

ATTENDANCE POLICY



COTON GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Principles

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- **Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **Truancy before or during the school day**
- **Absences which have never been properly explained**
- **Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.**

Parents are expected to contact school at any early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the Local Education Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment. School may issue fixed penalty notices.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

If a child is absent, parents should inform school by telephone on the first day of absence. Any absence of 2 days or more, school should be also followed up in writing stating the reasons for absence. For medical appointments parents are asked to show appointment letters to a member of staff in the school office. If a child is absent for 5 consecutive days due to illness / medical condition, medical evidence such as a doctors note will be requested for the absence to be authorised.

Regular monitoring of attendance by the attendance officer and head teacher will take place at least once a term (Staff may refer cases as appropriate at any time). Individual cases are followed up using a colour coded system which is clearly explained to parents via the school website (see below). Monitoring letters are sent to parents and the school will seek to support parents in addressing any attendance issues. At this stage referrals may be made to the Local Support Team if appropriate. The school will also work with the local authority and an audit and register check will take place once a year to ensure statutory duties.

Family holidays are no longer an authorised absence. The school follows the Staffordshire County Council leave of absence procedures. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the headteacher. Further details can be found in the SCC procedures available on the school website here:

http://www.cotongreenprimary.com/cms/_files/Schools-flowchart-and-letters-for-PNs%20March%202015.pdf

Registers open at 9:00 and close at 9.30am for the morning session. Any arrival after 9:10 is treated as late and recorded by the school office. Afternoon Sessions: Key Stage One - 1:15pm and 1:30pm Key Stage Two for the afternoon session. Children are encouraged to start school well before 9:10 at 8:50, where early work is set. The expectation is that all children are in school for 9:00.

Absence which is not notified will be followed by a letter and contact from the schools' Attendance officer. Children who achieve 100% attendance during the year will receive a school prize. Classes also receive an attendance award weekly as part of celebration assembly.

Our attendance is a strength of the school. In 2015-16 this was: 96.6%

Our attendance target for 2016-17: 97%

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mr R Osborne (Head teacher) and Mrs L. Densley, Admin Assistant (Administration)

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure a high level of attendance as possible.

In developing this policy, governors have taken due regard in reference to the government advice found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/361008/Advice_on_school_attendance_sept_2014.pdf

Date: 26/09/16 Signed : G.Astle

Education Penalty Notices

Information for Parents

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children go to school regularly. The local authority can now issue Penalty Notices if a parent fails to make sure that their children receive the education they deserve. This leaflet tells you about these notices.

School Attendance and the Law

Any absence from school is a cause for concern. Only by attending every day will your child have the best chance to get the most from their education.

The headteacher at your child's school must decide whether to authorise an absence. That is to agree that there was a legitimate reason for your child not to be in school.

There are only four legitimate reasons for absence:

- Religious observance
- Illness of the child
- The death of a close family member
- An urgent medical or dental appointment

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) can take legal action against you if you fail to make sure that your children go to school regularly and there is no legitimate reason for the absence. This action might take one of two forms:

- The issuing of a Penalty Notice
- Prosecution in the local Magistrates Court

This information is about Penalty Notices and how the EWS will issue them.

What they are

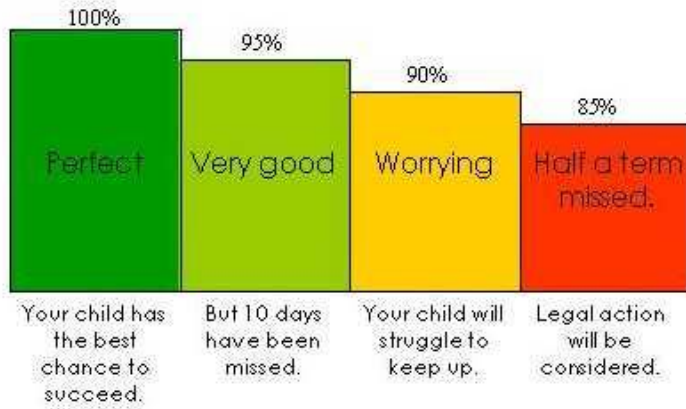
Penalty Notices are fines, issued by Staffordshire EWS, for a child's unauthorised absence from school.

The service will always consider legal action when there is no legitimate reason for absence.

How they will be issued

Notices will be issued by post. They will not be issued during a Truancy Sweep or as part of a meeting with parents.

Missing School Means Missing Out



This graph shows the effect of missing time from school over a year. Every school session is important if your child is not going to fall behind.

The EWS will not take legal action if previously poor attendance is now improving.

Instead they'll monitor the case and support the pupil. If attendance doesn't improve, or if absences begin to increase the EWS will re-assess the case to see if legal action is needed.

*****From September 2016 attendance below 90% will be the new threshold for persistent absence.**

Penalty Notices

What they mean

Parents who are subject to a penalty notice have 3 choices:

Pay the fine early, within 21 days, and it is £60

Pay within 28 days and the fine is £120.

Don't pay the fine. In this case the Notice will be withdrawn and Magistrates Court proceedings will start. This could result in a fine of up to £1000 for each child whose attendance is causing concern and for each parent involved in the prosecution.

Further information

If you would like further information about Penalty Notices please contact your district Education Welfare Team:

If you have concerns about your child's education you should, initially, discuss these with school.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent and for each child. Therefore if a family has 2 children living with both parents, then each parent will be fined twice.

District	Telephone
East Staffordshire and Tamworth	01283 239755

