



# ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

## Value Statement (who we are):

Coombe Hill Infants' School is an inclusive, community school with a strong tradition of mutual respect and tolerance within a nurturing family environment.

We provide an outstanding education for all children.

## Vision Statement (what we strive for):

Our vision is to develop strong minds, bodies and spirit in preparation for life. We sow the seeds of curiosity, enthusiasm and resilience to ensure all children continue to delight in their lifelong love of learning.

Responsibility: Janet Berry

Reviewed on: June 2017

Reviewed by: Janet Berry

Next review Date: January 2020

Governor Committee: Community, Children &  
Safeguarding – Becky Buckley

**"Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility"**

Coombe Hill Infants' School complies with the relevant legal duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998; we promote equality of opportunity and take positive steps to prevent any form of discrimination, either direct or indirect, against those with protected characteristics in all aspects of our work.

**This policy applies to Coombe Hill Infants' School including Coombe Connections Club.**

## **Introduction**

At Coombe Hill Infants' we recognise regular attendance and punctuality are essential for your Child's progress academically and socially. Children with good attendance are more settled and happy at school. Absences during term time could hinder this. Coombe Hill Infants' **does not authorise** holiday in term time, unless there is an exceptional circumstance.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. School staff should follow their procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.

At Coombe Hill Infants' we expect children to attend school everyday, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We recognise that good attendance is a whole school matter, and as such is of a primary concern to teaching staff, support staff, Educational Welfare Officers (EWO), Governors, parents and of course pupils.

*Every school day counts towards your child's future!*

## **Aims:**

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support children and their parents in establishing the highest level of attendance and punctuality possible.
- Ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer, to optimise learning.
- Enable children to progress confidently.
- Ensure attendance meets the Government and Local Authority targets.

## **Expectations:**

**We expect that all children will:**

- Attend school every day as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss with their class teacher any problems that may affect their school attendance

### **We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- Promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school everyday
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details

### **We expect that the school will:**

- Provide a comprehensive induction programme for all new entrants and parents to help children come to school willingly with a positive attitude
- Provide a bright, clean, warm and welcoming atmosphere
- Ensure teacher/assistants will be available from 8.45am at the classroom door to greet children and parents
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents
- Make initial enquiries regarding children who are not attending regularly
- Meet with the Education welfare Officer (EWO) regularly to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare

## **Definitions**

### **Authorised absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent.
- The Head teacher authorises the absence.
- If your child is unwell for more than 4 days, medical evidence will be required to authorise the absence.
- Religious or cultural observance can only be authorised if the school has been given advance notice.

### **Unauthorised absence**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.

- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- If your child is ill immediately before or after a school holiday we require medical evidence, without a medical letter this will be an unauthorised absence and may be referred to the Educational Welfare Service.
- Arriving at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Examples	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
	Genuine illness of the pupil Hospital/dental/doctor appointment for the pupil Major religious observances Visits to prospective new schools External exams or educational assessments	Shopping/ day trip/ visit to a theme park A birthday treat Oversleeping due to a late night Looking after other children/ other family members Appointments for other family members Holidays which have not been agreed

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

97%+	Good – well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress at school. Your child's attendance is at, or above, the school target.
93-96%	Below expected – Your child's attendance is below expected and will be monitored. You may receive a letter regarding your child's absence.
90-92%	Poor – Absence is now significantly affecting your child's attainment and progress. This will be closely monitored. The EWO may be involved at this stage.
90% and below	Unacceptable – Absence is seriously affecting attainment and progress. Your child's attendance is now a major concern. A referral to the EWO will be made, and strategies will be put in place to improve attendance quickly.

Coombe Hill Infants' and the Educational Welfare Officer work closely together and monitor attendance and punctuality. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. At Coombe Hill Infants' we understand that all children are individuals, and we will consider all factors affecting attendance before deciding on the most relevant intervention strategies to apply.

### **Reporting absences**

All absences **must** be reported on a daily basis. In all cases of absence parents should:

- Only keep your child away from school if really necessary. The school will always send home an unwell child. If your child is sent home from school poorly. It is our policy that your child stays at home for the rest of the day, and ensure they are recovered enough to remain at school of a whole day.

- Telephone the school on **02089429481** before 9.10am, or email [admin@chi.rbksch.org](mailto:admin@chi.rbksch.org) to let them know why your child is absent.
- **Please call daily and keep the school informed** if more than one days absence is necessary.
- If it is absolutely necessary for your child to attend a medical appointment during the school day, please bring your child to school before and /or after their appointment. Please bring a copy of the letter or appointment card to school.
- You are required to complete an absence application for any planned absence. The Headteacher will consider each application individually, and may require to meet with you.

If unexplained absences continue, or the school is concerned regarding irregular attendance the assistance of the EWO will be enlisted.

### **Lateness**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is essential that all children arrive at school on time. The school gate closes at 8.55am. If your child arrives after this time, they must enter via the school office. Parents must record the reason for the lateness. A record of pupils who are late is given to the Headteacher each Friday.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance and absence of every pupil
- Registration takes place at 9.00am, pupils who arrive after this time will be recorded as late to school. Registers are closed at 9.10am. Arrival after registers close will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with Department of Education guidance
- Afternoon registration takes place at 3pm
- Persistent lateness by a pupil may be referred to the EWO

All children are dismissed at 3.15pm, if you arrive later than this to collect your child, please come to the school office where you will have to sign out your child. At this time we will endeavour to contact you or your emergency contacts. If we are unable to make contact one hour after pick up time, we will refer to Kingston Children's Services. This also applies to Coombe Connections. The club manager has the right to charge for late collections from Coombe Connections, please refer to the Parent Handbook for further information.

## **Term Time Leave**

At Coombe Hill Infants', our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed. The Headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term time, and may only grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied by the evidence presented before authorising term time leave.

Any request of leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave during term time will not be granted when a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence.

## **The Law**

By law, parents must ensure that all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) receive suitable, full time education.

## **Leave of absence**

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) regulations 2013, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, states that Headteachers **may not grant any leave of absence during term time**, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If authorisation is granted due to an exceptional circumstance, a C code will be used in the register. Authorised Holiday (H) codes are no longer permitted in the register throughout the Borough of Kingston. G code will be used for unauthorised holiday.

## **Religious observances**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.

Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

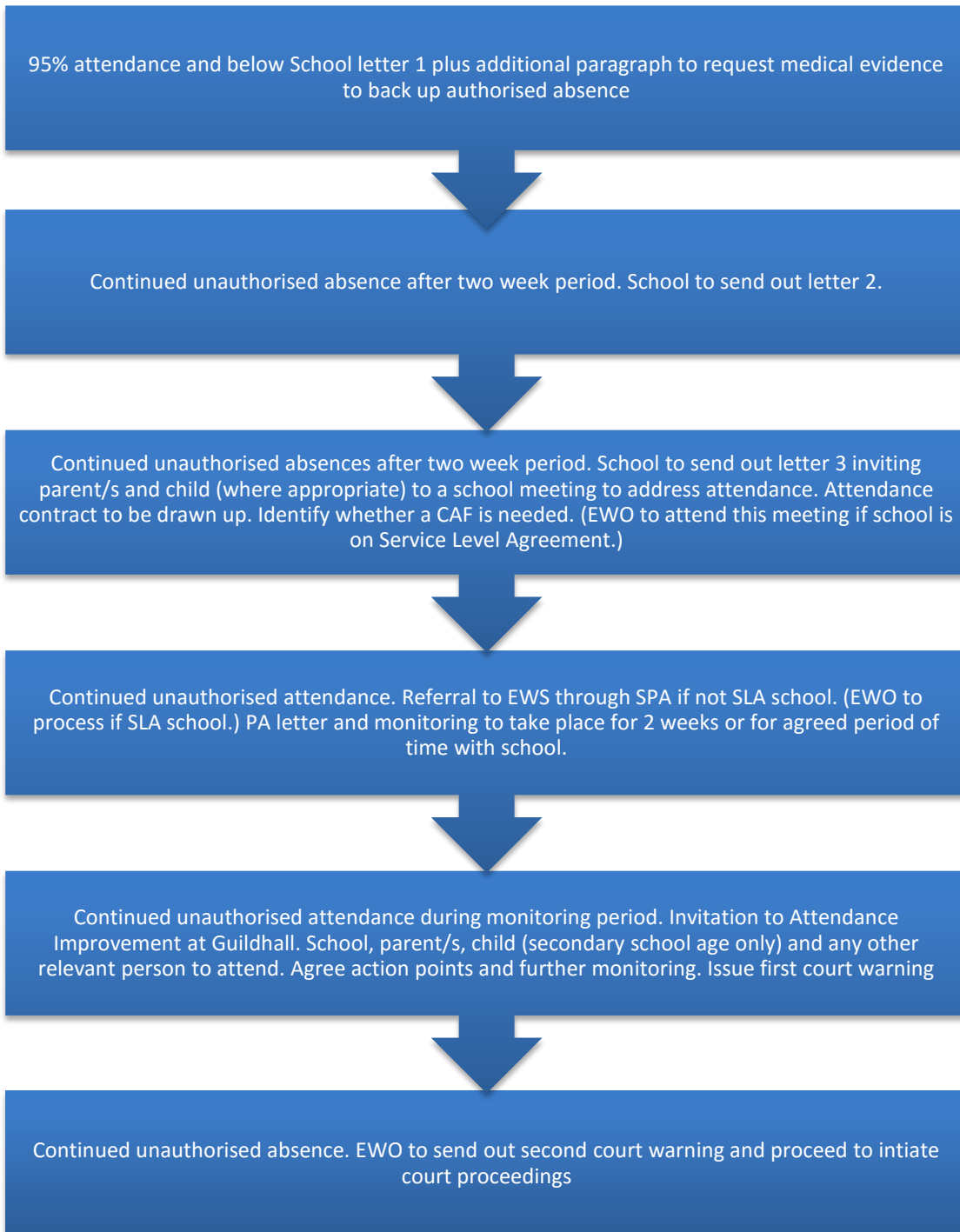
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Please sign and return this slip to school confirming that you have read and understood the Attendance policy.

Childs name..... Class.....

Parents signature..... Date.....

**Flow Chart checklist on school action on attendance below 95%.**



## EXAMPLE LETTER 1

<Date >

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <name of parent / carer>

RE: Absence Monitoring

In our recent monitoring of absence **child's name** appeared on our list of pupils whose attendance is below (insert %according to schools own policy).

**Child's name** attendance is currently (insert %) for the period (insert date) to (insert date).

**This percentage falls below the government target of 97% attendance and shows that your child has had a larger than average number of days off due to illness. We appreciate that children can become ill and need days off to recover however we would now ask you to seek medical advice for future illnesses and provide evidence of this in order for it be authorised by the school.**

If this pattern of attendance was to continue for the remainder of the year your child will not be able to keep up with his/her work. If this pattern of attendance continues and it falls below the 90% level and is unauthorised you will be referred to Education Welfare who may need to take the matter further.

If there are any concerns or circumstances affecting your child's attendance, other than illness, please ensure you make an appointment to see (insert name of head teacher or senior teacher) at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely

Name

Attendance Officer or alternatively the letter be sent out by the head teacher



## EXAMPLE LETTER 2

<Date >

<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>

Dear <name of parent / carer>

Since we wrote to you on <date of 1st letter>, <name of pupil>'s attendance has failed to improve significantly, and is now <attendance percentage>%. This is below what we expect and to put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year – your child will spend more time at home than at school this academic year!

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. It is important that low attendance is dealt with as early as possible to prevent poor habits of attendance forming with <name of pupil>. Poor attendance habits now will make it increasingly difficult for you to ensure your child attends school regularly as they get older.

We wish to help <name of pupil> to improve <his/her> attendance. If you would like to discuss <name of pupil>'s attendance please contact <school contact> on <school contact number> and I will be happy to talk with you and if required arrange a meeting. We would appreciate your support to make sure <name of child>'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve.

Thank you for your cooperation

Yours sincerely  
<School Contact

### **EXAMPLE LETTER 3**

#### **School Meeting Letter**

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Child

Child's Name: Template Child Date of Birth: 01/01/1900

School: Tester School

Current Attendance Level: 70%

You will recall that I wrote to you on (date) regarding Template's poor attendance at Tester School. I enclose a copy of Template's registration certificate, showing that since (date), Template has had 30 sessions of unauthorised absence. You will notice that further unauthorised absence has occurred.

I need to make you aware that the Education Act 1996 states that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends the school at which they are on roll. A failure to do this could result in legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

I would therefore like to meet with you to discuss this and support you in ensuring Template attends school regularly. I would like to meet you at (location of visit) at (time) on (date). If you cannot make this meeting, please can you inform me by contacting me on (contact details)?

Yours sincerely