



# POWELL CORDEROY SCHOOL

## PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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**Last reviewed:** Summer 2016

**Due for review:** Summer 2017

**Owner:** Head Teacher

**Reviewed by:** Performance and Welfare

**Review Status:** Annual

### INTRODUCTION

Powell Corderoy School firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which school and home must seek to avoid. Research has shown that children who attend school regularly are likely to be more successful – in school and in their adult life. Children who miss schooling may also find it more difficult to maintain and develop friendships with their peers.

To this end we will do all that we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance, but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or be served with a penalty notice.

In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. Schools are therefore required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report.

### EXPECTATIONS

**We expect parents/carers to ensure that all pupils:**

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss with their class teacher or Head Teacher any problems preventing them from attending school

**We expect all parents/carers who have responsibility for the children to:**

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- contact the school by 9:30am for every day on which any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- provide appropriate evidence to justify absences of 3 or more consecutive days

- if required and requested by the school, provide appropriate evidence to justify frequent, short-term absences (defined as when overall attendance for any one term falls below 90%).

### **We expect that school staff will carry out the following duties relating to pupil attendance:**

Teaching staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, as required by law
- provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns

School administrative staff will:

- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible for every morning a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence

The Head Teacher will:

- encourage good attendance through reward certificates
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- request evidence, if and when appropriate, to justify necessary periods of long-term or frequent absence
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and involve the Home School Link Worker if appropriate

The Dorking Schools Partnership Home School Link Worker may:

- working with the attached Education Welfare Officer (EWO), follow up concerns about attendance by contacting or visiting parents/carers at home

### **ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

1. **If you know in advance that your child will be off school**, e.g. for a prearranged medical appointment, please let the school know by telephone or in writing at least 24 hours in advance. It may be appropriate for the school to provide work for your child during this time.
2. **If your child is absent for any reason**, please phone the School Office **by 9:30 on every day** of their absence, giving your reason for keeping them at home. This is a child protection measure, to ensure all children on roll in school can be accounted for each day.
3. **When your child returns**, please send them back with a note for their teacher, dated and signed by you, telling the school why they have been absent. The school has to receive a signed letter from the parent or guardian providing an acceptable reason for any absence (please refer to 'categories of absence' below.) If we do not have an acceptable reason, the absence has to be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

Education Welfare may issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

### **Exceptional Leave of Absence**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Powell Corderoy Primary School does **not** authorise any holiday time during the school term.

School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in **exceptional circumstances**. School will not authorise any leave of absence taken during assessment weeks.

Where a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made on the appropriate form, in writing, to the Head Teacher who will consider the application on behalf of the Governors. All requests should be submitted to the Head Teacher at least two weeks before the first day of intended absence. If your child has siblings at another school also requesting leave of absence, you must state this on the request form so that the two or more schools can agree on their decision.

If a holiday is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

## **CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE**

Every half-day absence from school is categorised as either authorised or unauthorised absence.

### **Authorised Absences**

An authorised absence (one which the school agrees is reasonable) will only be granted for:

- Child illness
- Medical appointments
- External examinations (e.g. music or dancing exams, entrance exams)
- Educational assessments conducted by approved agencies
- Religious observances (e.g. funerals, major feast days in religions other than Christianity)
- Educational activity at an alternative site (e.g. taking part in a county sports event)
- Visits to prospective new schools

If you need to make a request to the Head Teacher for a period of authorised absence, you can pick up a form from the School Office. Please submit your request to the Head Teacher as early as possible, so that there is time for the request to be considered and for approval to be given if appropriate.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An unauthorised absence is one which the school would not consider reasonable, and may include:

- A trip to the theatre
- Shopping for new school shoes or uniform
- A child staying at home because a parent is ill
- Having a hair cut
- Holiday

All such absences need to be avoided in the interest of ensuring that your child develops a good habit of attending school regularly, allowing them to fulfil their potential academically, socially and emotionally.

### **Lateness**

School begins at 8.55am, and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. The register closes at 9.00am. The school gate is locked at 8:55am - late arrivals should enter school via

the office and are recorded on arrival. A late mark officially counts as an unauthorised absence. If the child is accompanied, their parent or carer will be required to give a reason for the lateness. Afternoon lessons begin at 1.00pm in Years R- 2, and at 1.10pm in Years 3-6. Children who go home for lunch are expected to be back in school before afternoon registration. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken.

### **MONITORING AND REPORTING PROBLEMS WITH ABSENCE**

At the end of each half term, the school will analyse attendance data for all children. In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) 2006, all **unauthorised** absences of 10 days or more will be reported to the Local Authority.

Letters will be sent home to families if their child's absence is a cause for concern. Unless there are known exceptional circumstances (for example, a long stay in hospital), this includes the following reasons:

#### **1. Attendance at or below 90% for the first time**

A letter will be sent home to warn that attendance is a cause for concern and offer an appointment with the Head Teacher to discuss ways of supporting you to improve this.

#### **2. Attendance at or below 90% over a second half term within a rolling year**

A letter will be sent with a specific appointment offered to meet with Head Teacher and discuss any issues which may be affecting attendance. Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence in future if their child is off school due to illness, in order for absences to be authorised. If medical evidence is not provided, future absences for illness will not be authorised.

**3. If, following stages 1 and 2, there are more than 10 unauthorised absences in a half term, within a rolling year,** a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Office. A letter will be sent inviting you to a meeting with the Head Teacher and Educational Welfare Officer to plan together for improvements.

### **PROMISE**

At Powell Corderoy we are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All issues concerning persistent absences will be handled sensitively and in confidence. If you are worried about your child's attendance, please talk to the class teacher or Headteacher.

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Policy approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ (print name)

On behalf of: \_\_\_\_\_ (committee or FGB)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. **This means we cannot grant leave of absence for holidays taken in term time, or recreational visits.**

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request. The Head Teacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

<b>Name of child(ren):</b>	<b>Class(es):</b>
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for the following dates: from: _____ to: _____	
Number of school days missed:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:	
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details:	
Please give details of any other children you have, and the schools they attend:	
Signed: (Parent/Carer)	Date:

**To be completed by the Head Teacher**

Child's attendance level over the last 12 months:		
Our overall school target for attendance this year is		%
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved		The absence will be recorded as authorised (pending the receipt of any evidence requested).
Not approved		The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
Explanatory notes:		
Please provide the following evidence (without which the absence cannot be approved):		
Signed: _____  (Headteacher)		Date: _____



# Children Missing in Education

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## School's Duties - **display in school office**

- Schools, including Academies and Free Schools, must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register.
- Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals in which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who are **regularly absent** from school or have **missed 10 school days** or more without permission.
- Schools must also notify the authority if a pupil is to be **deleted from the admission register** in certain circumstances.
- Pupils who remain on a school roll are not necessarily missing education but schools should **monitor attendance** and address it when it is poor.
- It is also important that pupils' **irregular attendance** is referred to the authority.
- Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should **investigate any unexplained absences**.
- Schools must also arrange **full-time education for excluded pupils** from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the school exclusions guidance.

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At Powell, this guidance is used to inform:

- Daily attendance management
- Termly attendance management meetings between admin staff and HT
- Pupil Attendance Policy