



Curdworth Primary School

Attendance Policy

Policy revised: November 2023

Reviewed by: Jas Kang (Head) and Lynne Nash (CSAWS)

Next review: September 2024

Our School Vision

Curdworth Primary is privileged to serve a thriving local community; where what we do is led by the children, for the children. As a result of our innovative, ambitious educational offer, children leave our school equipped with the tools to continue to thrive and grow, when taking their next steps into the wider world.

We are a small school, with big opportunities.

Aims

This policy aims to raise the profile of attendance by encouraging and promoting a positive attitude towards attending school so that all children can achieve a good attendance and receive consistent education throughout their time at school. We believe that through attending school every day, and on time, children and young people will get the best possible start in life.

Objectives

- To set expectations and aspirations that all pupils have a high standards of school attendance.
- To improve children's attainment and well-being through good attendance.
- To inform parents/carers as to the legitimate reasons for absence.
- To maintain an accurate attendance/registering system and methods for monitoring and supporting attendance.
- To maintain a clear policy on attendance which is known to all stakeholders.
- To maintain clear, consistent and regular communication both within the school and between school and parents.

Procedures

Our school procedures follow the expectations set out by the Department for Education in the guidance Working Together to improve school attendance (September 2022).

Our procedures are based around the principles and stages of:

- Preventing poor attendance
- Early intervention and Early Help to address early patterns of poor attendance and agree ways to improve.
- Targeted interventions (including Early Help and Formal interventions) for those children who are persistently absent or severely absent.
- Understanding barriers to individuals' attendance and agree individual plans for children with specific needs.
- Formal Statutory Interventions where support has not been effective or engaged with.

Attendance Partnership Expectations & Responsibilities

Children:

- To attend school regularly
- To arrive on time and appropriately prepared (homework, reading books and breakfast eaten)

Parents:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when enforced closures such as bank holidays, inset days, closures/part closures due to weather conditions.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child must be unexpectedly absent (e.g., sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances **and do so in advance**.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered, including offers of Early Help, to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered to prevent the need for legal intervention.

School:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Listen to parents and pupils to understand barriers to attendance.
- Build trusted relationships with parents and pupils where attendance concerns can be discussed, understood.
- Foster and maintain links with our community.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.

- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best place to lead service.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Ensure join up with relevant staff support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. (See Appendix 1 for roles and responsibilities)

School Attendance and Legislative Framework

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (Section 44) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school may result in the Local Authority prosecuting the parents and each parent may be fined.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive education. Estranged parents with whom the child has had regular contact may be prosecuted as well as the day-to-day carer. Each situation must be dealt with on an individual basis, always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern. The term 'parent' also includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children Act 1989 or who have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1996.

Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

We urge parents to notify us on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness **no later than 9.30am**. It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In most cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or authenticity of illness is in doubt, further evidence of a child's illness, such as medical evidence, may be requested. Medical evidence can take the form of hospital letters, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Child is absent and there are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- Child is absent and the same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Child is absent, and attendance is below expected levels and there is a concerning pattern of absence/reasons for absence.
- Where there is a medical problem and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

Not all illnesses require an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, earaches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school, they should follow the above absence process.

Medical or dental appointments

We do encourage parents to make appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. We can only authorise an absence for a medical or dental appointment if medical evidence is provided, where the child will be marked with an 'M'. However, if there is no medical evidence, the child will be marked with a 'U', Late (after registration has closed) or 'O', an unauthorised absence (if the child does not attend school for the whole session or full day).

Absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. We will consider each request individually considering the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance, and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Leave of absence application forms must be completed and are available from the school office. The application must be **made in advance** and the Head of School/Executive Head must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. Where leave of absence is declined it will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and may result in both parents receiving a fixed penalty issued by the Local Authority.

Absence not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Head of School or Executive Headteacher

Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

If the Head of School does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow us to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Requests for Leave of Absence (exceptional circumstances)

- The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.
- The law does not set a minimum number of sessions for which a Penalty Notice for Leave of Absence during term time will be issued. Warwickshire County Council will consider each referral on a case-by-case basis and on its own circumstances once the absence has occurred.

The resident parent should complete a Leave of Absence Request form available from the school office or the school website. The head teacher may ask parents to provide supporting evidence when assessing a parent’s case for exceptional circumstances.

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Religious observance

We treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, we do seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveler absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. We can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must advise school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and inform the school regarding proposed return dates. We will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return. Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Absent from school without authorisation

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for family days out, shopping, birthdays, or childminding.

Alternative Education Providers

On rare occasions, a small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider or dual registered with another school, agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at Curdworth School. Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored. When Pupil are Dual registered at another school or alternative provider their attendance will be recorded in the register as a D code (on days they are required to attend the other school/provision). The other school/provision will record the attendance of absence. For children who are Educated |Off site but not dual registered their attendance will be recorded in Curdworth school register as a B code if they are confirmed present or the appropriate absent code if absent. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with Curdworth School.

The Code of Conduct

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 set out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. This includes a requirement that every local authority must draw up and publish a Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices, after consulting all schools, including academies, and the police. The code should set out the criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice.

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

From 1 January 2018 any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The head of school will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by your head of school to the local authority.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

A pupil needs to achieve 10 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning can be issued. Late marks do not have to be one after the other for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late, you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve-week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and potentially a fine. These have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance at school. If a child's unauthorised absence for leave meets the above criteria, the school will refer the case to the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) to pursue issuing parents with a penalty notice.

Section 576 Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not,
- Any parent, who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person,
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Monitoring attendance and punctuality

Lateness

The school's main gate on Farthing Lane is open for parents and children from 8.30am for parents and children to make their way on to the school grounds ready for school side gates to open. The school's side entrances will open at 8.45am where children go straight into the school building and prepare for the start of the school day at 8.55am.

- At 8.55am the school side gates are closed.
- Children arriving at school after the side entrances are locked will have to enter through the main entrance where parents will need to explain the reason for the pupil's late arrival.

- A late mark will be recorded on the Bromcom class register and how many minutes late will be noted. (Please refer to Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct regarding fines issued to parents whose child is persistently late)
- If the child is unaccompanied, a member of the school office will sign the child in late on behalf of the parent.
- The late marks will be monitored regularly by the Head of School and parents will receive a letter if there are more than 5 episodes of lateness in any half term.
- Bromcom register will close by 9.15am. Any pupils not in class by that time will be recorded as 'N'. The school office will then contact the parents to find out reason for absence.
- Any child arriving after 9.15am will also be late but recorded as 'U' (late after registration has closed) on the register. This is an unauthorised absence.
- Once a child has accumulated 10 lates 'U' or unauthorised 'O' a fine may be issued.

Absence

- Until a legitimate reason is provided, all absences will be unauthorised.
- Parents are expected to give the reason for absence by phoning (NOT sending a message through Class Dojo) the school before **9.30am** on the first day of absence.
- If the child is absent for additional days, parents are expected to keep up daily contact (phone call, NOT a message through Class Dojo) with school to provide an update on the child.
The only exception being that the parent has been informed by a member of staff that their children should remain off school for 48 or 72 hours due to avoiding spreading of a sickness bug or self-isolating due to COVID-19. Daily contact is not required at this stage, unless the child is unable to return to school on the planned date.
- If the school has not been notified of the reason for absence, parents will be contacted to provide the information.
- To ensure the safety of the child, school may send a member of staff/s to the home when contact cannot be made by phone with the parent of an unexpectedly absent child. If there is no answer when staff visit the home, we will contact CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer to conduct a possible home visit or the local PCSO to do a safe and well check and contact the Local Support team for advice.
- The Local Authority will be notified if a child is frequently absent.
- Attendance figures are monitored by the Local Authority regularly.
- Please see Warwickshire County Council School Attendance for information on pupil non-attendance and fixed penalty notices.

If staff are concerned about a child's absence or there is no response to text messages, they will follow the process in detail above. This includes telephone calls to parents, telephone calls to other emergency contacts, home visits, referrals to the CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer and to the police for a safe and well check.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated (DFE Attendance guidance 2022)

Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per child (KCSIE 2023) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

If you are unsure if your child should attend school, please contact the school who will offer advice and guidance or signpost you to the relevant service.

Pupils who are experiencing personal challenges and pupils close to becoming or are persistent absentees

School uses Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd (CSAWS) to support the school with the processes associated with children's attendance at school. School employ CSAWS to provide the legal monitoring services and support that will help reduce the number of persistent absent pupils and improve whole school attendance.

The school will endeavour to support children in extreme personal situations by employing one or more of the following strategies and steps:

- The pupil and/or parents will be offered support from either the head of school or executive headteacher. This may be in the form of informal but regular conversations, telephone conversations, and letters to keep parents up to date on their child's attendance data.
- Parents will be invited to attend an informal meeting with the head of school to discuss potential barriers and support from the school to raise the child's attendance.
- If there is no improvement in attendance after the above, contact will be made to the school CSAWS officer and parents will be invited to a formal meeting with head of school and the schools CSAWS officer to discuss further the barriers of attendance and actions of support.
- The LTS (Local Support Team) may be contacted for support and advice for pupils, parents and the school – this will be accessed through First Response.

Other outside agencies may be liaised with if necessary for support and advice.

PROCEDURE FOR ISSUING PENALTY NOTICES FOR PERSISTENT ABSENCE

A Penalty Notice can be issued where at least 10 sessions (5 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absences in any 100 session (50 school day) period, (*WCC NON-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND PENALTY NOTICES CODE OF CONDUCT, MARCH 2021*).

The Local Authority shall consider the issue of a penalty notice after the sending of an advisory letter and monitoring for a period of 6 weeks (30 school days) if further unauthorised absence occurs and the following are in place:

- A copy of the pupil's attendance record which demonstrates at least 10 sessions (5 school days) were lost to unauthorised absence in the 100 sessions (10 Weeks).
- Prior to referral a minimum period of 30 school days given for the attendance to improve, evidencing the continued support offered by school.

Monitoring, Rewards and incentives for attendance

Attendance is reviewed at a minimum half termly, information regarding attendance may also be shared with the Local Authority as part of statutory processes. The Head of School will analyse attendance data half termly for the whole school and groups of pupils. This will be shared with stakeholders and used to inform the strategic plan to improve school attendance. Attendance will be shared with class teachers in preparation for Pupil progress reviews and parents' evenings. Attendance Data will be produced and used to promote attendance through the school's newsletter, website and rewards and incentives. Where there is cause for concern, this information is shared with CSAWS during regular attendance meetings held at school.

Those children who achieve an attendance percentage of 97% (approximately no more than 4 days/ 8 sessions absent) or above **at the end of the year** will be rewarded with a trip to a local park and enjoy a picnic lunch and play (weather depending). At the end of each half term children will be informed of their current attendance percentage so they know how well they are doing towards achieving the target of 97%.

Those children with **100% attendance at the end of each term** will be invited to a celebration treat – this could be a movie or a special lunch/breakfast.

Children who achieve **100% attendance for the entire year** will be rewarded with a £10 voucher.

Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Absent from Education

A child absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties. In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the statutory guidance to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds

listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended). Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

Use of Attendance Data

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you from your previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

Attendance is reviewed at a minimum half termly, where there is cause for concern, this information is shared with CSAWS during regular attendance meetings held at school. CSAWS then follow up attendance concerns with parents and carers on school's behalf.

Information regarding attendance concerns may also be shared with the Local Authority as part of statutory processes.

The Head teacher will analyse attendance data half termly for whole school and groups of pupils. This will be shared with governors and used to inform the strategic plan to improve school attendance.

Attendance Data will be shared with class teachers in preparation for Pupil progress reviews and parents' evenings and to target interventions.

Attendance Data will be produced and used to promote attendance through the school newsletter, website and rewards and incentives.

Appendix 1

Role	Responsibilities
Trust Level <u>ATLP</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure compliance with relevant legislation (e.g., pupil registration, attendance registers) • Reviewing school attendance • Agreeing and Reviewing School Policy
Head of School Attendance Officer <u>Jas Kang</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with relevant legislation • Data analysis and Strategic Plan for attendance • Implementing school policy and leading on whole school approach. • Authorising/unauthorising absences • Leave of absence request • Line management • Contact with parents • Overview of clear and escalating interventions • Evaluation of interventions • Promoting school attendance • Responsibility for links with CSAWS and the LA Statutory Team. • Attendance at attendance panels
Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants <u>All other staff</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking registers • Promoting importance of regular school's attendance • Providing early warning of attendance concerns • Positive role modelling • Following policy and procedures consistently • Point of contact for parents to discuss concerns
Designated Safeguarding Lead <u>Jas Kang</u> <u>Megan Lugg</u> <u>Kaye Gibbs</u>	<p>If staff are concerned about a child's absence or there is no response to text messages, they will follow the process in detail above. This includes telephone calls to parents, telephone calls to other emergency contacts, home visits, referrals to the CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer and to the police for a safe and well check.</p>
SEND lead <u>Carolyn Evans</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting importance of regular school's attendance • Providing early warning of attendance concerns • Following policy and procedures consistently • Work with attendance officer and parents to raise attendance of children with special educational needs and disabilities • Point of contact for parents of children with SEND to discuss concerns
School Office/Manager <u>Amanda Edwards</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining registers • First day calling/text messages • Identifying children whose absence needs further follow up action in line with the school absence procedure. • Late arrivals • Process for clearing registers • First day absent lead contact • Administration of school attendance letters, leave of absence letters etc. • Producing attendance reports