

**Catshill Middle School and
Catshill First School & Nursery**

Attendance Guidance

Revised: September 2022

To be reviewed: September 2024

Signature:  **Chair of Committee**

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ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE

Introduction:

At Catshill Middle School and Catshill First School & Nursery we are proud of our attendance record. The average attendance for the whole school is around 96%, with many pupils achieving 100% attendance for the whole year. 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.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

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:

- Report to you regularly through meetings and reports on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Reward trips will be linked to good attendance.

Understanding 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 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
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed (exceptional circumstances only).

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 not good 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 Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Prolonged absence for no apparent reason can lead to formal warnings and in some cases, prosecution.

We try to have close liaison with parents when there are difficulties with attendance. There may be legitimate reasons why some pupils become poor attendees and we have a range of strategies in school that we can use to address these issues using our extensive pastoral care system

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of absence by phone, text or email. (Please ensure we have three contact numbers).
- Failure to give a valid reason for an absence will lead to the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

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 our Attendance Officer and/or Head of School if absences persist;

Medical Appointments:

Pupils who miss a school session because of a medical appointment are recorded as being absent (authorised). If a pupil comes into school first, however, then they will receive their mark in the register.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses 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, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. All late arrivals are noted in the register. Any pupil who arrives after the register closes at 9.20am is marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session. At Catshill Middle School pupils

arriving after 8.55am (the start of period 1) are marked as late in the register and receive three behaviour points if there is no valid reason for the lateness. Pupils arriving between 8.45 and 8.55am are noted in the late book which is circulated to Pastoral Leaders on a weekly basis. Pupils who are in the late book on three occasions in one week will receive three behaviour points. Parents will be informed of persistent lateness via their child's planner or by letter. At Catshill First School this is monitored daily by the admin team and senior leaders.

Holidays in Term Time:

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 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 school time to go on holiday.

The Government has recently made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 1st September 2013. These state that Headteachers may not authorise holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is authorised.

Unauthorised leave may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice. Payment of a Penalty Notice, if paid within 21 days is £60 per child, per adult. If you do not pay within 21 days, the fine is increased to £120 and you have a further 7 days to make payment in full. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice within the total 28 day period could result in the commencement of criminal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The schools work closely with the Education Investigation Service (Babcock Prime) to follow appropriate protocols regarding absence, fines and investigations.

The Law relating to attendance

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 educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard 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.