



# Camp School

## Attendance policy

Approved by Governing Body: September 2013

Next review: September 2015

### **Aims**

We are committed to raising levels of attendance for individual children. We believe that only if children attend school regularly and punctually will they be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

We aim to work in partnership with parents and the Attendance Improvement Team to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils. Improving attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents/carers and school staff.

### **Statutory Framework**

A pupil of compulsory school age is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

### **Responsibility of pupils**

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from the class teacher, and if the need should arise, from the Head Teacher.

### **Responsibility of parents and carers**

Parents whose children are registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn.
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending regularly
- Impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- Take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- Work in partnership with school to resolve issues, which may lead to non-attendance
- Ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy
- Notify the school if their child is absent. This should be done as soon as possible – usually on the first day. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This should preferably be confirmed in writing when the child returns to school (but a phone call will be acceptable)
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- Ensure they do not book holidays during term time

### **Responsibility of the school**

- To support the attendance of pupils and deal with problems that may lead to non-attendance
- Call the attendance register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Differentiate between absence that is authorised and unauthorised
- Consider the maximising of attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole
- Support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issues which may lead to non-attendance
- Be sensitive to the needs of individual parents in the way in which attendance issues are addressed, recognising the reluctance some parents have coming into school and that some parents have difficulty understanding written communication

- Produce school attendance policies that are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents

## Registration

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases and should be kept for a minimum of date +3 years.

- The register must record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity. It must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.
- Registers will be called at 8:55am and at 1.00pm or 1.25pm daily, and will be marked in red or black in accordance with the list of symbols as set out in sheet in the front of the register.
- If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, he/she will be marked as absent. Pupils who arrive after the registers have closed should report to the school office where the office staff will ask them to complete their details in the 'late arrivals file'. The class teacher or office staff will subsequently amend the register entry to read absent/late. Corrections should be made so that the original is clearly distinguishable (Tippex should not be used).
- Registers will be checked regularly by the office staff and Head Teacher to ensure that correct procedures are being followed. The Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) will monitor the registers during his/her visits.
- Schools are required to notify their AIO of any pupils of compulsory age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason.
- Deletions and transfer information (using form EWN1) will be made in accordance with CFS Policy

## Punctuality

- Lateness should be monitored and followed up.
- When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she should be marked 'late' but counted as present for that session.
- When a pupil arrives late after the register has closed and provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- When a pupil arrives late and fails to give a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked 'unauthorised absent'.
- When a pupil arrives late having missed registration his/her presence on site should be noted in the 'late arrivals file' kept in the office. (This is important for fire/evacuation emergencies). Parents are asked to complete the details in the 'late arrivals file' if present with their child.

## Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence.

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. The school will decide on how an absence is to be recorded according to CFS guidelines. These state that:

*Absence should be **authorised** if:*

- The pupil is absent with leave (defined as "leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body").
- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home, and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for any of the following:
  - The child's transport to and from school,
  - Boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school,
  - Enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- The pupil is taking part in an approved public performance.
- The pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.
- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

- There are exceptional circumstances (e.g. there is a family bereavement). *Even in exceptional circumstances the child's attendance is expected to be **95% or better** for the 12 months prior to the absence request to be authorised.*

Absence should be **unauthorised** if:

- No explanation is forthcoming or the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

Examples of unauthorised absence may include:

- The pupil is shopping during school hours
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (eg a birthday)
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday

**Note:** Absence notes should be kept for at least a term. In the case of a pupil whose absence is a cause for concern they should be kept until the concern has passed.

## Requests for absence

Schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g a family bereavement). If there are exceptional circumstances behind a request for absence they should always be discussed with the Headteacher. If a child is absent from school because of a holiday or leave of absence that has not been agreed by the Headteacher, it will be classified as an unauthorised absence. In all cases an absence request form should be completed.

## Procedures for following up absence

The school office will contact a parent by telephone or text message if a pupil is absent and no reason/explanation has been provided by the parent/carer.

If a pupil has been absent without an explanation he/she will be given an appropriate absence form to be completed by his/her parents. If a pupil is absent for more than three consecutive days (without an explanation being forthcoming,) the Head Teacher or office staff will contact the parents again.

Absence patterns are monitored closely. If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Head Teacher will contact the parents and invite them to attend a meeting at school.

If a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and fails to bring a note or if the explanation offered by a note is unsatisfactory, the Head Teacher will contact the parents.

If a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the AIO during his/her consultation visits.

Notes from parents will be kept in the class register for the current term and subsequently transferred to the pupil's file. All telephone messages regarding absence/lateness are to be passed on to the class teacher and kept in the front of the register.

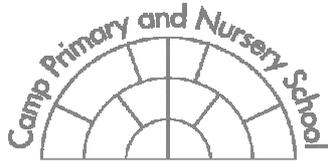
## Strategies for promoting attendance

- The school will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- A broad and balanced curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice.
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause of concern will be set targets for improvement. The class teacher will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be regularly reminded (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, text message, etc.) of the importance of good attendance.

- On admitting their children to school parents are asked to sign a *Home-School Agreement*.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be reintegrated back into school upon their return.
- The Head Teacher will make termly reports to the school's governing body on attendance matters.
- The school will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies – CSF, AIO, and local faith leaders etc. - when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Head Teacher will have regular meetings with the school's AIO in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

## **Appendices**

- 1) Request for absence form
- 2) Sample letter: Authorised Absence Request – Approved
- 3) Sample letter: Authorised Absence Request – Declined
- 4) Letter from Director of Education



# Camp School Attendance policy Absence request form

**Please note that where attendance is less than 95%, absence will not be authorised.**

School will not grant any leave of absence during term time. If there are exceptional circumstances behind a request for absence they should always be discussed with the Headteacher. If a child is absent from school because of a holiday or leave of absence that has not been agreed by the Headteacher, it will be classified as an unauthorised absence. This approach is strongly supported by the Department for Education and the Local Authority (see letter overleaf).

**Please note that where attendance is less than 95%, absence will not be authorised.**

I would like to apply for an authorised absence from school for the children named below:

Child(ren)'s Name(s)	Year Group
1. ....	.....
2.....	.....
3.....	.....

<p><b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:</b></p> <p>% Attendance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
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Dates of Absence

From ..... To .....

Total number of school days .....

The **exceptional circumstances** that require my child(ren) to be absent from school are:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Signed ..... (Parent/Carer) Date .....



**Authorised Absence Request - Approved**

**Date XXXXX**

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% attendance:

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Dear XXXXXXXX

I have received your letter requesting authorised absence for your child.

From:

To:

Number of school days:

Regular, punctual attendance is crucial for your child to make good progress in school. School policy states that in exceptional circumstances, and if annual attendance is 95% or better, permission may be granted for absence during term time. Your application falls into this category and I am able to authorise the absence.

Please ensure your child returns to school by the specified time or absences will be unauthorised. If a child is absent for more than the agreed number of school days absences will be recorded as unauthorised and they may be taken off roll and lose their place.

Please sign and return the copy of this letter.

Yours Sincerely

Louise Cornock (Head Teacher)

Parents signature: .....

Date: .....



**Authorised Absence Request -DECLINED**

**Date XXXXX**

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% attendance:

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Dear XXXXXX

I have received your letter requesting authorised absence for your child.

From:

To:

Regular, punctual attendance is crucial for your child to make good progress in school. As outlined in the school attendance policy, school will not grant any leave of absence during term time. This approach is strongly supported by the Department for Education and the Local Authority (see letter overleaf).

If you chose to take your child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and your child may lose their place on roll if they are absent for more than 6 weeks.

Please sign and return the copy of this letter.

Yours Sincerely

Louise Cornock (Head Teacher)

Parents signature: .....

Date: .....



**County Hall  
Hertford, SG13 8DF**

**TO PARENT/CARER**

**Tel:** 01992 555701  
**Fax:** 01992 555719  
**E Mail:** [justin.donovan@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:justin.donovan@hertfordshire.gov.uk)  
**Postal Point:** CHO126  
**My ref:** JD/jt

Dear Parent/Carer

I understand that you have requested that your child is given time away from school, in order to take part in a family holiday.

Recent changes to legislation make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree to extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

If there are exceptional circumstances behind your request you should discuss these with your head teacher. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and you may be fined or legal action taken against you.

I am sure that you will want the best education for your child. By taking family holidays during the designated holiday periods, you will be supporting your child's full school attendance, learning and development.

Yours sincerely,

**Justin Donovan**  
**Director of Education and Early Intervention**  
**Children's Services**