0
January 2019	Full Governors	1.1

Review Date	Changes Made	Next Review
		January 2019
January 2019	Penalty notice statements p6 & appendix A p10 in line with Churchill Family position statement.	January 2020
September 2020	Staffing changes made Contact details changed (telephone number) Changes to 'Reporting triggers summary table'	September 2021
November 2021	Changes to Appendix A regarding holiday absence	November 2022

Purpose

The aim of this policy is bring together external requirements and legislation with the ethos and vision of Carville Primary School. This policy provides a framework and guidance for all staff and parents to encourage pupils to attend school regularly so that they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a *minimum* of 96%
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Ensure attendance has a high profile by linking it to specific roles and responsibilities, rewards and celebrations.
- Review attendance regularly and act if attendance drops, or as a school we have a cause for concern.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's Home School Agreement, which parents must sign following their child's admission to a school (statutory).

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

Parents and legally recognised carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at school. Holidays should be taken during the school holiday period.

Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we

will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information related to attendance in our regular newsletters
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- reward good or improving attendance through class competition, certificates and rewards
- set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these around school
- run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together to develop our school community

Roles and responsibilities of head teacher, other staff, governors

Mr. A. Qualters, Deputy Headteacher, will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. Alongside Mr. R. Harker, Headteacher, he will also ensure that attendance is recorded accurately and analysed and that attendance issues are identified at an early stage so that support can be put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

The **Head Teacher** will ensure that:

- Attendance targets are set for individual pupils, classes and year groups
- School attendance statistics are reported to the LA and governing body
- Pupils absent for long periods because of ill-health receive appropriate learning support
- Vulnerable children (e.g. Looked After Children or under Child Protection Plan) will be monitored maintaining confidentiality.

The **Attendance Administrator/Deputy Head teacher** will ensure that:

- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Parents and carers are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised on a first day response system
- Pupil attendance and lateness are monitored regularly
- The reward system for good attendance is implemented
- The LA officer is provided with registers of attendance and supported in the following up of long-term absences.
- Parents/carers will receive a letter at the end of each half-term highlighting their child's attendance percentage.

All **Teachers** are expected to:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- Attend school regularly
- Ensure they are punctual and ready to learn when they arrive on school premises.

Parents and carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parent and carers will be asked to:

- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Ensure the child attends school regularly and on time.
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance and every subsequent day.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance (exceptional circumstances): In the case of a planned absence, parents/carers must obtain a leave of absence request which may be authorised by the head teacher depending upon the circumstance surrounding the absence. **Leave of absence requests received during term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.**
- Engage with any measures deemed necessary to support good attendance (**see Appendix A**)

The **governing body** will ensure that the LA is informed about long-term absence of pupils and challenge the school in meeting attendance targets.

Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8:55am, and again for the afternoon session at 1:15 pm.

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8:55am and all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time.**
- All lateness is recorded daily and coded *L*.
- Significant lateness, after the close of registration, will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with North Tyneside and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.**

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies.

What to do if my child is absent?

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, and no later than 9:30am.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child’s safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Administrator and Deputy Headteacher if absences persist.
- Follow the process in the reporting triggers table below.

Ten days’ absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of missing*. Children’s Services staff may visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment as attendance falls. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. Children whose attendance falls below

93% will be placed on an Attendance Improvement Plan. For a monitoring period, typically half a term, absence will not be authorised without proof of medical reason.

Should attendance fall below 90% school may make a penalty notice request to North Tyneside Council. This will give families 4 weeks to improve attendance or a penalty notice will be issued resulting in a fine of at least £60.

Reporting triggers summary table

Below 96% Letter 1 – reworded – to show acknowledgment of drop in attendance. No meeting required	Informal monitoring
Below 93% Letter 2 – invite in to discuss continued drop in attendance, place on Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP)	Formal Monitoring for four weeks through AIP
During monitoring period, all absences to be ‘O’ unless med evidence supplied	If no improvement/drops below 90% issue letter 3 and request PNWL
10 ‘O’s trigger letter 3 and issue PNWL	4 week monitoring period
IF improved keep monitoring and extend AIP, if no improvement request PN	No improvement request further PN If improves continue to monitor and extend AIP

Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in North Tyneside Council’s *Penalty Notice Protocol*, parents/carers may be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action.

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 taking children out during school time.

Parents **will** be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from the school.

Exceptional circumstances for authorisation of leave of absence request

Exceptional circumstances are those where it is deemed necessary to remove a child from education as the activity entered into cannot possibly take place during school holidays.

If you believe that your child's absence is deemed to be exceptional circumstances you will need to complete a leave of absence form. These are available from the school. You will need to include supporting evidence wherever possible. You will need to hand the form into the school office before any leave is taken.

The Head Teacher and/or governing body will consider your form and decide whether or not to accept your request due to exceptional circumstances.

Understanding types of absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised
- **Unauthorised absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Carville Primary School and North Tyneside Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

- The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance

- The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid North Tyneside Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance.

For national guidance refer to: *Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance*, which covers legal measures for non-attendance:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-andattendance.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years.

Pupil Attendance
A Guide for Parents/ Carers

Education is one of the most important gifts we can give our pupils at Carville. In order to support your child and enable them to receive the best education possible, we continually look at ways to improve attendance levels and provide the best opportunities for learning and progress for your child. We would like to remind parents and carers, of the school procedures to follow relating to your child's attendance at school.

Starting and Finishing the School Day

Being on time is very important – not just in school but in all walks of life.

- Pupils need to be in school ready to start the day at **8:55am**. We have a free breakfast club in school from 8:10am for children who are 5 or over.
- If you know you are going to be late, **please contact the school office on 200 7236** as soon as possible to let us know that your child is going to be late.
- Any child who arrives after this time **must** report to the office. For pupils younger than Year 5, an adult must accompany them and inform the office of the reason for arriving late.
- Any child that arrives **after** 9am will receive an 'L' – Late mark.
- The school day finishes at 3:15pm. Please contact the school office on 200 7236 to inform us if you are running late or if there is a change in collection arrangements for your child.

Absence

Every child at Carville is expected to have an attendance level of at least 96%.

ANY time missed from school is an **ABSENCE** and **WILL REDUCE** your child's overall attendance level in school.

Attendance Rate %	Days Missed
100%	0
95%	10
90%	19
85%	29

In ALL cases of absence, we would appreciate parents and carers co-operation with the following:

- Contact school by 9:30am at the latest on each day of absence by calling **0191 234 2676** or emailing carville.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk . Please state the **specific reason** for absence and when you expect your child to return.
- Only keep your child away from school if really necessary.
- Where possible, please book routine appointments outside of school time. We appreciate this may not be possible for emergency appointments, however we would like to ask that these are booked outside of the registration times of 8:55am and 1:15pm.
- Please speak to your child's class teacher to follow up on any work missed for your child.

The school by law has to enter an absence mark into the register. There are two types – 'Authorised' and Unauthorised'. These absences are reported to North Tyneside Council and the Department for Education who govern schools.

Authorised Absences

- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Medical/ Dental appointments (appointment card/ medical letter **must be** produced)
- ✓ Bereavement
- ✓ Agreed special occasion or exceptional circumstances (a 'Leave of Absence Permission Request' form from the office, must be completed and returned in advance of the leave taken)

Unauthorised Absences

School **cannot** authorise absences for:

- ✗ Absences where no contact is made with school
- ✗ Absences where no reason is provided
- ✗ Going on holiday
- ✗ Getting up late and not wanting to come into school for that day
- ✗ Staying off because a sibling is poorly
- ✗ Keeping your child off because you are ill
- ✗ Children not wanting to come to school
- ✗ Taking the first last day of the week/ term off
- ✗ Visiting relatives
- ✗ Going to the shops or hairdressers
- ✗ Birthdays

IMPORTANT

Any holidays taken during term-time WITHOUT approval on a 'Leave of Absence Permission Request' form BEFORE the leave is taken may result in an automatic Penalty Notice (fine) being issued. Other unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued after considering all current family circumstances.

Working with Parents and Families

Please remember if you are experiencing difficulties with attendance or punctuality, call our school office on 200 7236 for an informal chat, we will do all we can to help and support you. Other ways we can help are:

- Arranging a meeting with Mr Harker – Deputy Head to discuss any concerns/ issues you may be having and access further support. All information is treated in the strictest confidence.
- All parents will receive information every half term with their child's attendance on.
- Providing a free breakfast club, that starts at 8:10am.
- Rewarding children with good or improved attendance.

Rewarding Attendance in School

- Weekly class attendance competitions
- Termly certificates for 100% and excellent attendance above 96%
- Termly letters home to Parents and Carers
- Prizes and treats for 100% termly and end school year attendance.