



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Costessey Primary School

## Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the School Advisory and Improvement Group on an annual basis.

Signature *K Lawson*

Principal

Date: 26.11.20

To be agreed by Governing Body.

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

Costessey Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. Further details can be found on the DfE website and Norfolk Schools website.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets. These will reflect both national and Norfolk attendance target.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy contains the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

### School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

### Lateness

Morning registration will take place at 8.40am. The registers will remain open until 8.50am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an un-authorised absence unless an explanation given is accepted as grounds for authorising the late arrival.

The afternoon registration will take place at 1.00pm.

The registers will close at 1.10 pm.

Parents / carers of a child who is persistently late will be sent a concerns regarding punctuality letter. (See appendix 1)

## Absence

In the case of your child not being in school, the office staff will send a text message by 9.30 am asking you to call in to explain the absence. If we have not received a call from you, the office staff will call you by 10.30am. If there is regular absence this may be a phone call from a member of the pastoral teams.

## Frequent Absence

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences the staff member in charge of attendance will monitor and may contact the family to enquire about the absences.

## Persistent Absence

Any child whose attendance falls below 90% is classified as a persistent absentee. When this is the case a letter will be sent home regarding the current attendance of the child (See appendix 2). The school will offer support to help the attendance increase.

## Fixed Penalty Notices

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

1. at least 9 sessions, 4 ½ days, of unauthorised absence during the last 6 school weeks.

Any pupil at Costessey Primary School who meets this criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a Fixed Penalty Notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

## Fast Track

In cases where a child's attendance has not improved following communication and support from the school, or if a child's attendance is extremely poor, it may be necessary to start the Fast Track process. Details of this can be found in the leaflet on <https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/schools/files/pupil-safety-and-behaviour/fast-track-to-attendance/fast-track-leaflet.pdf>

## Holidays

Revisions by the Department for Education to the 2006 Education (Pupil registration) Regulations state that from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, a Headteacher/Principal can no longer authorise any holidays during term time. The amendments make clear that a Headteacher/Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers/Principals should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

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An example of such an **exceptional circumstance** would be a leave of absence to represent a national team in a sporting event. If you need to request a leave of absence you will need to complete a holiday form (See appendix 3)

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome and our staff go above and beyond to ensure this happens. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

### **Promoting Attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. This will be achieved through newsletters and certificates where children have achieved 100% attendance for a whole term. Weekly class attendance is also celebrated and shared with the whole school.

### **The Registration System**

The School use the Pupil Asset computerised registration system for keeping the school attendance records.

The staff member in charge of attendance will scrutinise this data on a monthly basis and share with the Principal, Vice Principal and Head of Pastoral Care. Any anomalies or patterns of absence or lateness will be investigated.

The codes used in the registration system can be found at Appendix 4 of this document. These may change from time to time as required by the Local Authority.

### **Register Security**

Computer access is password protected. The registers must be safely stored. Completed registers are stored in archive boxes in a locked office and are only held for the duration necessary as outlines in our GDPR policy under the retention of records.

## Additional Guidance due to Covid-19 restrictions

Following the government guidelines around self-isolation and Covid testing, outlined below are the steps Costessey Primary School are putting in place around pupil's attendance.

### School Day Timings

In order to ensure that the school is kept in bubbles and to reduce the number of people on site at any one time, the timings of the day have changed. Registers will close 10 minutes after the start time issued to each year group. For these timings please see the school Covid policy or contact the school office.

### Covid Symptoms

If your child is displaying any Covid symptoms they will need to stay at home and receive a Covid Test. At this point your child's attendance will be noted as an 'X' code which is not an unauthorised absence. If the test comes back negative, **we will require proof of the negative test**, once received the child can return to school. If the test is positive, the child will need to isolate as per the government guidelines, their absence will then be recorded as code 'I' (illness) and the school will provide work for the child to complete at home if they are able to.

### Isolating

If your child has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, you will need to follow government guidelines <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>, and your child will need to isolate for 14 days. During this time your child will be marked with an 'X' code which is not an unauthorised absence and the school will provide work during this time.

If a member of your household is isolating, government guidelines show that other members of the household can continue as normal with no need to isolate. With this in mind, children who are kept off school due to a member of their household isolating will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the duration of time they are away. During this time no fines will be issued. Work will not be sent home in this instance.

### Exceptional Circumstances

In cases where a member of the household is shielding due to being clinically extremely vulnerable, parents may choose to keep their child off school. When this occurs the school will review the risks and make a decision about the type of absence recorded and if work will be provided for home learning.

## Appendix 1

Dear [Parent Name]

[Child's name]      DOB: [      ]

During a recent meeting with the school's Attendance Consultant, it was noted that your child has arrived late at school on a number of occasions this academic year. I have enclosed a copy of the attendance record for your information which currently stands at [      ]% which is below the expected 96%.

Frequent lateness can cause children to become anxious and they miss valuable teaching time. Lateness also causes disruption to office staff and the class teacher and other pupils and I am asking for your co-operation to ensure that your child attends punctually in the future.

It is a legal requirement that all children should be in school and starting the school day at [      ] am. **Any child who arrives late after [      ] am is recorded as 'late after registration closes' and this counts as an absence and will affect pupil attendance percentages.**

Please be aware that repeated unauthorised late arrivals could result in a penalty notice being issued and/or the implementation of the Fast Track process.

I will continue to monitor and hope to see an immediate improvement.

Yours faithfully

## Appendix 2

Dear [Name],

### **School attendance of [Child's Name] DOB [        ]**

During a recent attendance review with the school's Attendance Consultant it was noted that [child's name]'s attendance is below the expected level of 96%. For your information I have enclosed an up to date copy of [child's name]'s attendance which currently stands at [    ]%.

I understand that there could be a genuine reason for these absences. However, we monitor attendance levels closely at Costessey Primary School, as evidence shows that good attendance and good attainment go hand in hand.

We would like you to encourage [child's name] to attend school on a regular basis, even when complaining of minor ailments such as a cold, runny nose etc. as most children are fine once in school and we will contact you if your child is too unwell to stay at school.

If poor attendance continues, this could result in a penalty notice being issued and/or the implementation of the Fast Track Process.

If there are any issues that you feel may be affecting [child's name]'s attendance or you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me to arrange a meeting to discuss the issues.

Yours faithfully



## APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

### Important Information for Parents

- Head teachers comply with the 2013 amendment to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (2006) Regulations 2013** which means that they cannot authorise a leave of absence from school unless it is exceptional; every case should be treated on an individual basis and with due consideration of the circumstances. Ultimately, it is the Head teacher of the school who decides if a period of leave during term time should be authorised or not.
- Head teachers may grant leave of absence if they consider exceptional circumstances apply.
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised.
- Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed.
- If leave of absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress.
- This form **MUST** be completed by the parent who intends to remove the pupil from school during term time.
- Failure to make a request for a leave of absence in advance will result in the absence taken being recorded as unauthorised.
- Any absence either side of a holiday will be investigated and proof of illness or further details of the holiday (e.g. proof of flights etc.) may be requested.

***Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.***

**I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:**

Full name of

child/ren.....

Address.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

From (1<sup>st</sup> day of absence) .....To (last day of absence)  
.....

Total number of school days.....Expected date of return to  
school.....

Reason for proposed absence - please provide reasons to support the application including evidence:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Please read the following and sign to indicate you agree:**

*I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I undertake to make sure my child/ren catch up with any work that is required of them.*

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s):

Date:

**Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been:**

Agreed  Days agreed  Not agreed

Signature of Principal:

## Appendix 4

The following codes / marks will be used to record attendance information:

Code	Description	Category
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT in medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical / Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by an other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious Observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19); and Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced Closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances