



Colliers Green CofE Primary School

Colliers Green, Cranbrook, Kent. TN17 2LR

Document Control Sheet

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| March 2023 | Policy updated to include details about issuing penalty notices. |
| October 2024 | Policy and letters updated to reflect changes in guidance from August 2024 |

1. 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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents>The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. 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 an emergency has arisen;
- Contact the school at the earliest opportunity if their child is 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.

4. 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

5. 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.

6. 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 day's continuous absence, the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will make a referral to the Local Authority.

7. 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 before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close ten minutes after the times indicated above. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for further action.

8. Authorised and unauthorised absence

8.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service Personnel returning from a Tour of Duty overseas where it is evidenced the individual 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 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 student'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.

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)

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in writing, through an email to the office with details of the request and full reasons. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

8.2 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

8.3 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

9. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

9.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where a child has complex barriers that impact on attendance, the school may put in place the following support:

- Reintegration plan co-produced with parents and any other agencies involved to support attendance.
- Inclusion support programme which is reviewed regularly with parents/carers any other involved agencies
- Consultation with Educational Psychologist at the local Emotionally Based School Avoiders consultation forum

9.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

If a child is absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND, the school works closely with the family and any other agencies to make adjustments to support attendance. This may be with meetings outside of the school hours with the child on the school site, Teams contact, home visits and provision of work. The school may liaise with the local authority for more complex cases.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the Attendance Lead will inform the local authority.

9.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

When a child has had a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence the school may put support in place to support reintegration if needed. This may be in the form of informal catch ups with the PSO in advance of return to school and when the child has returned to school. If a phased return is appropriate and supportive this could be put in place. Regular review of the child's success in return to school will be carried out between the parents/carers and the class teacher. These may be informal.

10. Attendance monitoring

10.1 Monitoring attendance

Colliers Green Primary School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

10.2 Analysing attendance

Colliers Green Primary School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

Colliers Green Primary School will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Data returns

(see 'Working together' guidance, chapter 2, page 21 and regulation 13 of the School Attendance Regulations 2024).

Colliers Green Primary School follows our statutory duty to share specific information from our registers with Kent County Council at particular points in accordance with Regulation 13 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024, including:

- When any pupil's name is added or deleted from the admission register outside of standard transition times. (The latter is also known as a deletion return).
- Names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who have 10 continuous school days of unauthorised absence (codes N, O, G, U) recorded on their register (known as an attendance return).
- Names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who have accumulated 15 school days of absence (code I) either consecutively and/or intermittently, as well as any pupil the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 continuous school days because of illness (known as a sickness return).
- Deletion, attendance and sickness returns must be made via the Digital Front Door on the Kelsi website.

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to identify patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Where necessary introduce an 'attendance contract' whereby school and parents agree to supportive actions and review the implementation of these at regular intervals.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary
- Send early communication to target unauthorised absence through letters, phone calls and meetings. Class teachers to communicate early concerns and interventions strategies as soon as attendance becomes a concern

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be revised and reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years. The review (and its approval) will be made by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1

Letter 1, bringing attention to attendance concern

Address

Date

Dear

Re: Name and class

We would like to draw your attention to **child's name** attendance and would like to work with you to improve this. I have attached a summary of his/her attendance data for your information.

At Colliers Green, we really want every child to be in school every day but do understand that illness can affect attendance. When a child is absent it really impacts their learning, they miss out on teaching while they are away and are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

We would like to advise you that if a child's attendance remains poor, we may request supporting evidence for absences and appointments, as per our attendance policy.

We want to work with all families to support their child's attendance and encourage you to contact us, if we can assist further.

Yours sincerely,

Josephine Hopkins
Headteacher

Letter 2 – notice to improve letter

Address

Date

Dear

Child's name and class

School attendance is hugely important. For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, and for their learning, wellbeing, and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996. If your child is a registered pupil at an alternative provision in the circumstances set out in section 444ZA of the Education Act 1996, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence.

You, «**FORENAME**» «**SURNAME**» are a parent/carer of «**Students_Name**», (called in this notice "the pupil") who is a registered pupil at Colliers Green Primary School.

The school have offered support to you and your family to try and help improve «**Students_Name**»'s attendance, including *(delete as appropriate)*:

1. Telephone calls. The school contacted you every day your child was absent to understand why your child was absent and to offer their support with any issues your child may be having.
2. An Attendance Overview Letter. The school wrote to you, letting you know about «**Students_Name**»'s attendance, the impact of their continued absence, and inviting you to contact the school to discuss the situation further.
3. An Attendance Support Meeting Invite. The school invited you to a meeting to discuss your child's unauthorised absences and to offer support to ensure that their attendance improved. You were notified of the consequences should your child continue to have unauthorised absence and you did not effectively engage with the support offered.
4. Reasonable Adjustments. The school offered your child temporary changes to their normal timetable to support improved attendance,
5. Improving Attendance Contract. The school agreed a contract with you to improve your child's attendance. This included actions that both the school and you as a parent committed to.
6. Referrals to external agencies: The school referred your child to external agencies so they could access additional support.

Unfortunately, despite the support that was offered to your family, attendance remains a cause for concern. Between «**WARNING_START_DATE**» and «**WARNING_END_DATE**» the pupil failed to attend regularly at Colliers Green Primary School, which resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absences being recorded. Please see the attached registration certificate for details.

You now have twenty school days (4 weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any unauthorised absences from school during this period. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, *a Penalty Notice may be issued / a referral may be made to the Local Authority requesting they issue you with a Penalty Notice.*

A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days if this is the first offence.

NB – A Penalty Notice may be issued as soon as an unauthorised absence is recorded.

If you wish to discuss this notice, or discuss what further support is available, please contact our team as soon as possible:

Yours sincerely,

Josephine Hopkins
Headteacher

Letter 3, requesting meeting re attendance concern

Address

Date

Dear

Child's name and class

I am writing to update you with regards to **child's name** attendance, which is currently ??%. We understand that some illness is unavoidable, however, we encourage our students to maintain a minimum of 96% attendance.

I would therefore like to invite you to meet with me in order that we can discuss strategies to further support **child's name** to attend school regularly.

Please contact me on asalter@colliers-green.kent.sch.uk to arrange a convenient time.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Salter
Family Liaison Officer

Letter 4 - re unauthorised absence

Address

Date

Dear

Request for leave of absence during term time

Child's name and class

I have received your **email/written request** to take **child's name** out of school for a **xxx** on **xxx** , a total of **xxx** school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for leave of absence in term-time will **not** be authorised as the Regulations only allow absence to be authorised absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstance. Department for Education guidance starts that, *'Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.'* We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open and where there 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered the request but I am writing to confirm that the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take **child's name** out of school the Attendance Service may issue a Penalty Notice.

For your information Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent/carer** of **each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 days period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely,

Josephine Hopkins
Headteacher

Letter 5 - re lateness notification

Address

Date

Dear

Child's name and class

At Colliers Green, we have high expectations of attendance and punctuality from all pupils. We strive for every child to be in school each day and on time. Regular attendance is essential to ensure children reach their potential both academically and socially.

Following a review of the children's punctuality, we are writing to parents of those children whose punctuality is below expectations.

Child's first name has been late on a number of occasions, and as a result missed **x minutes** of school, and valuable learning time, this academic year. Persistent lateness can be distressing for the child, is disruptive to the class, and can affect learning as much as absence.

We are keen to work with you and to understand if there are any barriers to arriving on time or reasons for lateness, so we can together support your child, to ensure they reach their potential. If you would like to discuss the situation further, please do let me know and we can arrange to meet or have a phone conversation.

The school gates open at 08:45. The official start of school is 08:50 for Class 1 and 2, 09:00 for Class 3 and 4.

We are also obliged to inform you that we may request the support of our Attendance Officer at the Local Authority to identify and support with persistent lateness.

If you have any questions, or there is anything you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Josephine Hopkins
Headteacher