



Cleves School  
Learning Together

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

Cleves is a successful school and all families have a part to play in maintaining its high reputation. Children obviously need to attend school regularly and punctually. This policy makes you aware of the school's procedures and expectations as far as attendance is concerned.

### Why regular attendance is important:

The curriculum is very carefully planned at Cleves and any absence means that your child will have a 'gap' that it may not be possible to fill. Absence includes late arrival and early departure as well as non-attendance. Regular attendance is key to educational progress and attainment.

### Promoting Regular Attendance:

All members of the Cleves community need to work together in order to ensure a high level of attendance.

### The school undertakes to:

- Publish this policy on our website
- Remind all regularly about attendance in the school newsletter
- Discuss attendance termly at Governors meetings
- Inform parents of any concerns promptly
- Give parents an annual report on their child's attendance with positive feedback if appropriate
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality
- Monitor individual students' attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents when a student fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verification from a professional or other relevant body may be requested
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Officer. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the Education Welfare Officer may result in further actions e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision order

- Meet the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child – by ensuring that whenever possible, students are consulted in all decisions that relate to them

Parents undertake to:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- Ensure that they contact the school before 9.15am on every day of absence, or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Notify the school immediately of any change of contact details
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child

### **More details on absence:**

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments that fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

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 school using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Examples of such types are:

- Birthdays
- Looking after others at home
- Visiting relatives
- Taking long weekends
- Shopping trips
- Special treats
- Viewing sporting events (as opposed to taking part in pre-agreed sporting events)
- Taster Sessions at Secondary Schools (other than Year 6)
- Going on holiday – teachers will NOT provide work for children

School will authorise up to three days PER YEAR for stage auditions/advertisement filming.

If your child is reluctant to attend school for any reason, you should contact the school as soon as possible so that, between us, we can address the problem.

### Medical/dental appointments during school hours

These should be notified in advance to the Welfare Officer via [absence@cleves.co.uk](mailto:absence@cleves.co.uk) and class teacher. Evidence of the appointment (such as a copy of the appointment card/letter) should be given to the Welfare Officer. Where possible (emergencies being the exception) such appointments should be kept to a minimum as many doctors and dentists offer surgeries outside of school times. However, if appointments have to be made during school hours it is expected that the pupil will return promptly after the appointment. If for some reason this is not possible, parents should contact the Welfare Officer to discuss before making the decision not to return to school.

### Early Collection – before the end of the school day

If in an emergency a child needs to be collected from school before the end of the day, and you have not already requested the time from the Welfare Officer, please do not attempt to leave a message at Reception – all absence must be authorised by the Welfare Officer.

### Entrance Exams/Assessment sessions

We appreciate that some pupils will need time to sit entrance exams or assessment sessions, particularly in Year 6. The local secondary schools work closely with us to minimise disruption to our pupils and therefore you should be notified well in advance of such an appointment. A request for absence should be made to the Welfare Officer and class teacher in advance for each exam/assessment, supported by a copy of the appointment letter. It is expected that the child will return to school promptly after the session. Again, if for some reason this is not possible parents should contact the Welfare Officer to discuss the reasons before making a decision not to return to school.

It is the Welfare Officer's responsibility to monitor and authorise requests for absence and attendance. Whilst we ask that you include your class teacher in all such requests so that they are aware of any requested absence, ultimately it is the Welfare Officer's decision to authorise absence on behalf of Cleves School Governors.

### Persistent Absenteeism

Fortunately the vast majority of children at Cleves attend school regularly. If a child's attendance should fall below 90% then their absence is classed as **persistent**. You will have been informed of our concerns and remedial action will be taken. We will work with you to create an action plan to address the problem and will give you all possible support. All cases such as this are made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

### Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you should:

- Contact us before 9.15am on every day of absence by email [absence@cleves.co.uk](mailto:absence@cleves.co.uk) , telephone 01932 224300 (option 2), by written message, or in person
- Send a written explanation with your child upon their return to school

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on every day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.15am
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90%

### **Contact numbers:**

It is important that we have up to date contact numbers in case we need to get in touch with you. Please ensure that you inform the school if your numbers change.

### **Education Welfare Officer:**

If there should be a problem with attendance we would expect you to contact the school at an early stage and work with us to arrive at a solution.

With a more persistent problem, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer. If all efforts to reduce the level of absence fail, Penalty Notices can be given or prosecutions in the magistrates' court pursued.

### **Leaving school during the day**

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time and whether the student is being collected
- Children must sign out on leaving the school in the folder at Reception, and sign back in on their return
- Where a child is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to Reception before leaving the site
- If a child leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate , in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the student as a missing person

### **How we manage lateness**

Children are allowed into school from 8.30am onwards unless they attend Early Risers which starts at 8.00am. Children must be in school by 8.45am. Registers are marked at 8.50am and your child will receive a late mark (L) if they are not registered by 9.00am. After 9.00am your child will be registered with an unauthorised absence (U) for the morning session.

In the afternoon children should be in class at 1.15pm, registers are marked at 1.20pm and your child will receive a late mark if they are not registered by 1.25pm.

The Welfare Officer will contact you if your child is late persistently and the matter may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

### Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school, requiring the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

Pupils identified by Police and Education Welfare Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

### Unauthorised Holiday

**The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head Teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

### Unauthorised Attendance

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised absences during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or education welfare of the child will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### **Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions**

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

### **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

The Police Youth Intervention Officer may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned that they are likely to receive such a notice.

### **Attendance Target**

Our school target for attendance is 96.4%. We hope that you will do your best to support us in achieving this target through placing a high priority on attendance. We monitor absence termly and will address anomalies promptly.

People responsible for attendance

- Welfare Officer
- Deputy Headteacher
- Headteacher

The school must publish its absence figures to parents and must promote attendance. Parents should make sure that children attend school regularly. We should all work together to ensure that children have a high level of attendance.

Reviewed: November 2013

To be reviewed: November 2015