

Attendance Policy



Review Details:

Next review due:	November 2026
Committee responsible:	Curriculum Committee
Document location	Teachers Shared J:Drive - Policies

Version	Approved by	Date approval	Key changes
2.0		22/10/2020	- Policy updated with consistent approach - All tables removed - Easier to read format
2.1		19/10/2021	3 Parents and carers responsibilities 3.1 Reporting Absence (List added) 3.3 changes to times
2.2		05/01/23	- Numbered bullet points added - Date changes
2.3		16/01/24	- Date Changes - Footers Added
2.4		14/01/25	- Date Changes 1.1 to 1.13 added 3.6 'Term time holiday' added 4.6 added 4.8 Removed (no letters or calls)
2.5		09/12/25	4.9 Lateness and detentions

Reviewed December 2025

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Part 1: EIA Screening

Policies, Procedures or Practices:	Attendance Policy	DATE:	09.12.25
EIA CARRIED OUT BY:	A Walters	EIA APPROVED BY:	E Vindel

Groups that may be affected:

Are there concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for a positive impact
Age (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		X
Disability (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication)		X
Gender reassignment (transsexual)		X
Marriage and civil partnership		N/A
Pregnancy and maternity		N/A
Racial groups (consider: language, culture, ethnicity including gypsy/traveller groups and asylum seekers)		X
Religion or belief (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)		X
Sex (male, female)		X
Sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender; actual or perceived)		X

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Coniston Primary School, pupils' learning is at the heart of everything we do, but children cannot learn if they are absent. Absence from school has a proven negative effect on individual pupil progress, attainment, class learning and attitudes to school.
- 1.2 Effective schools must convey a positive attitude for regular attendance to parents/carers, pupils and staff. Coniston Primary School are proactive in promoting regular attendance and punctuality, ensuring that pupils take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.
- 1.3 This document defines the policies and procedures implementation of which will help to achieve the following objectives:
- To improve attendance and punctuality
 - To reduce the percentage of unauthorised absence
 - To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm
 - To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
 - To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Education Act of 1996 states that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of school age attend school regularly and punctually and that children receive a suitable education. **Our expectation is that students arrive on time and attend regularly - that is every day the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so.**
- 2.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration - England) Regulations 2006 the governing body of a school is responsible for making sure that attendance registers are kept and the Education (School Attendance Targets - England) Regulations 2007 require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set overall attendance targets.
- 2.3 Schools are responsible for completing attendance registers for morning and afternoon sessions and following up any recorded absences to:
- Ascertain the reason
 - Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
 - Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- 2.4 Schools are also responsible for monitoring pupil attendance and lateness and, where a pupil has a significant absence/lateness record, contacting the Associate Education Welfare Officer, who is responsible for working with the school and parents/carers to resolve the issue.
- 2.5 Working with the Associate Welfare Officer, schools will also decide if the parents/carers should be fined for failing to meet their responsibilities.
- 2.6 Coniston Primary School recognises that they have the responsibility to build a good working relationship with parents/carers by regularly publishing the arrangements for notifying absence and the school's policy towards authorised absence, on the school website and through

newsletters.

3. Procedures

3.1 Parents and carers:

- Under the 1996 Education Act, it is the law that parents or carers must ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents or carers may be reported to the Local Authority if their children's absence from school is a significant cause for concern.
- With regard to this, parents and carers must follow the school procedures for reporting any absence:

3.2 Reporting Absence:

- If a child is unwell, parents are required to phone the school or leave a message on the answer phone on each day of absence stating the reason the child cannot attend school.
- If a parent or carer has failed to notify the school office of the absence through a telephone call, text or note by 9:10am, then the school will run through all emergency contacts given by the parent in an attempt to clarify the situation.
- If a child is absent from school for more than 2 consecutive days (without any explanation) the school may contact the Educational Welfare Officer and then social care; this is to ensure your child is safe.
- If the Educational Welfare Officer is not available, school staff may make a home visit.
- Persistent absence which remains unauthorised will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.
- Parents and carers should make all medical appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. Notification of absence for unavoidable medical appointments must be made in advance of the appointment by telephoning the school on 01454866920 and by completing the absence request form.
- Parents or carers must, when requested, provide proof, such as an appointment card, when absences require further justification or authorisation will not be given.
- Parents or carers should be aware that a letter or phone call does not in itself authorise the absence. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation will authorise the absence.
- Parents or carers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their child arrives punctually to and is collected punctually from school every day. If punctuality problems are of a persistent nature, parents or carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to improve the situation.

3.3 Pupil Registration:

The schools are required to maintain two registers:

- An admission register (known as the school roll) containing a list of all pupils at the school
- An attendance register
- Both registers are legal documents and are completed in line with school policy.
- The attendance register provides the daily record of the attendance of all pupils. It may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. Attendance data from registers is also used in pupil's annual reports.
- The registers are usually taken electronically through the classroom computers. They are taken twice per day, at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Paper based registers are always available in case of computer failure.
- Within the register each pupil is noted either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If a pupil is absent, the register will record whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.
- Electronic transfer of data means the school's administration staff are immediately informed of absences or lateness and can take any required safeguarding actions.

3.4 Recording Lateness:

All pupils are expected to be in school for registration at the start of the day. The external doors to the playground and classrooms used by all children are closed promptly at 8.55am. All children arriving after this time enter through the front door and sign in late at the office.

- Morning registration takes place between 8.45am and 8.55am.
- Afternoon registration takes place between 1.00pm and 1.05pm.
- Any pupil arriving after the closure of registration will be recorded as late.
- An unauthorised absence is recorded for children arriving after 9.30am.

3.5 Signing in and Out

- When a pupil is taken from school during the day then the parent/carer is required to sign the pupil out on leaving and in on return in the signing in/out book located in the main office.

3.6 Classifying Absence

- Any pupil who is absent from school will have their absence recorded as being authorised or unauthorised. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.
- Authorised absence is where the Headteacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences are treated as unauthorised.

Absence will only be routinely authorised for:

- bereavement
- bad weather (where it would be a safety risk to attempt to come to school)
- illness

- dental or medical appointments

The Headteacher, on behalf of the Governors, will consider requests for authorised absence, outside the above categories, only where exceptional circumstances exist.

- Requests for authorised absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher explaining the exceptional circumstances relating to the request. A discussion with the Headteacher might be helpful before a written request is made.
- It should be noted that the authorised criteria list does not include absence for family holidays. Under government regulations, a Headteacher can agree to a holiday in term time **ONLY** where there are 'exceptional circumstances'. No absence will be authorised unless the Headteacher is satisfied that there are such exceptional circumstances.
- To have a week's Term time holiday, because the cost is cheaper during term time, **does not** constitute an exceptional circumstance.

In making the decision the Headteacher will take into account factors such as:

- The age of the child
- The nature of the event for which leave is sought
- The timing of the proposed absence
- The duration of the proposed absence
- The attendance pattern in the present and previous academic years (Absence will not be authorised where attendance is lower than 95% or where the absence would take attendance below 95%)
- The child's progress/attainment
- The child's ability to catch up on missed schooling
- The Headteacher will ensure that the judgements on what constitutes exceptional circumstances are consistent to ensure fairness and consistency of approach where children from the same family are involved.
- Parents/carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

4. Attendance / Lateness Monitoring and Management:

4.1 The school monitors the attendance of all pupils on a regular basis. Where school has identified that a child's attendance has:

- Fallen below the level of 95% in any term
- And/or below the level of 95% with 3+ broken weeks

4.2 The Educational Welfare Officer will decide whether a standard letter will be issued to the family. This will make them aware of the concerns and the importance of consistent and regular attendance at school.

4.3 If there is no subsequent improvement in a child's attendance a request will be made for a meeting with the parents/carers and, where necessary, the Associate Education Welfare

Officer. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss expectations and try to ensure that their child's attendance improves. Attendance Plans will be put in place for families requiring additional support.

- 4.4 The school will endeavour to work with and support all children and families wherever possible.
- 4.5 The school will identify situations where there is a pattern of pupil absence/lateness which could become an issue and discuss the problem informally with the parents/carers.
- 4.6 Where repeated absence affects learning and progress, children may be supported to catch up during break and lunchtimes on their return, to avoid falling further behind their peers.
- 4.7 Where a pupil has frequent absences for medical reasons discussions will take place with healthcare professionals to evaluate the child's health and educational requirements.
- 4.8 Where children are regularly late the school will write to the parents/carers informing them of the schools concerns and offering support to help rectify the situation. If lateness is consistent and parents/carers have not responded to support from the school then a referral will be made to the Associate Education Welfare Officer.
- 4.9 If a child is late, 3 or more times in a term, the teacher will contact the parent and a letter will be sent home explaining that any further lateness will result in a lunchtime detention of up to an hour, each time the child is late that term.
- 4.10 We expect our students to attend school on time every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so.
- 4.11 During celebration assembly on a Friday, the class with the highest attendance percentage will be awarded with a sticker. The class with the most stickers at the end of each term will be awarded the attendance trophy and will have a reward day during the first week of the following term.

5. Issuing Penalty Notices:

- 5.1 Penalty Notices are fines imposed on parents/carers as an alternative to legal prosecution under the Education Act for failing to ensure that registered pupils of school age attend school regularly/punctually.
- 5.2 A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent/carer in one or more of the following circumstances:
 - Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
 - Truancy before or during the school day
 - Absences that have never been properly explained
 - Taking holidays that have not been authorised
 - Persistent arrival after the register has closed.
- 5.3 A pupil has to be absent from school in one or a combination of these circumstances for at least ten sessions (there are two sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon) in any 7 week period before the issuing of a Penalty Notice can be considered.

5.4 The fine imposed under a Penalty Notice is currently £60 (per parent/carer, per child) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice (rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days). The payment must be made in full and details of how to pay are printed on the notice. There is no right of appeal by parents against a Penalty Notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority will decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice.

5.5 Issue of Penalty Notices will always be preceded by contact from the school.

5.6 Any decision to issue a notice will only be taken after discussion with the Associate Education Welfare Officer and after other intervention has been tried.

5.7 Penalty Notices will always be issued in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.

5.8 Penalty Notices will be issued to each parent/carer liable for the attendance offence(s) by the local authority or someone authorised by them.

5.9 All parents/carers will be given information regarding Penalty Notices and the circumstances under which they are issued.

6. Guidelines for Parents / Carers

What can parents/carers do to help?

- Let the school know the first morning why your son/daughter is away
- Try to make medical, optician etc appointments outside school time
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Do not book family holidays during term time

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to your son/daughter; it may be something simple
- Talk to the class teacher
- Talk to the Family Link
- Talk to the Headteacher

If it continues

- You may contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation. (Number available from the School Office)
- A penalty notice or prosecution will only be recommended as a last resort when all other interventions have failed to improve attendance.

7. Summary of School Arrangements

- School begins at 8.45am
- Any child arriving after 8.55am is 'late' and needs to enter through main entrance and have their name entered in the Late Book.
- Any child arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as 'late' and this will result in an unauthorised absence.

- Registers are taken in the morning and afternoon
- Leave of absence requests need to be put in writing, in advance, FAO Headteacher on a Request for Absence form which can be obtained from both the school office and the website.

Signed (Chair of Governors)

Date:

Next Review Date: November 2026

Signed:

(Chair, Curriculum Committee)