

The
Coombes
CE Primary School

Attendance Policy



Date: October 2019
Review Date: October 2020

A love of learning grows here

Vision

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(A farmer went out to sow his seed. Mark 4: 3-8)

The Coombes vision is about growing. Here we grow to

Love learning

Be the best we can

Respect and care for each other

Serve our community

Look after our environment

This School has a Christian foundation and our vision and values are based on this. We seek to achieve academic excellence and provide the good conditions described by Jesus Christ in the parable of the sower where each child can grow and thrive. We aim to see each child grow in character, confidence and understanding, grow in appreciation of who they are and acquire the skills needed to succeed in a changing world.

| <i>How The Coombes' Vision Impacts Pupil Premium Groups</i> | |
|---|---|
| <i>Love learning</i> | <i>The design of a curriculum based upon Knowledge, Communication and Well-being which directly targets the barriers to learning of our most vulnerable pupils. If learning is enjoyed children they will be more motivated to come to school</i> |
| <i>Be the best we can</i> | <i>Work with parents to ensure that attendance is good and lost learning is addressed</i> |
| <i>Respect and care for each other</i> | <i>Educating parents to ensure that they understand that it is their role to ensure that their child's right to have access to a full time education is respected</i> |
| <i>Serve our community</i> | <i>Children are to learn that they are responsible for their learning and as part of the school community they are required to show a commitment to the expectations of the community</i> |

This school's Attendance Policy is based upon the requirements contained within the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Department for Education Guidance as from time to time issued in respect of school attendance matters

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Introduction

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their child receives an efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The Supreme Court as determined that 'regular' attendance means that which is "**in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school**" (Isle of Wight Council v Platt) (6th April 2017)

Commitment to Attendance

The staff of The Coombes CE Primary School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, pupils, governors, trustees of the Keys Academy Trust and the Local Authority, to provide an education of the highest standard for all our children. Regular attendance is essential to achieving this. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we encourage parents to ensure their children achieve the maximum possible attendance and any issues that may prevent this are brought to the attention of school staff promptly. Clear expectations of daily attendance and routines that support children to achieve this, at an early age, will help pupils throughout their school life.

Expectations

We expect all pupils to:

- Attend school every day unless they are prevented from doing so by unavoidable reason;
- Arrive at school on time;
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day; and
- Talk to their parent/carer, class teacher or an appropriate member of staff if they are worried about anything that may affect their school attendance.

Definition of a Parent:

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child (having care of child means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child) is considered to be a parent in education law.

We expect all parents/carers to:

- Encourage daily school attendance throughout the academic year and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Advise school by 0930, on the first and any subsequent days, if their child is going to be absent, giving the reason for absence;
- Arrange non-urgent medical and dental appointments outside school hours or during the school holidays;

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- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**, in which case Leave of Absence must be requested in advance;
- Contact school promptly should a problem occur that may prevent their child from attending school;
- Notify the school of any changes in home circumstances that might affect their child;
- Notify school immediately of any changes to phone numbers, home address or emergency contact details;
- Ensure they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy and their legal responsibilities with regard to their child's education.

School staff will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parent's/carer's concerns;
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- Contact parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received by 1000, to explain the absence;
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Should no explanation be received by the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. 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, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested;
- Regularly inform parents/carers of the percentage attendance of all pupils (parent's evenings, end of year reports etc.);
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly;
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further cautions, e.g. a Penalty notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order;
- Notify the Education Welfare Service after 10 days unexplained absence and after 15 days of consecutive sickness absence;

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Pupils Leaving During the School Day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- Parents/carers should arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time;
- Pupils must be signed out at reception on leaving the school and signed back in on their return;
- When a pupil is being collected from school, parents/carers are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site;
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers 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 pupil as a missing person or contact Social Services.

Punctuality/Lateness

It is crucial that children arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils and parents/carers the grounds are open at 0835.

- Registration takes place at 0850 and pupils who arrive after 0850 will be recorded as late to school;
- Registers close at 0920 and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (This could lead to prosecution by the local authority if the problem persists);
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will initially be followed up by school staff and if not resolved will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Changing Schools

It is important that if parents/carers decide to send their child to a different school, they must inform the school in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next;
- The address of the new school;
- A new home address.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school and notification sent to the Local Authority. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to Education Welfare Service following 'reasonable efforts' to contact the family and after four weeks the pupil will be registered with Educational Welfare as a pupil missing education.

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Elective Home Education

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their children receive a suitable full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law allows parents/carers to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school. This is known as Elective Home Education (EHE).

Should parents/carers wish to follow this route they are required to put this in writing to the Head Teacher requesting that their child is removed from the school roll. School will then inform the EHE Officer, in writing, who will make contact with the family and ensure that education is 'suitable and efficient'.

Leave of Absence

- The school holiday dates, INSET days and SATs dates are published with sufficient notice.
- Only in 'exceptional' circumstances will leave of absence in term time be authorised. This is per current Department for Education guidance.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Welfare Service may be notified.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the school accepts the explanation offered as a satisfactory justification for the absence or has given approval in advance.

Unauthorised absence is when the school does not accept an explanation as being reasonable justification for the absence, or when no explanation has been provided despite a written request being sent to parents/carers, or when the Head Teacher has not approved a parent's/carer's request for leave of absence.

Parents/carers should be aware that it is the Head Teacher's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

In the case of long term or frequent absences due to illness or a medical condition, supporting medical evidence may be requested. This could be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip from a doctor's surgery or a copy of a prescription. (Please note that the school is not asking any parent/carer to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for any cost.)

Penalty Notices for Holiday

- The Head Teacher can request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for five or more days' unauthorised holiday. Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per pupil.
- 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 is then obliged to prosecute for the original offence of non-school attendance.

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Penalty Notices

In addition to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised leave, Penalty Notices may also be issued if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

As of September 2019, the Penalty Notice & Code of Conduct states that Penalty Notices will also be issued for:

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period;
- 10 unauthorised lates in a 10-week period;
- Persistent unauthorised absences during a 4 week period; and/or
- A pupil found in a public place whilst excluded.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

If concerns regarding attendance arise, the school will make initial contact with the parent/carer to resolve any issues that may be preventing regular school attendance. Should no improvement be seen or the concerns remain, the matter will be escalated within the school. Where all attempts to improve attendance have been exhausted, the school will refer to the Education Welfare Service.

Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996, says:

“If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence”.

If the reasons given for your child’s irregular school attendance are not satisfactory, then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the Law. This may result in:

- A Fixed Penalty Notice payable up to **£120** fine;
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**;
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or sentenced to a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.**

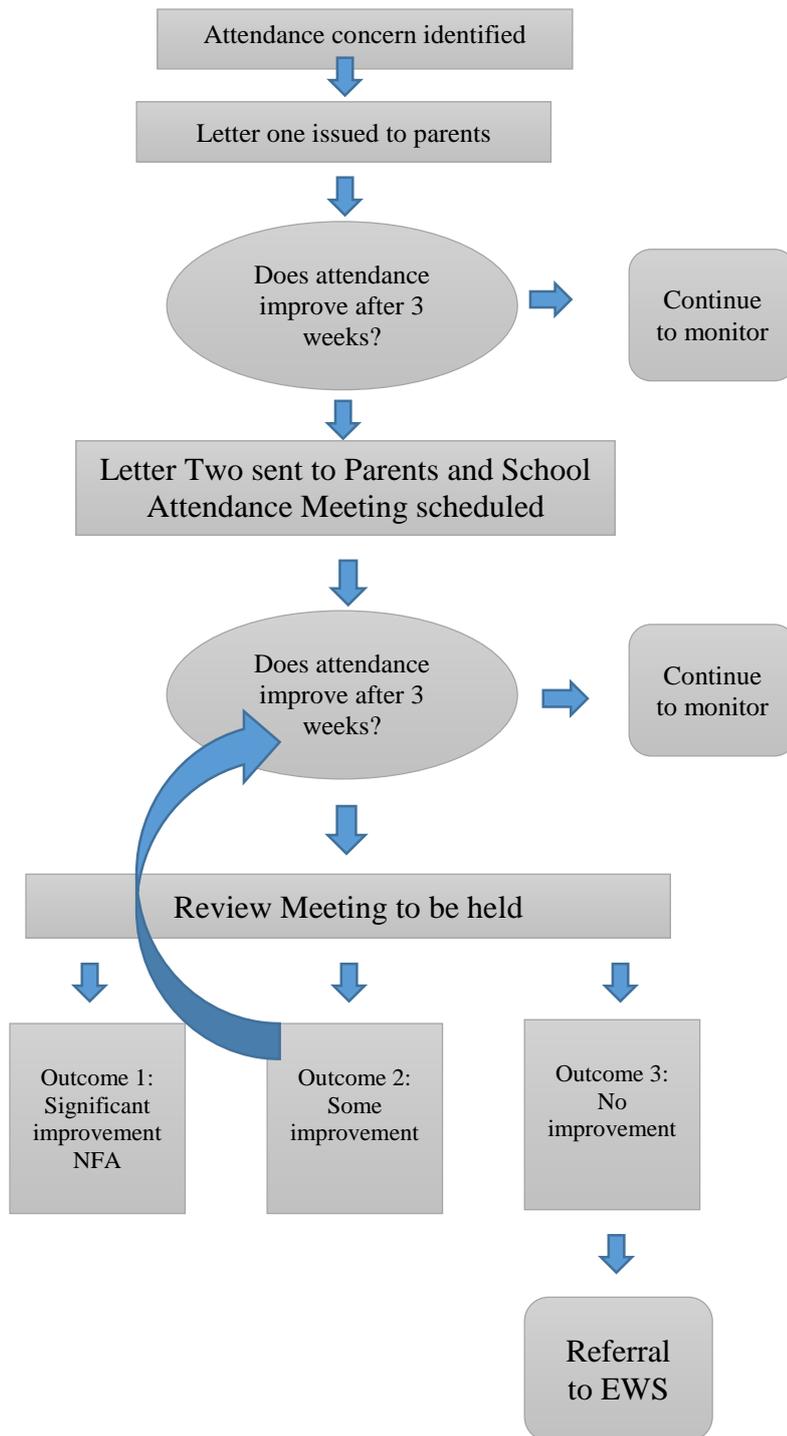
Appendix 1: School Attendance Process

Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Request Form

Appendix 3: CME

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Appendix 1: School Attendance Process



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Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Request Form
LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM - THE COOMBES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Department for Education has advised schools to only authorise leave of absence in 'exceptional' circumstances, hence School will not approve any absence in term time, except in such circumstances. The Headteacher will determine whether the reason given for requesting leave of absence is exceptional or not. Please also note that there is no automatic right to take holidays in term time nor will your child/ren's overall attendance affect the Headteacher's decision.

Please complete the section below and return to school at least one month before the requested absence. School will endeavour to respond to your request within one week. If your request for leave of absence is approved your child will be expected to collect and complete all missed work. Please note that taking your child away during the school term is detrimental to their educational progress.

If leave of absence is taken without approval, this information will be passed to our Education Welfare Officer and a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning. Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 per parent / carer per child; between 22 and 28 days it is £120. Penalty notices are issued to each parent, per child. Further details are available on the Wokingham Council website or from the Education Welfare Service. If the fine is not paid by the 28-day deadline, the matter will be taken to court.

Pupil's name.....Date of Birth.....Year/Class

Pupil's name.....Date of Birth.....Year/Class

Pupil's name.....Date of Birth.....Year/Class

Reason for leave of absence in term time: (This must be completed) If the absence is for religious observance, please include the name and contact details of your place of worship.

Absence Period from (1st day of absence).....to (return date to school).....

Number of school days to be missed

Full Name of Parent / Carer 1

Full Name of Parent / Carer 2.....

Signature/s of Parent/s / Carer/s.....Date:.....

School use only

Entered onto SIMS: Yes No Code used:

This request for leave of absence is Approved Not Approved

Signed:.....Name:.....Date:.....

Appendix 3: CME

By using the hyperlink code below, you are welcome to read the government guidelines regarding children missing education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

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