



# Claremont Primary School

A hub of educational excellence and innovation,  
supporting and valuing everyone

## Attendance Policy

|                                  |                                                              |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Responsible person</b>        | Steph Kirk, Attendance Officer<br>Candi Roberts, Headteacher |
| <b>Responsible governor</b>      | Chris Davidson,<br>Chair of Governors                        |
| <b>Responsible governor team</b> | FGB                                                          |
| <b>Date approved</b>             | Spring 2022                                                  |
| <b>Date of next review</b>       | Spring 2023<br>(or as new guidance available)                |
| <b>Policy reference</b>          | Adapted Kelsi Model                                          |

At Claremont we believe and recognise that the diversity of our community is one of our greatest strengths and assets. We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are treated fairly, and we have carefully considered and analysed the impact within this policy to promote equality of opportunity for all and we will use our position of influence as a school to work with all stakeholders to eliminate discriminatory barriers and ensure that our pupils have a sense of shared, common belonging and understanding

## Statement of Intent

Claremont Primary is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we monitor attendance on a weekly, termly and annual basis.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Claremont Primary.

## Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent by 9.30am and give a full reason for absence. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.**

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.55am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

Pupils finish school at 3.25pm. Parents should notify the office if they are going to be late collecting their child or if there is a change to the normal pick-up arrangements.

## The Role of School Staff

At Claremont Primary there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Assistant Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present,

absent or late. The class teacher notifies the Attendance Officer in the first instance of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by text message. If no response from parent a code of unauthorised absence will be entered
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes) on a daily/weekly/termly basis
- Teachers are informed termly of the child's attendance figure

### National Attendance Codes

| Codes | Description                        | Meaning                       |
|-------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| /     | Present (AM)                       | Present                       |
| \     | Present (PM)                       | Present                       |
| B     | Education off site (no dual reg)   | Approved educational activity |
| C     | Other authorised circumstances     | Authorised absence            |
| E     | Excluded                           | Authorised absence            |
| G     | Family holiday (not agreed)        | Unauthorised absence          |
| H     | Family holiday (agreed)            | Authorised absence            |
| I     | Illness                            | Authorised absence            |
| L     | Late (before registers close)      | Present – late for session    |
| M     | Medical/Dental appointments        | Authorised absence            |
| N     | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence          |
| O     | Unauthorised absence               | Unauthorised                  |
| P     | Approved sporting activity         | Approved Educational activity |
| R     | Religious observance               | Authorised absence            |
| U     | Late (after registers closed)      | Unauthorised absence          |
| V     | Educational visit or trip          | Approved educational activity |
| #     | School closed to pupils and staff  | Attendance not required       |
| Y     | Enforced closure                   | Attendance not required       |
| X     | Non-compulsory school age absence  | Attendance not required       |

### Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 96% + attendance – acceptable
- 94 – 95% attendance – the class teacher to investigate and notify the Attendance Officer of concerns and contact the parent, if appropriate, initially by letter
- 85 – 93% attendance - school intervention via letters/phone calls/meeting with parents via the Assistant Headteacher

- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification

### **Children Missing Education**

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service, when appropriate.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school

### **Being Late to School**

At Claremont Primary the register is taken at 9.00am and 1.00pm (KS1)/1.30pm (KS2). Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to the office where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.10am and 1.10pm (KS1)/1.40pm (KS2). Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in June 2020.**

- Where a pupil has been persistently late for 10 or more half-day sessions after the registers have closed (code U) a Penalty Notice Warning Letter, signed by the Headteacher, will be issued. The Penalty Notice Warning Letter will include:
  - Details of pupil's absence

- Offer to meet with the parent
- Statement of legal responsibilities of the parent regarding attendance
- The consequences for the parent in failing to ensure their child's regular attendance; in particular, a warning that further unauthorised and persistent absence could result in a Penalty Notice or prosecution
- An expectation that, after the warning letter, the level of attendance will significantly improve and that this improvement will be maintained

### **Authorising Absence**

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified. To request term time absence parents must complete an 'Application for leave of absence during term time' form at least 14 days before the start of the absence where possible.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that **will not** be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

### **Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

In some instances, a short amount of time out of school is required (music exams, medical appointments, school visits) and a Pupil Pass form must be completed at least 24 hours in advance and authorised by the school office.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers **can** agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **must** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

### **Local Authority Action**

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 school days) unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions (50 school days) – these do not have to be consecutive – the school will consider the following:

### **Local Authority School Liaison Officer Actions**

This may include:

- Attendance improvement meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast track to prosecution

### **Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance**

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in June 2020.**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or 50 school days – these do not need to be consecutive.

- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 per parent, per child, to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

### **Leave of Absence/Holiday**

From September 2013, the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations removing the Headteacher ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- With leave (the school has given permission)
- Due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- Religious observance
- Failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Awarding good attendance**

Children with 100% attendance at the end of the school year will receive an attendance award. We recognise that there are occasions where children will have had an authorised absence or exceptional circumstances which has prevented them from achieving 100% and these children will also receive an award.

## **Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021/2022 academic year**

### **Attendance Expectations**

Pupil attendance is mandatory and the usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

### **Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Although school attendance is mandatory, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). These include:

- Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) or PCR test
- Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of quarantine

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, a new category of non-attendance (code X) has been added to school attendance registers and this will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

### **Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19**

From 24 February 2022, all children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months (pupils) identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 are no longer required to isolate or take daily LFD tests for 7 days. Children should continue to attend their setting as normal.

### **National attendance codes in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Reasons for use</b>                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| X           | Pupil has symptoms, is self-isolating and is either awaiting results or had a positive COVID-19 test<br>Pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK     |
| I           | Pupil has tested negative for COVID-19 but remains unwell following test (such as with a different illness)<br>Pupil has completed their isolation period but is still feeling unwell |