



**Where Learning is Fun!**

## **Culcheth Community Primary School**

### **School Attendance Policy 2017**

#### **Introduction**

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Culcheth Community Primary School believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Culcheth Community Primary School values all pupils. As set out in this policy we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

#### **Legal framework**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance or otherwise

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

### **Categorising absence**

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, through verbal explanations may be appropriate where this is considered appropriate.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

**Illness:** In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

**Medical/dental appointments:** Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day.

**Other authorised circumstances:** This relates to occasions where there is a cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package

**Excluded:** Exclusion from school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

**Family holidays and extended leave:** Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday in term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

Culcheth Community Primary School **will not** authorise term time holidays except in exceptional circumstances (At Headteacher's discretion). In any event the school will not authorise term time holidays in the following circumstances:

- Where there has been previous term time holiday absences of any length
- Where pupils are in Year 2 or Year 6 (national curriculum testing years.)
- Where there is a retrospective request for term time holiday.
- Where there is a history of poor attendance. (below 95%)
- Where there is a failure to evidence that any request is due to an exceptional circumstance.

All requests for term time holidays must be made in writing using the appropriate form available to parents from the school office. This form must be returned to the office for the attention of the Headteacher who will consider the request and decide to authorise or not authorise. Parents will be informed of the decision to authorise or not authorise the holiday absence.(see attached Appendix A)

If a pupil fails to return from holiday on the scheduled date and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised.

Only in exceptional circumstances will absence of more than 10 school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases granting leave for longer periods than normal may be authorised.

**Religious observance:** Culcheth Community Primary School acknowledges the multi faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

**Traveller absence:** The aim for the attendance of traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school regularly and as frequently as possible.

The Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a traveller parent will not be prosecuted if their child accrues 200 attendances (ie 200 half days) in a year. **This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.**

It does not mean that part time education for traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not in school.

When in or around Warrington, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school then the expectation is that their child will attend school full time.

Culcheth Community Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily whilst travelling. This is to protect them unfairly losing their place at their school of attendance.

Culcheth Community Primary School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in ongoing dialogue with traveller families. This means that parents must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

Culcheth Community Primary School 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.

**Late arrival:** Registration begins at 8:55am each morning and 1.30pm each afternoon. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9:10am, pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late.

**Unauthorised absence:** Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupils/family members birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- “couldn’t get up”
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

If a child is on the Child Protection register or is perceived to be vulnerable and they are absent without the parent/carer giving a good reason the Headteacher will contact Warrington Safeguarding immediately to gain advice on action to take. The same action will be taken if a child is deemed to be at risk and have persistent unexplained absences.

### **Deletions form the register**

In accordance with the Education (pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfers between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- In custody for more than 4 months
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the local authority has failed to locate the pupil

Culcheth Community Primary School will follow Warrington Borough Council’s missing education protocol when a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Culcheth Community Primary School believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the **Governing body** will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parent
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure there is a named person to lead on attendance within the school
- Ensure the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

**The school will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with parents and pupils
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance. With good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site are implemented.

**Request that parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance with the home environment
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow up this with a note where possible
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance

- Support the school: take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the headteacher in advance of booking the holiday

### **Support systems**

School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/ separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Culcheth Community Primary School also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and children in care.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Referrals to support agencies
- Time limited reduced timetables
- Reintegration support packages
- Reward systems
- SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning materials)

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs Culcheth Community Primary School, will consider the use of legal sanctions.

Policy to be reviewed Jan 2019

## **Appendix A**

### **APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

Child's Name ..... Year .....

Home Address .....

.....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

First date of absence ..... Last date of absence .....

Total number of school days missed .....

Reasons for absence from school:

.....

.....

.....

.....

I make the above application for my child (named above) to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed ..... Date .....

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE**