



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Headteacher: Nicola Truman

Cedars Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education, which maximises opportunities for each to realise their true potential. Cedars Primary School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment in which each member of school community feels wanted and secure. All staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

Cedars Primary School has established a system of incentives and rewards, which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives, Cedar Primary School will aim to establish and maintain an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information advice and support. In line with Government legislation, extended holidays are no longer permitted. Please refer to the Discretionary Leave Policy for more information.

Aims

1. To maintain a high overall percentage of attendance of pupils at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework, which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To develop a positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To continue to reward and celebrate good attendance.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service.

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.

This policy has been amended to company the Working Together to Improve Attendance document.

Roles and responsibilities

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 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

The designated leader responsible for attendance

The designated 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 leader responsible for attendance is Miss Oxendale

Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator

The Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for:

- Monitor attendance daily in the office.
- Every day at 9:00am they will be in the office to phone parents where no message or contact has been made with school. If no contact can be made the PWC will immediately carry out a home visit to eliminate any potential safeguarding concerns.
- Work with the lead responsible for attendance, to tackle persistent absence
- Support the designated leader in leading attendance across school
- Carry out home visits to children who we have highlighted as a concern from data

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.
- Promoting good attendance through supporting whole attendance strategies.
- Report any patterns/ absence concerns to the attendance lead.

School Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/ listen to voicemails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator if they feel this needs further investigation
- Conduct first-day call-backs/ send text message to ascertain the whereabouts of a child who is absent
- Promoting good attendance through supporting whole attendance strategies.
- Report any patterns/ absence concerns to the attendance lead.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, and on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence, or when reasonably possible, 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
- Keep school updated with changes to contact details.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Arrive at school, every day and on time to access their education

The Inclusion Officer (Blackburn with Darwen)

- The role of the inclusion officer is to work in partnership with school through a termly meetings to monitor impact of attendance strategies. When the final stage of the attendance escalation plan has been reached, it is the responsibility of the inclusion officer to utilise legal powers to enforce school attendance.

Recording attendance

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. The morning register is open from 8:45 until 9:15. The afternoon register is open from 12:45 until 1:15.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The reason for illness
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. 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.

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. 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, and parents must sign their children out of school and when they return, sign them back in. 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.

Improving and Maintaining Punctuality

Parents are informed about the importance of arriving at school on time through:

- Initial meeting for Reception parents
- School prospectus
- Regular reminders in the school newsletters
- By text message/ phone call/letter/meetings in case of repeated lateness
- Meetings with the Headteacher and PWC in case of persistent lateness.

As with attendance, punctuality is monitored on a daily basis. We urge parents to co-operate with us and ensure your child arrives to school on time every day. The school has facilities for a breakfast club, which starts at 8:00am for only £1.00 however, if parents are struggling financially, please speak to a member of Senior Leadership Team.

In case of poor time keeping these procedures would be followed:

- Any child who has not arrived at school when the registers are collected are recorded in the Absences book which is kept in the office. Phone calls are made to see whether the child is attending school or not.
- Children who arrive late for school will be marked on SIMS as late (L) and their reason, along with the time they arrive. This is also recorded in the absences named and highlighted in green.
- If a child is persistently late, the PWC will discuss this with parents and offer ways in which we could support them in making sure their child arrives on time.

- Continued issues with punctuality will be referred to the Inclusion Officer from the Education Team. A copy of the attendance report will be issued.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, all staff are aware that if children go missing, this can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Cedars Primary School knows that early intervention is key to identifying any risk and to prevent the risk of a child going missing in the future.

School is updated annually on the procedures which are to be taken in the case of a Child Missing in Education. School is required to inform the local authority about the details of:

- All children who are believed to have moved out of the Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) geographical area after the school has undertaken reasonable enquiries (to be completed within 10 school days) and the child's whereabouts have still not been confirmed.
- Children who have been absent without the school's permission for a continued period of 10 days
- Children who have failed to return to school for 10 days beyond the expected return date following a leave of absence period
- Children who have relocated abroad
- All Gypsy Romany Traveller children who school believes have gone travelling without securing prior agreement and/or confirming a return date
- Children who are withdrawn from school, but parents are unwilling or unable to say where or how their child will continue to be educated.

In a case of CME, the school needs to make reasonable enquires and the Attendance Team must:

- Obtain as much information as possible from parents before relocation
- Maintain contact with parents following relocation
- Confirm admission with the receiving school
- Make a home visit if possible
- Make general enquiries amongst friendship groups
- Establish contact with all named people on the child's record. Relevant CME forms will be completed and sent to the Inclusion and Place Planning Team.

Circumstances when a CME notification is not required:

- Those children who move out of the BwD are and their whereabouts has been confirmed – these children will be reported to the Local Authority using a 'Deletion from School Roll Notification' form
- In 'truancy' cases where a child's unauthorized absence has already been formally referred to the Inclusion Officer
- Children with long-term medical or mental health needs whose absence has been verified by a health professional.

Monitoring Attendance

To monitor children's absences from school we have devised a new procedure to tackle attendance from the start. We will communicate to parents through the days their child has missed. See appendix one for a break down on the procedure.

Parents will be contacted through: attendance@cedars.blackburn.sch.uk when their child has missed school. As a school, we understand sometimes children are ill and will be absent from school however we will closely monitor everyone's attendance, the same way.

Daily

- The school office will check registers and telephone any family that has not informed school of their child's absence.
- Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator (PWC) will liaise with the office staff daily and pursue persistent targeted absentee children and do home visits if necessary.
- Designated Attendance lead will check in with the Attendance team to monitor how the day looks and if any children of our concern have arrived at school.
- The designated attendance lead may also ask the Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator to carry out an emergency home visit if we appear worried by an absence.
- Attendance lead will check the register and SIMS to gather evidence of a child missing 3 days, 6 session or more. The appropriate letter will be sent to the parent of the child to inform them that the school is monitoring their child's attendance.

Weekly

- Whole school attendance is monitored every week (Monday) by HT/AL/PWC/Office Manager and any areas for immediate action will be discussed.
- The attendance of children below 90% of any class is shared with the teachers on a weekly basis.
- Any pupils whose attendance falls below 95% will be discussed at the monthly meeting with the Headteacher and or the Inclusion Officer. Actions are discussed and implemented.
- If absence persists, and falls below 85%, the Inclusion Officer will make contact with parents.
- If termly absence continuously persists, a formal meeting is held with parents, PWC/Head. The child will be put on an Action Plan and regular monitoring meetings will take place to ensure improved attendance.
- Individual attendance will be monitored weekly for: a) Improvement in attendance. b) Patterns of non-attendance. c) Number of absences record.
- Whole School Attendance percentages for the whole school including punctuality for every class is celebrated in Friday's Good News Assemblies.
- An attendance display board in the main hall is updated weekly to highlight the importance of School Attendance.
- Daily 'Full house'; certificates are given out to any class with 100% for the day.
- The class with the highest attendance will win a trophy, ice pops and a star on the 'Race to 5' competition.
- If a class gains 100% all week, each child will receive an attendance prize and class certificate

Monthly

- Whole School To choose a day every month and hold a '100% Day' to improve attendance and raise awareness and importance of attending school.

- If the school can achieve 100% attendance on the day the children will be rewarded a prize that has been planned for by the teachers and attendance team.

Half Termly

- Children will receive monthly prizes for attending school.
- A Raffle will also be done with the parents of the children who achieve 96% or above.

Annually

- Individual attendance prizes, certificates and celebration during assemblies.

Procedures for ensuring good attendance:

- Registers should be completed and be returned to the office by 9.00am and 12.55pm.
- Parents should explain all absences on the first day of absence, whether by phone call/message or letter. A messaging indicating 'not well' will not be accepted office staff will make contact with parents to ascertain the reason for absence.
- The PWC will liaise with the school office between 9.00am - 10.30am and make contact with parents. If no contact has been made by parents the PWC will arrange to carry out a home visit.
- Absences can be either authorised or unauthorised. It is usually the Headteacher's discretion whether any absences are authorised or unauthorised.
- If a class teacher is uncertain about the nature of a child's absence, they should discuss the absence with the PWC. This will then be followed up by a phone call or a home visit.
- Attendance of all pupils is monitored by the HT, AL, PWC, and Office Manager on a weekly basis.
- Any pupils causing concern are discussed and any actions are implemented including letters, charts, meetings etc
- Any pupils whose attendance falls below 95% will be discussed at the monthly meeting with Inclusion Officer. Further actions are discussed and implemented. If absence persists, and the child's attendance falls below 85%, the Inclusion Officer will make contact with parents.

Improving and Maintaining Good Attendance:

- Parents are informed about the importance of good attendance, through regular letters, newsletters, and text messages.
- Children are made aware of the importance of good attendance through whole school collective worship using attendance awards and from class teachers.
- Children who achieve 100% attendance in their class over the full school year will receive a certificate and prize at the annual prize giving assembly.
- Class attendance is shared weekly. The class with the best attendance each week is recognised at Friday's assemblies.
- Classes with 100% punctuality and 100% attendance will be rewarded with a prize.
- Overall school attendance is shared weekly to celebrate high levels of attendance and monitor and discuss times when attendance figures vary.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

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.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. It should be noted that authorised absences also affect a child's overall attendance.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Valid reasons for authorised absence may include: Illness and medical/dental appointments, although we strongly encourage that these are made outside of the school day.

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

If a family decides to take Discretionary Leave of Absence without authorisation and the child does not return to school by the 21st day, the child may be removed from roll.

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. With the induction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices the following changes have been made:

- The first time a Penalty notice is issued for term time leave will be £160 per parent, per child and this is to be paid within 28 days. If paid before 21 days the fine will come down to £80.
- The second time a Penalty notice is issued for term time leave will be £160 per parent, per child and is to be paid within 28 days. If paid before 21 days the fine will come down to £80.
- The third time an offence is committed for term time leave, a Penalty notice will not be issued. The case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' court and fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.
- A Penalty notice will be issued if 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence are missed within 10 weeks of the academic year. This will include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes.

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.

Education Supervision Order

An education supervision order (ESO) is a formal legal intervention once all voluntary support has been exhausted. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO. Education supervision orders initially last for one year. The local authority will notify parents in writing of the intention to proceed to an ESO, and will set up a meeting to discuss it with the parent. Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.

Below are the attendance codes that will be used:

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established

O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Date agreed by Governors:

Date to be reviewed: Autumn Term 2026/7