





“Let your light shine” Matthew 5:16

Everyone is encouraged to shine by encompassing our values of respect, trust, honesty, thankfulness and resilience. Enabling us to grow, learn and achieve together.

Attendance Policy 2023

	Date	Signature
Discussed at Staff Meeting	02.10.23	
FGB:	04.10.23	

Responsibility of Full Governing Body

Next Review Date: October 2024

Vision Statement

The School's Christian Vision Statement "Let your light shine" is our central vision. Everyone is encouraged to shine through living out our values of trust, honesty, thankfulness, respect and resilience. Enabling us to grow, learn and achieve together

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1. Aims

At Cold Harbour School we recognise the importance of regular school attendance and believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is also vitally important that children arrive and leave school on time.

Education provides a means of life enhancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines the educational process and leads to underachievement and low attainment.

High levels of attendance are the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents, governors and all staff. Good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects.

We aim to:

- Have high expectations for attendance
- We work to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Put in place effective strategies to regularly monitor and analyse attendance.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on '**Working together to improve school attendance**' *Guidance for Maintained Schools, September 2022* and Parental Responsibility Measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

The Law on school attendance states:

1. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
2. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being, and wider life chances.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The Curriculum Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Sarah Kotulecki** and can be contacted via 01908 270377.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement – using the DfE
- Providing weekly attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education learning mentor (**Ronnie Rowsell**) to tackle persistent absence

Advising the headteacher when thresholds have been met and to consider a fixed-penalty notice. The attendance officer is **Michelle Youngworth** and can be contacted via 01908 270377.

Michelle makes reference to the DfE webpage '*Pupil attendance in school.*'

https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools?utm_source=3%20October%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office (at 8:45am each morning and 12:50pm (EYFS /KS1) or 1pm (KS2) using SIMS.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents / carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Learning Mentor in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

There are legal obligations on parents to secure full-time education for their children of compulsory school age, whether at school or otherwise and to send them to school regularly to benefit from their education once they are on the school roll.

Parents must see themselves as partners with the school in their children's education and support the school in the following ways:

- Ensure the fullest possible attendance of their child by keeping requests for their children to be absent from school to a minimum
- When absence is unavoidable, provide a verbal explanation in person or by telephone on the first day of absence, before 9am
- When absence continues for more than a day, contact the school by phone or letter
- Ensure that their child arrives at school and is collected from school on time

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time – arriving at 8:45am (morning session) and by 12:50pm (afternoon session.)
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Cold Harbour enters pupils on the admission and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed the pupil will attend.

As a school we will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15 am (30 mins after the session began.) The register for the second session will be taken at 12:50pm and will be kept open until 1:20pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

All parents should notify the school as soon as possible if their child is absent giving a reason for the absence. This can be done by:

Telephone -01908 270377, option 1 and leave a recorded message or visit the school office in person.

Email (office@coldharbour.milton-keynes.sch.uk) - the school administrator will then pass the message to the class teacher and enter the reason for absence directly into the register;

- Letter - the class teacher will place the letter in the register and enter the reason for absence into the register. A Class Dojo message by itself is not acceptable.
- Personal - an explanation may be given personally to either the class teacher or the administrator when the child returns to school. This will then be entered into the register.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school **in advance** of the appointment and provides written evidence of the appointment.

For all other requests of absence, a leave of absence form must be completed.

This leave of absence form can be requested from the school office or via email: office@coldharbour.milton-keynes.sch.uk

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

At Cold Harbour we respond to ongoing punctuality issues in the following ways:

- Early morning phone call to ensure family members get up on time
- Follow up phone calls to offer support with getting to school – learning mentor / Headteacher will walk / drive to pick up child who are refusing to come to school
- Where appropriate a free place at Breakfast club may be offered or a place on the schools walking bus

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will do the following:
 - a) Learning mentor will carry out a home visit to ascertain the whereabouts of a child
 - b) Make a follow up call to CFP or social worker if engaged with the family
 - c) Contact MASH or police as appropriate
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly written reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as the death of a family member or any circumstance that puts a child in immediate danger e.g. serious car crash, fire, domestic abuse

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least **3 weeks before the absence**, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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

- Further discretion may be given for exceptional circumstances e.g. requesting flexi-schooling where a child or family member may be unwell, a child has experienced trauma or an exceptional change might be occurring to a family unit.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school, we feel that good attendance is must be rewarded, for example children who achieve 100% in any 1/2 term receive a certificate and those who receive it for an entire term will be invited to a Headteacher tea party (Autumn, Spring or Summer.)

The class who have achieved the highest attendance for any given week will receive 5 minutes additional playtime on a Friday morning.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance data is analysed and quickly picks up on children who are developing a pattern of absence. Any child whose absence falls below 95% is contacted by the Learning Mentor. Each day is counted as 2 sessions; 10% absence corresponds to 19 days (38 sessions/year)

The monitoring process:

A child will be 'at risk' of persistent absence if 6 sessions (3 days) is recorded in a half term period. Thus 6 sessions over 6 half terms = 36 sessions absent (18 days)

At the end of each half term, where attendance has dropped to <95% parents will be contacted informing them of their child's actual attendance. Those who fall below 90% will be informed that their child is at risk of persistent absence.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

At Cold Harbour we:

- Investigate all unexplained absences by telephoning the child's parents after the close of the register at 9:15am.
 - Make a home visit to all children who have been **absent for three days or more**
 - Contact parents if it has any concerns over attendance. Absence letters are sent out to

families who fall below 95% each half term. These letters both highlight areas of concern and also acknowledge as improvements the school has noticed between terms.

- 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
- Where absence continues, send out a School Attendance warning letter (Appendix 2)
- Involve the Local Authority (emailing Colin.Mayo@milton-keynes.gov.uk) if parents fail to support the school in ensuring the fullest possible attendance of their children.

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. As a school, we compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

As a school we:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

As a school we:

- Monitor daily on a spreadsheet the times child arrives at school, recording reasons and watch for patterns of behaviour
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teacher who share these at parent's evenings to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies e.g. the impact of EBSA nurture groups.

7.4 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.

At Cold Harbour we work to reduce persistent absence, including *Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)*. We:

- Closely monitor the attendance of vulnerable children, including those who may have EBSA
- Provide daily contact with our learning mentor with the with child and family, to break down barriers to attendance
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Use attendance data to find 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 are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Contact our Wave 1 MHST team to support parents and children who are experiencing EBSA

Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Where we feel a child may be experiencing EBSA, we follow the EBSA Guidance for Schools and Settings in Milton Keynes, part two practical support.

This sets out that good practice follows the following principles:

- Early intervention
- Collaborative, person-centered working-working with parents and schools, as well as the young person
- Understanding individual needs and contexts
- Emphasis on the need for a rapid return to the educational setting alongside support and adaptations

As a school we follow, the indicators checklist and profile screening for vulnerable children to work towards finding strategies and interventions to support the child and family.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy
Relationships and Behaviour policy
Positive Mental Health Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Monitoring letter for attendance below 90%

Our attendance data analysis has highlighted that XXX attendance for the XXX term (XXX to XXX) was X%.

As we monitor all attendance below 90.00%, we will continue to monitor XXX attendance over the next term and should be most grateful if you would report any future absences to the school office.

Each day is counted as 2 sessions; 10% absence corresponds to 19 days (38 sessions/year.)

I enclose XXX attendance report.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Warning Letter

Dear

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE WARNING LETTER

NAME:

DOB:

YEAR:

SCHOOL

I write to advise you that you could face a legal sanction if you fail to ensure that your child attends school regularly and punctually.

During the period to the school was open for sessions and attended on occasions and/or was late after the register on occasions. Your child's overall attendance is %.

Section 7 of The Education Act, 1996 states that you have a legal duty to ensure your child's regular attendance at school; therefore, if your child's attendance does not improve the matter will be referred to the Local Authority who will commence legal proceedings. This could mean, under the terms of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to you and a fine of £60 will become payable in 21 days or £120 will be payable after 21 days but within 28 days. A Notice could be issued three weeks after the date of this letter, if there is no improvement in your child's attendance or punctuality. This warning is in place for 12 (twelve) school's weeks as set out in the Milton Keynes Code of Conduct for their issue.

Alternatively, we will write to invite you to an Attendance Interview or refer the case to the Local Authority who will invite for an Attendance Interview. If there is no improvement after the interview, legal sanctions will commence and the Local Authority will invite you to a PACE interview. You will receive a formal caution interview as required by the PACE Act* which will lead to a prosecution in the magistrates' court under Section 444 (1) or Section 444 (1a) Education Act, 1996: if convicted you will receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment for an "aggravated" offence or a fine of up to £1000 and a criminal record for a Level 3 offence.

Yours sincerely,

*Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984