

CAVERSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Reviewed: February 2025
Next Review: February 2026

Introduction

This policy sets out attendance and punctuality expectations and applies to all children at Caversham Primary School.

The Importance of Good Attendance

All children of compulsory school age (the term following their 5th birthday) are entitled to a full-time education suitable for their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education and by registering at Caversham Primary School they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends regularly.

The school aims to provide a positive, calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn. The school aims to work together with families, staff and other professionals towards good attendance and the related attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Good attendance allows the school the best opportunity to safeguard children, identify their needs and provide support.

'at Key Stage 2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard.'

(DfE 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' 2022)

The Co-Headteachers have responsibility for the strategic approach and can be contacted via the school office admin@cavershamprimary.reading.sch.uk

The attendance process at a glance

95 - 100% = Attendance is good to excellent

90- 94.9% = Attendance is cause for concern and will be monitored closely.

Below 90% = Attendance is causing significant concern and deemed as Persistent Absence- a letter of concern will be sent and parents may be invited in to school to discuss attendance if appropriate. Pupils who are persistently absent will be monitored by both the school and Local Authority. The school's link Attendance Support Officer will likely attend any meetings called. If attendance falls below 80%, the school will discuss and implement further measures of support or action with the Attendance Support officer.

Persistent or Severe Absence

Strategies for individual children with persistent (below 90%) or severe absence (below 50%) will be tailored to the individual and will involve professional and LA support as necessary to explain consequences and to best protect the child's right to education.

FPN (Fixed penalty Notice) Strategy - Parents should be aware that taking unauthorised leave of absence could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution for absence of 10 or more school sessions (5 days) within 10 a week period.

Fixed Penalty Notices are given per parent, per child.

Expectations:

- Children are expected to attend school every day unless too unwell to attend or in exceptional circumstances agreed with the school in advance.
- Absences should be reported by parents/carers before 9am by telephone or email to the school office.
- Any unexplained absences will be followed up with a phone call. If a reply is still not received, the School Attendance Support Team at Reading Borough Council will be informed.
- All children are expected to arrive at school within the 10 minute arrival time (8.30am-8.40am) and be prepared for the school day. Teachers will collect pupils from the playground at 8.40am.
- Pupils' emergency contact details must be kept up to date.
- The school will promote, encourage and support good attendance.
- The school will regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with attendance and will work to put effective strategies into place
- The school will report attendance to parents and work together with parents and children and other professionals to understand barriers and resolve them when attendance is of concern.
- The school will share information and work collaboratively with other local schools and the Local Authority when absence is becoming persistent or at risk of being severe.
- Parents should complete an Absence Request Form if their child is to be absent during term time for reasons other than illness or medical appointments.
- If your child is unwell, parents should call or email the school office on the morning of each day missed. Forms can be collected from the school office or downloaded from the school website.

Absence from school

If a child is too unwell to come into school (or if child has suffered sickness or diarrhoea within 48 hours), parents/carers should call the school office on each morning of absence (please see NHS guidance on our school website attendance tab).

If an appointment (medical or other) cannot be made outside of school time, parents/carers should call or email the school office. Evidence of the appointment will be required for our records. Evidence might be a screenshot of a text confirmation or online appointment form.

Parents should complete an Absence Request Form if their child is to be absent during term time for reasons other than illness or medical appointments. Forms can be collected from the school office or downloaded from the school website.

Please note that absence for holidays in term time cannot be considered as exceptional circumstances and may be liable for a fixed penalty notice. Please see the following information:

Caversham Primary School Attendance Update 2024-5

From September 2024, there are some significant changes in the ways that attendance is navigated in schools and Local Authorities. To support parents in understanding some of these changes, we have created this summary sheet- please speak with Mrs Jones-King and Mrs Grover if you have any questions or if you would like support regarding attendance and punctuality.

5 days of unauthorised absence

Penalty Notice fines may be issued for any term-time absences that are unauthorised (for example, a 5-day termtime holiday) - whether these absences are taken consecutively or cumulatively over a rolling period of 10 school weeks

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any 10-week period

Penalty Notice fines will also be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any rolling period of 10 school weeks

A school day has 2 sessions:

1 morning and 1 afternoon session per day

A **school week** means any week in which there is at least one school session. The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 6 sessions of holiday plus 4 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

What is a Penalty Notice?

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, from August 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. Any further offences will result in criminal prosecution.

The law will be clear that where a Penalty Notice threshold is met – in each individual case, the school **must** consider if a Penalty Notice is appropriate

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term-Time Leave of Absence or irregular attendance, the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days)

Reduced to: **£80** per parent, per child if paid within 21 days

Second Offence (in a 3-year rolling period)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term-Time Leave of Absence or irregular attendance to the **same parent** for the **same child** the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days)

There is no reduction in the amount.

Third Offence or Any Further Offences (in a 3-year rolling period)

The third time an offence is committed for a Term-Time Leave of Absence or irregular attendance by the **same parent** for the **same child** (including those by other Local Authorities) a Penalty Notice will NOT be issued but will be referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare service for **Prosecution** which may result in fines of up to **£2,500** per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in a Magistrate's Court can show on a parent's future DBS certificate.

Unchanged

Penalty Notice fines are issued **Per Parent, Per child**. This means that fines are issued to each parent, for each child who is absent. For example: If 2 siblings are absent for a term-time holiday this will result in each parent receiving 2 separate fines- this could amount to £480 (offence 1) or £960 (offence 2)!

Strategies for improving attendance

There can be many reasons why a pupil's attendance becomes a concern such as:

- medical needs/ appointments,
- anxiety
- emotional needs
- special educational needs and disabilities

We aim to work with parents so that we can put the best support in place to improve attendance levels.

There are a number of strategies for helping pupil's attendance and these might include:

- Allowing children to come in to school 5 minutes earlier/ later to avoid the crowds
- Giving children special jobs to do to give them purpose for coming in and settling nerves
- Supporting parents with a morning routine
- Supporting parents with pupil's medical needs
- Signposting parents to external services or making referrals

Class teachers and the senior leadership team will promote good attendance, support and encourage children and parents and will review attendance at regular team meetings.

Our punctuality process at a glance

Arriving at school

Children are expected to arrive at school on time and ready to learn. The playground gates are opened at 8.30 and pupils remain the responsibility of parents until 8.40am when teachers arrive to collect classes. The arrival window is 8.30-8.50am. Any child arriving at school after 8.50am will need to sign in at the school office. The school monitors late arrivals and will speak with parents where patterns of late arrival emerge.

Please note the following timings and the way that late arrival will be recorded on our registers:

8.40-8.50am: present

8.50-9.00am: late before registration closes

9.00-9.10am: late after registration closes

9.10am onwards: Unauthorised morning session

Prompt Collection

Parents are expected to collect their child/ren at 3.10pm or by 6pm if at After School Club. If another adult is collecting their child, parents should inform the school in good time so that the class teacher/After School Club staff and the child can be informed. If there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay to collection, then parents must telephone or email the school to ensure that staff are aware and the child can be reassured and looked after until they are collected from the school office. Please note, if a parent collects a child from After School Club after 6.00pm, a fine will be issued (please see After School Club terms and conditions). If a child is collected late from school, parents may be charged the cost of overtime for staff supervising their child (unless exceptional circumstances apply).

Good Attendance Ethos

Staff welcome children with a smile and greeting as they enter the school or the classroom, they will encourage enthusiasm for school and will ensure a process is in place to communicate with them if a child is unhappy.

New starters at the school will be directed to the Attendance Policy and information on the website. This will be reviewed and updated annually. Parents will be informed when the policy has been amended following approval by the Governing Body.



ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME - **Please read notes below and complete all sections of the form**

This form is to be completed and forwarded to the Head Teacher of the school. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child/ren's regular attendance at school. The Head Teacher may authorise leave of absence under exceptional circumstances- please see the Attendance Policy for details.

Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Name(s) of Child(ren)

_____ Class _____ DOB _____
_____ Class _____ DOB _____
_____ Class _____ DOB _____

From (first day of absence) _____ to (last day of absence) _____

Total days absent from school _____ If half day absence: morning / afternoon

Full Name(s) of Parent(s)

_____ / _____

Signature(s)

_____ / _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____ / _____

Date Form Completed by Parent(s) _____

Reasons why this cannot be taken in school holiday period – please complete this section

.....
.....
.....

Decision: Authorised / Authorised in Part / Unauthorised Absence (for office use only) – return copy to parent(s) and Attendance Support Team (AST)

- We do not authorise leave in term time
- Other
- Religious Observance

Reason/ or see above: _____

Headteacher's signature: _____

Date: _____