



Attendance Policy

Cockfield CEVC Primary School

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cockfield School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. The School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Cockfield School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils feel valued members of the school community, are eager to learn and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance leader

The Head teacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Head teacher, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly and are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that

a report is prepared for the Governing body half termly. S/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration

- i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day, once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

REGISTER CODES

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	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 (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT 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 any 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	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

- ii) The register will be called promptly at 8.50 am and 1.15 pm by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- iii) The registers will close at 9.30 am and 1.55 pm. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as unauthorised absence. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present/late but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 4.6).

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as U: unauthorised absence, unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Head teacher.
- ii) Cockfield School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education, as authorised absence will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Cockfield School will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.

iv) Authorised Absence

The decision to authorise absence is at the Head teacher's discretion based on his or her assessment of the situation. The Head teacher will take into account the pupil's previous record of attendance and will determine the length of authorised absence as well as whether it is authorised at all. If an event or absence can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time, then it will not be authorised.

Parents requesting a leave of absence for their child or children, must complete the "Leave of Absence Request Form". The school will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision. The school will not authorise leave of absence during periods of national tests ie: KS1 and KS2 SATS. Circumstances where absences may be authorised are exceptional (that is, rare, significant, unavoidable and short). They include:

- (a) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

- (b) where the pupil has a medical appointment that cannot be arranged out of school hours. Pupils are expected to attend school before and after the appointment unless medical reasons prevent this;
- (c) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions that prevent the child from getting to school safely;
- (d) absence for a bereavement of a close family member, for the funeral service, but not for extended leave;
- (e) where families have experienced a significant trauma or crisis and need a short period of time to recover together;
- (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- (g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- (h) where a leave of absence has been granted by the school in advance. Exceptional circumstances where this may be authorised, having due regard for the pupil's overall pattern of attendance, include:
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance or sporting event;
 - a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion that could not have been arranged in the holiday period;
 - absence for important days of religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil or pupil's parent belongs. If the religious observance requires travel, this may be considered, but extended leave will not be authorised. This would be for one-off occasions and not for regular or recurring events.
 - where a parent in the armed services is returning from a long operational tour that has prevented contact during term time.

Parents should not take their child out of school for a holiday during term time. The Head teacher will not allow holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances surrounding the situation and an application has been made in advance. When an application is made for a holiday via the "Leave of Absence Request Form", it will be considered by the headteacher and will only be authorised in rare, exceptional cases.

- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
 - no explanation has been given by the parent;

- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent for a family event that could have been arranged in the school holiday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence of 8 sessions (4 days) or more within a 12-week period to the Education Welfare Officer. The local authority has the power to issue penalty notices and fines to parents when a pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Class registers

In order to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of pupils, class teachers will check that every child is present at the start of each session. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the school office and measures taken to locate the pupil.

2.7 Staff training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. **Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data are complete, accurate, analysed and reported to parents and the Governing body (see para. 2.2 above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by class and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfES within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Cockfield School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and the school's office manager keeps note of weekly attendance figures – these will be publicised in the school's weekly newsletter on a class by class basis and whole school basis.

4.2 Cockfield School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. A letter is sent to parents to remind them that an explanation is required.

4.3 First-day calling

Cockfield School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation, to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

4.4 Meetings with parents

Each week, the school will explore current attendance figures. Pupils with attendance under 90% will be highlighted and letters sent to parents informing them of this. Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4-week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.5 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3 (iii)) will be marked with an unauthorised absence for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will remain unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will

not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence (see paras. 4.3 – 4.5). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.7 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes need to enter by the front door and go to the office manager to sign the late book. Parents can sign this on their behalf. This record is checked regularly (week by week) and any regular lateness will result in a letter being sent home to inform parents of this.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office as mentioned in para 4.7. It is important that all pupils arriving late following this procedure.

4.9 For the same reason it is important that a parent/carer, when accompanying pupils leaving the premises legitimately with them (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day, should sign the 'Visitors' book in the entrance hall. No child may leave the premises without their parent or carer. Except in an emergency, this is always prearranged with the class teacher.

4.10 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Cockfield School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure that it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately – we will also telephone the police if the child is not found within a few minutes of the school grounds being searched.

4.11 Study leave

This area of the County attendance policy does not relate to our school.

5. Term-time holidays

5.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

5.2 Cockfield School will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is not a right. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended holiday.

- 5.3 Cockfield School will consider authorising holidays for:
- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
 - when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
 - parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.5 Cockfield School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

6. Extended leave of absence

6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas Cockfield School will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit are more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs may be involved;
- where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Cockfield School.

7.2 Cockfield School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure that their children attend the school regularly;

- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Cockfield School on the first day of absence by telephone call, followed on their child's return by a written note.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, and taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Cockfield School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Pupils' responsibilities

8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

8.3 A Guide for Pupils is attached.

9. Governors' responsibilities

9.1 These are defined in the Education Act 2002, Section 175 (2):

"The Governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school."

10. Conclusion

10.1 Regular school attendance is a necessary contributory factor to ensure the outcomes of Every Child Matters:

Be healthy –

- attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy

Stay safe –

- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure that they attend school regularly

Enjoy and achieve –

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings

Make a positive contribution –

- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others

Achieve economic well-being –

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style

11. Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy annually.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.50 am and the afternoon register at 1.15 pm.

2. What happens if my child is late?

If your child arrives between 9.00 am and 9.30am he/she will be marked late.

If your child arrives between 1.25 pm and 1.55 pm he/she will be marked late.

If your child arrives after 9.30 am and 1.55 pm he/she will be marked as an unauthorised absence, but as present for health and safety reasons.

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. However, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

6. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety, as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact your child's class teacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he /she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education. Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure that you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY

A GUIDE FOR PUPILS

1. Attending regularly and on time

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Cockfield School. It will help you keep up with your school work and get the best results you can.

Remember, your attendance at school is shown in your Record of Achievement.

2. Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- illness
- emergency dental / medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement

Looking after your brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

You will also need a note from your parents to explain ALL absences from school. You will also need a note if you arrive at school after 9.30 am in the morning. If you do not bring a note, or the explanation on the note is unsatisfactory, the absence will count as unauthorised and will be shown on your end of year report.

3. Need help?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. TALK TO SOMEONE – your class teacher, another member of staff, your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

Signed _____

Head Teacher

Signed ___ Norman Kelly _____

Chair of Governors

Signed _____

Chair of Committee

Date: 6th May 2021

Review Date: May 2022