



Attendance Policy

Staff responsible: Mr D Heather

1. Rationale

Pulford C of E VA Lower School is committed to maximising attendance for all pupils to enable them to benefit fully from their education. We believe that regular attendance is vital for effective learning. It is therefore our responsibility to convey to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise the importance of establishing strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. We will endeavour to identify, as speedily as possible, any problems affecting attendance and adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance.

2. Principles

The school will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. The school will promote positive staff attitudes to those pupils returning from absences. Each September, staff will be reminded or made aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

3. Procedures

Registration:

- Registers will be completed promptly at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Morning registers will be opened at 8.50 a.m. and close at 9.25 a.m.
- Afternoon registers will be opened at 1.15p.m. and close at 2 p.m.
- Registers will be completed in accordance with the guidance sheets at the front of the registers.
- Where pupils arrive late and the register is still open, they will be marked late but counted as present for the session.
- Where pupils miss registration and do not provide an adequate explanation, they will be marked as late but counted as unauthorised absent for that session.
- Pupils who arrive late, should report to the front office and be signed in by the accompanying parent or office staff on duty. The cook will also need to be informed if they have school lunch.

4. Definitions

4.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For



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example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

4.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

5. If a child is absent

5.1 If a child is going to be absent from school then the parents must inform the school on that day in the morning. The office staff will then put a note into the class register to inform the class teacher

5.2 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.

5.3 The parent may inform the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

5.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

6. Long-term absence

6.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

6.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

7. 'Holidays in Term Time'

Amendments have been made to the Education Regulations 2006, which came into force from 1st September 2013. These contain new guidance about holidays during term time. Regulation 7 states that schools should only grant leave of absence during term-time if the school 'considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to the application'. If the "special circumstances" criteria are met the Headteacher may authorise absence of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances. The government describes special circumstances such as;

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time. If the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupils education
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

This means that Pulford C of E VA Lower cannot grant holidays for the following reasons as the government does not deem them as special circumstances;

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- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term

Unfortunately, any holiday taken without the authorisation of the school may now be subject to 'fixed penalty notice' which means that you may be fined by the Local Authority. If there is a special reason why you feel you need to take your child out of school (not one of the reasons above), you are free to write a letter to the head teacher who will seek advice if necessary from the Education Welfare Officer.

Amendments to 2007 regulations which come into force in September 2013 set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. The Local Authority can give each parent a fine of £80, rising to £160 if this is not paid within 21 days. From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period. If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If the fine is not paid in 28 days the parent may be taken to court for keeping the child out of school. If the child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years the parent will not be fined but may be taken to court. If the parent is taken to court they could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give a Parenting Order.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Parents:

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually, that their child is properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents are asked to contact the school early on the first day of absence by telephone. This message will be recorded and passed on to the class teacher for filing in the register. School will follow up absence with a phone call if none has been made by the parent.
- A letter explaining a child's absence is appreciated on the child's return to school
- A pupil's absence from school will remain unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is given by the parent.
- Parents should avoid, wherever possible, making medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- Parents should avoid taking family holidays during the school term, except in the circumstances outlined above.

8.2 Staff:

- Staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example.
- Staff should convey high expectations to pupils regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Staff will inform parents promptly of any concerns over their child's attendance.
- Absences will be totalled regularly.
- Staff will bring any concerns regarding attendance to the attention of the Headteacher.
- Registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session and attendance will be monitored regularly.

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- If no contact is received from the parent of the pupil on the morning of absence, the school will contact the parents by telephone, or if the parent is unavailable, write a letter requesting information. If this action does not result in an explanation or the return of the pupil to school, a further letter will be sent.
- The school will contact the Access & Inclusion Service if the absence continues after ten days without explanation from the parent.
- Action on irregular attendance will involve a letter being sent to the parent by the Headteacher. If the attendance does not improve the parents will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the issue. The aim of the meeting will be to identify and resolve any difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.
- In some cases of persistent absenteeism in order to authorise medical absences the Headteacher will request confirmation from the Doctor to confirm illness.
- In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence, then an individual reintegration programme will be implemented.
- Absences should not be authorised once a warning letter for court action has been issued to parents by the Access & Inclusion Service, unless a medical certificate is received.
- A telephone call will be made to parents when a child's attendance falls below the school attendance target
- A letter will be sent to parents when a child's attendance falls below 80%.
- If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Education Welfare Service

8.3 Child Missing Education procedures (CME).

- The school follow the Central Bedfordshire Procedures: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/migrated_images/cbc-cme-procedures-sept-17_tcm3-21094.pdf with particular regard to:

School CME Referrals

35 When a child due to start school, or to transfer across phase, fails to attend from the first expected date of attendance the school should ensure that he/she is nevertheless placed on roll and should endeavour to make contact with the parents within 7 days. (The school should also contact School Admissions to check whether the child has registered at another school.) Should the school's efforts to contact the parent prove unsuccessful and the child continues to fail to attend the school should refer the child to the CME officer as a potential CME.

36 If a child leaves a CBC school without the parents notifying the school of a proposed destination school or if a child fails to return to school after a holiday the school should take reasonable steps to contact the parent to ascertain their intentions with regard to the child's education. (Should the school have safeguarding concerns it should contact Central Bedfordshire Childrens Services Hub contact details in point 25 above).

37 If the school, having made reasonable enquiries, fails to identify the child's whereabouts or his/her parents' intentions it should make a CME referral to the CME Officer. The CME officer will carry out further investigations, including, if necessary: Checking various databases; i. ii. iii. iv. v. vi.

38 Making further enquiries of other agencies Ensuring a home visit is undertaken either by the CME Officer or School Attendance Officer; Liaising with the CBC Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit teams; Liaising with the CBC Housing department and other housing



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providers; Contacting the Practitioner Support Unit of the NHS. Checking the Electoral Roll If the child is located the CME officer will notify the school and advise on any further action which the school needs to take.

39 If the child is located within another LA the CME officer will contact this LA in order to ensure that the child is tracked into education.

40 If the child is not located the CME officer will advise the school, if it has not already done so, to remove the child from the school roll and to send his/her CTF to the DFE S2S (School to School) Lost Pupils Database. (This CTF should be coded XXXXXXX).

41 Referrals by Schools should be made using the E-Form link below

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/ChildMissingEducation.ofml>

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/GeneralChildMissingEducationReporting.ofml>

9. Intended Outcomes

- To reduce the percentage of 'Holidays in Term Time'
- To use consistent codes across the school in order to maintain an accurate record of absences.
- To encourage regular attendance and punctuality
- To follow the registration procedures and follow up consistent reasons for absence
- To consult with the Access & Inclusion Service when appropriate

Review Procedures

The School's policy will be reviewed when:

- every three years
- The School wishes to review the policy/ there is a change in legislation
- If amendments are required by the LA
- Next review due 2027

Policy endorsed by the Governing Board Spring 2024.

Signed: Chair of the Governing Body

Equal Opportunities

All young people will be treated equally, regardless of race, creed or gender.

The policy will be applied regardless of culture, faith or belief.