



Attendance Policy Spring 2016

This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the school and operated within the vision, aims and values as a Church of England School.

Aims

It is the policy of all the schools within the Clevedon Cluster to celebrate achievement. Full attendance is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our students. We actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our students.

Our school will give a high priority to emphasising to parents, guardians and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home and school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

Parent's Role

"Parents have a duty to educate their children "suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs which they may have" either by regular attendance at school or otherwise under Section 7 of The Education Act 1996. Parents whose children are registered at school are then responsible for ensuring that they attend punctually, regularly and stay at school" - **Section 7 of The Education Act 1996**

All schools must have two registrations during the day. At St John the Evangelist School, the doors open at 8.45 and students must be in school by **8.55** and registers are taken at **8.55** promptly. Any student arriving between **9 am** and **9.30** will be coded as **L** (late). Morning registers close at **9.30 am** promptly. Any students arriving after this time will be coded as **U** which counts as an Unauthorised absence for the morning session. The afternoon register period is 1.15 -1.30. Failure to attend either will result in your child being marked as absent. All truancy will also be coded as a **U** unauthorised code.

If your child is unable to attend school it is your duty to report the absence with the reason to the school office (telephone absence line) as early as possible.

Your child is feeling unwell, what do you do?

Before taking the important decision for your child to miss school, Clevedon Cluster advises you to consider the following 4 questions:

1. Will this illness prevent my child learning at school today?
2. When was the last day your child was absent from school? - Is this the first time this term?
3. Could there be another reason why they don't want to be in school?
4. As a parent/carer would I take a day off work for the same condition?

Please note that common conditions such as:

Headaches, colds, periods and sore throats can be treated with over the counter pain relief and your child should be able to attend school. If these issues continue we advise that you should consult with your GP.

If your child appears or feels 'better' later in the morning, they can still come into school in time for the afternoon registration.

Do I Need to Provide Medical Evidence?

Although we appreciate that students can become ill for a variety of reasons, as a school we have to take the decision whether to authorise the absence.

Authorised Absence is coded when an explanation from parents is provided on the day of absence and agreed by the school as suitable reason

Unauthorised Absence is when at least one of the following may occur, the student does not attend school, the school are not notified by parents or the reason for absence is not deemed to be a reasonable explanation for absence

The decision to authorise any student's absence can be done by providing medical evidence of the condition.

This is particularly important if your child's absence drops beneath 92% as all absences will be automatically un-authorised without medical proof.

Any absence your child has from school whether it is authorised or unauthorised will have a detrimental effect on your child's progress of learning and achieving full potential.

School will authorise absence where medical proof is provided. Medical proof can be obtained in the following ways depending on severity of illness or reason of absence.

- Prescription labels of medication
- Hospital//Dental appointment letters and cards are provided with appointment time and diagnosis

- A GP medical letter
- Proof of Diagnosis from a consultant such as a community paediatrician
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) assessment

What should I do if I my child has a medical appointment?

If your child is required to attend a medical appointment, where possible, try and make these for out of school hours. Where this is not possible, we would not expect a student to be absent for the whole day. Please bear this in mind when booking appointments and travel time. The school must be provided with proof of a medical appointment for **every** occasion such as appointment cards or medical letters.

Can I take my child out of school during Term Time?

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended by Government in September 2013. Regulations have now removed a Headteacher's authority to authorise leave of absence for family holidays during term time unless there are exceptional reasons. **(see FAQ)**

The Clevedon cluster will not authorise term time holidays and we ask that our parents abide by this. Any exceptional requests for leave during term time, should be made 1 month in advance of the proposed absence and should be completed in writing on the Clevedon Cluster 'Request for Leave of Absence' form (see appendix)

We will reply to the request promptly to confirm if the request has been authorised or not and may include one of the warning letters attached.

School Role

As a school we will regularly review each student's attendance and punctuality internally but also externally with North Somerset Education Welfare Service. All students will fall into one of 3 categories using our Assertive Mentoring system.

Green – 95% and above Attendance and no more than 3 lates

Amber – 92% – 95% Attendance & up to 5 lates

Red – under 92% attendance

Where a student's attendance is of concern i.e. Red or Amber, we will consider the following actions:

- Letters home to express concern
- Telephone calls
- Meetings
- Legal non-attendance meeting
- Letter warning of a fine or court action

Throughout the year we will continually review all students' cases.

Penalty Notices and referral to the Education Welfare Service

North Somerset Education Welfare Service has a duty to follow up unauthorised absences which occur across schools.

Under section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority may issue Penalty Notices to parents of children with unauthorised absences from school.

From September 2015 the Clevedon Cluster will be following Government guidelines and will be issuing penalty notices where unauthorised absence occurs and this includes unauthorised holidays.

The fines are issued to each parent, for each child, and are:

- ° £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to
- ° £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Only in very limited circumstances can a Penalty Notice, once issued, be withdrawn.

Failure to pay the fine will result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. The court can fine a parent up to £2,500 and the court can also offer a custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

Policy Review

This policy has been reviewed and passed by the Governors of all the Clevedon Cluster Schools and will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains up to date with any changes in statutory requirements.

Date Policy Approved:.....

By:

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is regular attendance important?

Attending school is a legal requirement. This is because a child with poor school attendance will be affected in a number of ways. Such as

- Significantly under achieve and leave school with fewer qualifications.
- Children who are not in school are more likely to become involved in various anti-social behaviours or place themselves in vulnerable situations.
- Struggle in social situations or with friendship groups
- Stress of falling behind with school work
- Future employment, training and opportunities
- Poor attendance certificates for references

Can I authorise my child's absence from School?

No. Only the school can authorise a child's absence. The education act 1996 outlines that it is the Headteacher's discretion to decide if an absence is acceptable or unacceptable.

What is not an exceptional circumstance?

Each case is looked at individually, but the following are examples

- Cheaper holidays
- Family day trips
- Relatives coming to visit
- Birthdays
- Weddings which incorporate holidays
- Trips with family which they deem to be 'educational'
- Booking holidays during activities week
- Child was too tired to attend following a late night to attend an event

I am concerned that I am going to receive a fine?

If you have any concerns you should seek to discuss with school. Any student with unauthorised absence could be liable for a fine, but usual practice will be for a warning letter to be issued first, warning of a potential penalty notice.

However, School have the discretion to request the issuing of a penalty notice without warning where the parent has chosen to take the child out of school without requesting the leave or subsequent evidence, suggests the child has been away from school with parental knowledge.

How much is the fine?

The fine is £60 per parent, per child for the offence period. This rises to £120 if it has not been paid by the 21st day

It's not my fault my child won't attend school?

By law, as parents we have legal responsibility to ensure our children attend school, no matter how difficult it is for the parent. If you have difficulties putting in boundaries to help your child attend school, you may want to speak to school, who can advise of strategies or other organisations that might be able to help. Likewise, if there are issues in school preventing your child wanting to attend, please inform the school so the matter can be addressed promptly.

Who should I speak to in school regarding school attendance matters?

To report an absence, request term time absence – contact the school office.