



# Cleobury Mortimer Primary School

The Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust



## Attendance policy

September 2022

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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

Promoting good attendance

Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence, including through working in partnership with our EWO

Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance 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.

### **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

#### **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

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 the Pastoral Lead (Mrs Nicola Mountjoy).

#### **3.4 The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

The education welfare officer is responsible for:

Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Education Welfare officer is Jennie Graham [jennie.graham@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:jennie.graham@shropshire.gov.uk)

### **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 via SIMs.

Call parents of children in their class, whose attendance has been identified as a cause for concern by the Pastoral Lead, to see if there is a specific issue (e.g. anxiety, morning routines etc) that school can help with.

### **3.6 Office staff**

School office staff will:

Take calls and messages on ParentMail from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record them on SIMs

Call parents if a pupil is absent and we have not received a message. If parents can't be contacted, all other listed contacts for the child should also be tried. If no reason has been provided by 2pm, this should be recorded on My Concern, to enable the DSLs to consider if further action is required.

Call parents of children who have been identified by school as being persistently / severely absent and causing concern to clarify the reason for absence, if the parent has messaged via ParentMail.

Transfer calls from parents to the senior leaders in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day on time

Call (or message via ParentMail) 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**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session (after lunch). 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:

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 between 8.40 and 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm.

## 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). Tel: 01299 270313 or through ParentMail.

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 through the office (call or email as above)

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

If a pattern of lateness emerges the classteacher/headteacher will discuss the issue with parents and how it is negatively impacting on their child's education. If the pattern continues the EWO will be informed.

#### 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 continue to call and may contact the police if we have not heard anything by the end of the day (or earlier 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 e.g. through parents evenings and end of year 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:

- It is highly unlikely that the event will occur again in a child's school life
- It is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event
- The event cannot be organised outside of the school term
- The event is necessary to the health and wellbeing of the child
- Taking part in the event will be of greater value to the child than attending school

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office and in Appendix 2 of this policy. 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

Wedding (1day) or Funeral

Please note that the annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance. There are 190 school days in an academic year, leaving 175 days free for families to take holidays.

## 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

We will encourage all pupils to understand the importance of attendance and will celebrate good attendance in assembly. We will be clear about expectations through a traffic light approach which guides actions:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>96- 100%</p> <p>Children are accessing learning opportunities and few are missed (0 - 7.5 days off)</p>                        | <p>Attendance Levels are good to excellent:</p> <p>Valuing of this through positive encouragement/praise/rewards as appropriate.</p>  |
| <p>93 - 95%</p> <p>At risk of underachievement - up to 14 school days absent in an academic year</p>                              | <p>Attendance levels beginning to cause concern:</p> <p>Analyse data and reports. Regularly monitor attendance/reasons for absence. Consider requesting medical evidence and formally alerting parents to concern. Medical evidence can take the form of either a dated GP/Nurse appointment card, a dated note from the GP/Nurse written in the student's Planner, a 'with compliments' slip signed and dated by the GP/Nurse, a prescription or proof of prescribed medication relating to current issues. Parents can request a screen print during the consultation which should be free.</p> |
| <p>90 - 93%</p> <p>High to severe risk of underachievement - up 20 school days absent in a year (the majority of a half term)</p> | <p>Attendance levels causing more significant concern:</p> <p>Action plan with parents to find ways of promoting better attendance. EWO involvement begins.</p>   |
| <p>Below 90%</p> <p>Extreme risk of underachievement - more than 21 days absent in a year</p>                                     | <p>Attendance levels decreased to an unacceptable level - below persistent absence rate - despite interventions. Consider further wider services</p>  |

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

Monitor attendance and absence data 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

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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board through Headteacher reports.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

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**

The school will:

Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, 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

### **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.

The school will:

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

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Monitor regularly

Support EWO's in meeting or sending clear information and warning letters about the persistent or severe absence.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and every 3 years.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour 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   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                             |  |
| 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                      |



|                             |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations  |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school   |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b>                    | 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) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence              | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration        | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed   |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>y</b>    | 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 |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school  |
| <b>#</b>    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day  |

## Appendix 2



# Cleobury Mortimer Primary School

## Request for Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time in Exceptional Circumstances



Headteachers can only authorise any absence when an application has been made in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child is normally resident and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance.

**Please note:** An annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance. There are 190 school days in an academic year, leaving 175 days free for families to take holidays.

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Full name of child(ren):  | Address:                     |
| 1).....   | .....                        |
| 2).....   | .....                        |
| Dates: .....  | Number of School Days: ..... |
| <b>Reason for application:</b> .....  |                              |
| .....   |                              |
| Parent's forename.....  | Surname.....                 |
| Parent's forename.....  | Surname.....                 |
| Signature of parent(s)/carer(s): .....  |                              |
| Date: .....   |                              |
| The headteacher may take into account:  |                              |
| It is highly unlikely that the event will occur again in a child's school life    |                              |
| It is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event                    |                              |
| The event <b>cannot</b> be organised outside of the school term                   |                              |
| The even is necessary to the health and wellbeing of the child                    |                              |
| Taking part in the event will be of greater value the child than attending school |                              |

### Office use only

Authorised                       Unauthorised

Comments:.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Signed .....(Headteacher) Date: .....

### **WARNING**

**If this requested period of absence has not been authorised, details will be passed to Shropshire Council's Education Access Service. The Council may, in the following circumstances, issue a formal Warning, serve a Fixed Penalty Notice or take court action in respect of non-school attendance for this and any future unauthorised absence:**

- Parents have not sought permission from the headteacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time
- The headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or
- A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation.

