



Colliers Green CofE Primary School

Colliers Green, Cranbrook, Kent. TN17 2LR

Document Control Sheet

Document Title:	Attendance policy
Document Type:	Policy
Owner:	Headteacher
Governor Committee:	SESC
Date adopted by governors:	14 th March 2023
Re-adoption date:	March 2025
Policy Type:	Safeguarding, child protection and behaviour.
Statutory Policy:	No

Document History

Date:	Summary of Changes:
March 2023	Policy updated to include details about issuing penalty notices.

Statement of Intent

Colliers Green Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. This policy represents our commitment to achieve 100% attendance, by setting out our expectations and strategies.

In accordance with Department for Education (DfE) advice to schools, Colliers Green Primary School will:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every child has access to full-time education;
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Colliers Green Primary School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour. All children whose attendance is irregular will be considered vulnerable.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:50am in Class 1 and Class 2, and by 9:00am in Class 3 and Class 4. All pupils that arrive late should report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

We expect parents to:

- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality, with their child aiming for 100% attendance each year;
- Keep absences to a minimum;
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time each day;
- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address;
- Notify the school via telephone, email or Studybugs when their child is unable to attend on the first day of absence and each day thereafter with a reason for this. Parents should also let the school know if their child is going to be late;
- Parent should provide medical evidence indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician if asked to do so. Wherever possible, appointments should be made outside of school hours unless and emergency has arisen;
- Contact the school at the earliest opportunity if their child experiencing any difficulties in coming to school, and the school will act to resolve the issues.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility under **Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act**, and permitting absence that is not authorised by the school may create an offence in law.

The Role of the School Staff

At Colliers Green Primary School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present or absent.

It is the responsibility of the Admissions Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call, email or Studybugs.
- Where there has been no communication, emails are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed each seasonal term of the child's attendance figure

Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance – the Admissions Officer to investigate and notify the Headteacher of concerns. Admissions Officer to contact parent if appropriate.
- 90 - 95% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

Children Missing Education

- Parents must inform the school in writing if they are planning to remove their child from the school roll. This must include arrangements that will be put in place for the child's education.
- The school will follow the Department for Education's guidance relating to Children Missing in Education (CME). If after ten days' continuous absence, the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will make a referral to the Local Authority.

Lateness

At Colliers Green Primary School, the register is taken at 8:50am and 1:00pm in Classes 1 and 2; or 9:00am and 1:15pm in Classes 3 and 4. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to the office where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late (Code 'L') and the number of minutes lateness will be recorded.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for further action.

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions, see exceptional circumstances below)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)

- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.