



Camp School

Attendance policy

Approved by Governing Body: February 2017

Next review: Spring 2020

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. All pupils are expected to aim for 100% attendance, with a minimum acceptable attendance of 95%.

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 ready 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 can be in person, by phone or in writing.
- 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
- Take 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 taken at 8:55am and at 1.00pm or 1.25pm daily, using an electronic register (SIMS)
- If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, he/she will be marked with an 'N' by class teacher. 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 office staff will subsequently amend the register entry to read 'late'.
- If a pupil fails to arrive at all office staff will subsequently amend the register with the appropriate symbol to explain the reason for absence.
- Registers will be checked regularly by the office staff and Head Teacher to ensure that correct procedures are being followed. The Attendance Improvement Officer will monitor the registers during his/her visits.
- Schools are required to notify their Attendance Improvement Officer 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 of information (using the 'Removal from roll' form) will be made in accordance with Children, Schools & Families 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. Registers will close at 9:30am.
- When a pupil arrives late after the register has closed they will be marked as 'U' in the register.
- 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 Head Teacher of the school can authorise an absence.

The school will decide on how an absence is to be recorded according to Children, Schools & Families 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 (e.g. 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 Head Teacher. If a child is absent from school because of a holiday or leave of absence that has not been agreed by the Head Teacher, 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 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. The Department for Education considers a pupil to be persistently absent if their rate of absence is 10% or above.

If a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and the parent/carer fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, the office or Head Teacher will contact the parents again.

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

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 office and Head Teacher will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be regularly reminded (via newsletters, the school prospectus, 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 – Children, Schools & Families, Attendance Improvement Officer, 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 contact with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer 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 Head Teacher. If a child is absent from school because of a holiday or leave of absence that has not been agreed by the Head Teacher, 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 child/ren named below:

Child/ren's Name/s	Year Group
1.
2.
3.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:
% Attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

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



Date

% attendance:

Dear XXXXXXXX

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

From:

To:

Number of school days:

Authorised Absence Request – Approved

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

Sharon Barton
Head Teacher

Parents signature:

Date:



Date

% attendance:

Dear XXXXXXX,

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

From:

To:

Number of school days:

Authorised Absence Request – DECLINED

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 choose 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 a copy of this letter.

Yours Sincerely

Sharon Barton
Head Teacher

Parents signature:

Date:

Children's Services
Director: Jenny Coles



County Hall CHO126
Hertford, SG13 8DF

Tel: 0300 123 4043
E-mail: jenny.coles@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Our ref: JC/MB/cji
Your ref:
Date: 12th September 2016

Dear Parent/ Carer,

I understand that you are unhappy with the Headteacher's decision not to authorise time away from school to allow your child to take part in a family holiday.

Changes to legislation, which came into force in September 2013, made clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 school 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 Headteacher. 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.

The power to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher and not with the local authority. If you are unhappy with the Headteacher's decision you should follow the school's complaints policy.

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

Jenny Coles
Director for Children's Services