



Calder Vale St. John's CE Primary School Scorton CE Primary School



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Introduction

This is a successful school and every 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 school and home work together to ensure they attend regularly. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open.

National Policy

The school is bound by recent changes to national policies which came into effect on 1 September 2013. Full details of the regulations can be found on the Department for Education website at www.education/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a0022386/regulations-amendments.

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.

Under the terms of the regulations ensuring regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Understanding types of 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 sound 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 permission has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school and requests for leave of absence should be made as far in advance as possible. This will give the school time if it is necessary to request further evidence from parents before making a decision whether or not to authorise the leave

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

Leave in term time will **not** be agreed by the school at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional. 'Exceptional' means that, by the very meaning of the word, an event requiring holiday leave would only occur once or twice in a child's school career

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

In the event that a request has been denied an appeal can be made by formally writing to the Chair of Governors who will forward the matter to the Appeals Committee.

Religious Absence:

The school will authorise one day 'leave' (i.e. the day set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.



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Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent a parent/carer must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone or calling into school

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If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them;
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority School Attendance Team where appropriate in line with the Local Authority protocol.

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 a child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

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:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to parents termly on how the children are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rates are and how these relate to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance in our 'Celebrations' Worship' at the end of term;
- Carry out transition work with pupils before leaving for high school;
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school;
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors;
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance.

Improving Attendance/

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. School may consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality:

- Meetings in school between parents, pupils and the Headteacher;
- Parenting contracts;
- Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/ or referral to outside agencies (including the Local Authority School Attendance Team)
- Attendance panels
- Penalty notices

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we



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need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be given priority consideration, and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils will be tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents will be subject to an Action Plan and all PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority School Attendance Team.

The Local Authority School Attendance Team:

If difficulties cannot be sorted out using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST). They will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, and unauthorised absences persist the case may be referred to the Court Officers, who can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Lateness

The way in which the school keeps and administers its register of pupil attendance is also prescribed in law (*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments*) and lateness can have a significant impact on a pupil's apparent attendance as well as on their work. Consequently, poor punctuality is not acceptable. If children miss the start of the day they can 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, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year would be the same as missing two weeks of school.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect the children to be ready to enter school at that time. Lessons are started by 9am so any child arriving after this time may have missed the introduction to a lesson.

Registers are marked by **9.10am** and a child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. All pupils arriving after this time **MUST** enter school via the main door and **MUST** sign into the book which is held in the office.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a 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 the parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent late record parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or a member of the pastoral support team to resolve the problem, but the school should be approached as soon as possible if there are problems getting a child to school on time.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. It is important that we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. A data update sheet will be sent annually as well as reminders to keep school up to date with any changes through the newsletter.