



'Doing our best to achieve our best'

Clarendon Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

Introduction

At Clarendon Primary School, we have an expectation that all children come to school or nursery on time every day as any time away from school will have an impact on their education. Children quickly learn that their attendance is important to their learning and that good attendance is essential for a successful future.

Research shows that children who regularly attend school tend to achieve higher standards than children with low attendance. As a school we want all our children to be happy and achieve, and want them to have a good level of education so they have more choices and opportunities in adult life.

How it adds up!

Attendance Percentage	Days missed over a school year	
100%	0 days	
95%	10 days	(2 weeks missed learning)
90%	20 days	(4 weeks missed learning)
85%	30 days	(6 weeks missed learning or ½ a term)
80%	40 days	(8 weeks missed learning or over ½ a term)

Our number one aim is to always work in partnership with parents / carers in order to support good attendance and punctuality, manage any problems or concerns that may arise at the earliest possible opportunity and implement our shared statutory responsibilities that are outlined by the DfE and central government.

As a school we convey the importance of regular attendance to parents and children through:

- Our school newsletter.
- Discussions with parents at parent consultation evenings, induction meetings and parent visits to the school prior to their child's admission.
- Weekly school assemblies, half-termly attendance raffles and termly attendance rewards.
- Regular daily contact with parents when entering school in the morning.
- Attendance monitoring letters and specifically arranged meetings to discuss reasons for lower than expected rates of attendance.

(This is in line with the DfE guidance as outlined in [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#))

School opening times:

The school is open for children in Reception to Year 6 as follows:

- Registration begins at 8.40am, which is the time when all children need to be in their classrooms; however, the gate opens at 8.30am for children to come in early and go straight to their classroom. (This is known as a 'soft start' and helps children liaise with their class teacher before school officially starts and / or complete planned 'early work' activities.)
- School finishes at 3.10pm.

The school is open for children in the nursery as follows:

- For children who attend on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning – Nursery starts at 8.45am and finishes at 2.55pm on Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday, Nursery starts at 8.45am and finishes at 11.45am.
- For children who attend on Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday – Nursery starts at 12pm on

Wednesday and finishes at 3pm. On Thursday and Friday, Nursery starts at 8.45am and finishes at 2.55pm.

- For children who attend full-time – Nursery starts at 8.45am and finishes at 2.55pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday Nursery starts at 8.45am and finishes at 3pm.

Lateness

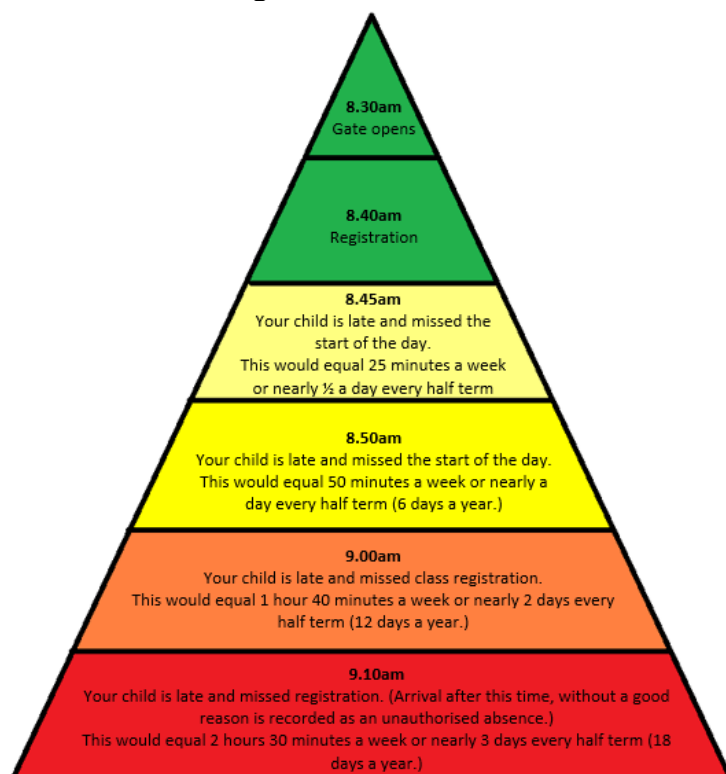
The school opens at 8.30am, with the school day officially beginning at 8.40am. All pupils (Reception to Year 6) are expected to be in school and in their classrooms by 8.40am at the latest ready for registration. The registration period is from 8.40 to 8.55am. Any child arriving at school (Reception to Year 6) after 8.40am, but before 9.10am, will be recorded as 'late before close of registration'. Any child arriving after 9.10am will be marked as 'late after the close of registration', which is statistically an unauthorised absence for that session.

Furthermore, any child arriving later than 8.40am must be accompanied by a parent or carer to the school office to sign in; providing the reason for their lateness. This will then be recorded on the child's individual attendance record.

For children in nursery who arrive after the nursery gate has been locked at 9am, they must be accompanied to the school office by a parent or carer to sign in; providing the reason for their lateness. This will then be recorded on the child's individual attendance record.

It is important to remember that pupils who are consistently late are not only disrupting their education, but also the education of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken.

Every minute of learning counts:



Persistent lateness can also:

- Cause embarrassment to the child
- Make it harder for the child to settle
- Cause disruption to the rest of the class

Completing the Register

As a school and nursery provision, staff understand the importance of correct marking of registers and know that incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable. Registers provide a daily record of attendance for each pupil and may be required by the Surrey Attendance Service or in a court of law as evidence, particularly where a fixed penalty notice has been issued. They also contribute to a pupil's end of year report.

Daily and weekly attendance figures are completed by the School Office and analysed by the School's Attendance Officer and Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis. Running totals of authorised and unauthorised absence are maintained and reported to parents when they fall below a certain level or raise possible concerns. All registers at Clarendon are kept electronically.

All staff are aware that it is crucial that registers are kept up to date and accurate. This is particularly important for Health & Safety and Safeguarding reasons as, in the event of a fire or other emergency, staff need to be able to quickly account for all children who are present in the school.

Encouragement, recognition and rewards for good attendance

To support good attendance staff at Clarendon Primary School and Nursery strive to build positive relationships with all pupils and parents. We believe that mutually respectful and positive relationships enable us to understand, support and improve attendance. Our pupils need to feel safe in school, ready to learn, and experience a curriculum which is engaging and purposeful.

Alongside the most important rewards that come with good attendance; (i.e. obtaining a good education, making good progress and being able to spend time with friends and classmates), the school also has a range of other strategies used to recognise and reward good attendance. These include:

- Children being welcomed into school / class / nursery in the morning.
- Children's attendance contributing to their class' overall weekly attendance total, with a chance of being part of the winning class announced in Friday's assembly and recorded in the weekly newsletter. (Reception to Year 6.)
- Children's attendance contributing to their class' overall weekly attendance total, with a chance of being part of the winning class at the end of a half-term; Reception to Year 6. (**N.B** – At the end of each half-term the winning class receive the half-termly chocolates to enjoy with their classmates.)
- Having their name placed in the attendance raffle (once for each full week of attendance), with a chance of having their name drawn out in the last achiever's assembly each half-term to win a prize. (Reception to Year 6.)

Types of absence

All children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised absence – where the school approves the absence.
- Unauthorised absence – where the school will not approve the absence.

Reporting an absence

If a child is absent from school, parents should email the school office on clarendonschool@googlemail.com or phone them on 01784 253379, before registration. Parents can also make contact earlier if they wish, using our answer phone system to leave a message. This should be on the first day of the absence and clearly state the reason for it. Parents should continue to contact the school on a daily basis until their child has returned.

If a child is on the Child Protection register, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, (DSL) will be informed and act as appropriate. Where a child is in the care of the Local Authority, daily contact will be made by the relevant authority to check whether the child is in school.

To help identify whether your child is too unwell to attend school, please refer to the [NHS' 'is my child too ill for school?' guidance](#).

Where a child is absent due to illness, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, this will be marked as authorised.

For children of statutory school age (Reception to Year 6), where absence levels are causing concern, or where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence,

such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

In the event of a child being absent from school or nursery, to support ongoing contact with parents/carers, the school will hold (wherever possible) the contact details of at least 2 different individuals on a child's SIMs record.

Following up unexplained absence

Where a pupil we were expecting does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Day 1	Send a text message to the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. (For children of statutory school age, any unexplained absence cannot be legally authorised unless a valid reason has been provided.)
Day 2	If the pupil is still not accounted for the school will phone / email parents each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, for statutory school aged children, the school will seek further support from the Surrey Attendance Service (SAS).
Day 3	
Day 4	<p>If a pupil is still not accounted for, the school will phone / email all contacts. If there is no adequate response then a member of staff, accompanied by another person, will consider whether visiting the home address is appropriate visit the home. Where this occurs they will deliver a letter stating that the school has concerns and has endeavoured to make contact with parents. This letter will also be emailed to all contacts. The letter will state that if the school does not hear from parents by the end of the day, the school will inform the Surrey Attendance Service (SAS) as well as consider making contact with the Police, asking for a welfare check. The DSL may also make contact with Surrey Children's Services to alert them to our concerns.</p> <p>Despite the fact that attendance at nursery is non-statutory, where non-attendance concerns exist for nursery aged children and contact cannot be made with a parent or other contact provided, the school will consider making contact with the Police, asking for a welfare check; particularly where non-attendance concerns are part of wider pattern of concerns. The DSL will also consider making contact with Surrey Children's Services to alert them to our concerns.</p>
Day 5	Phone all contacts and liaise with SAS (for statutory school aged children). Consider making contact with the Police and Surrey Children's Services.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents, wherever possible, to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and parents should provide evidence of the appointment.

Approval for term-time absence

Whilst the headteacher will authorise a pupils absence from school for certain educational activities or to attend other schools, they will only grant **a leave of absence** to a pupil during term time for other types of activities if the request meets one of the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances include:

- Taking part in a regulated performance.

- Attending an 'interview' e.g. for a specific type of secondary school application.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable.
- Other exceptional circumstances.

Any leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Each application is reviewed individually; taking into account the specific details provided, the individual circumstances presented and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted using the school's 'application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances form' which can be requested via the school office. This should then be sent back to the office as soon as a leave requirement is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.

Leave of absence will not be granted for holidays. There are 175 non-school days per year and therefore all holidays should be booked during this time. Legislation does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child (of statutory school age) on holiday during term time. If a parent takes a child of statutory school age out of school during term time they could be fined as per the information set out in the 'penalty notices' section.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness.
- Medical / dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the Surrey Inclusion Service and/or the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school, and no alternative provision has been made.
- To attend an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school.
- To attend another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration).
- To attend provision arranged by the local authority.
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by a public / service emergency or because the school premises are closed.

Unauthorised Absence during Term Time

As a school we know that a pupil's absence, during term time, can seriously disrupt their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away from school, but are also less prepared for subsequent lessons that build on these sessions after their return. This can subsequently result in a risk of underachievement.

The Local Authority policy states that where unauthorised absence exceeds 20 school days' and where reasonable endeavours to make contact with the family have been unsuccessful, the child's name can be removed from the school roll. Furthermore, if any period of absence has been authorised and the child does not return to school after this period, the child's name can be removed from roll after 10 school days. When a child's name is removed from our register, the local authority will be informed that the child is considered 'missing in education'. Once removed, the parents will also have to reapply to the Local Authority for a new school place.

If a child is taken out of school unauthorised, or authorised absence teachers will not be expected to provide work for these children.

Attendance and lateness monitoring:

To ensure good attendance is consistently maintained by all children, with absence and lateness identified as soon as a concern arises, the school implements a range of systems. These include:

- Classroom based staff informally monitoring absence and lateness; discussing this with parents as soon as a potential concern arises. This is to identify, manage and support any possible reasons that may be causing this as well as to ensure parents understand the impact ongoing absences and / or lateness will have on their child's education.
- Informal daily and weekly monitoring by the attendance officer on the gate in the morning. Again, this is to identify and support (as early as possible), the management of any concerns or worries that may be leading to this and ensuring parents understand the impact ongoing absences and / or lateness has on their child's education.
- Individual review of any child's attendance register, (where a concern arises), to identify possible reasons for this as well as appropriate action needed to manage, support and improve this.
- Formal half-termly monitoring by the attendance officer, with any concerns subsequently discussed and reviewed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, with actions and next steps identified to support this.
- For children of statutory school age, the headteacher and school's attendance officer meet half-termly with the local authority's Attendance, Advice and Intervention Officer to discuss the attendance of children 'causing concern'.
- Each child's attendance and number of lates reported formally to each child's parent at the end of the year as part of their end of year school report.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance.
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.
- Conduct, thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data patterns and trends.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence to help develop strategies to address them.

Attendance and lateness management:

Whilst we fully understand there are sometimes valid and legitimate reasons why a child is late or absent from school (e.g. to attend a doctor's appointment or because they are too unwell to attend), as previously stated, ongoing lateness and absence can have a significant impact on a child's education and social integration.

To support consistently good attendance and punctuality, we know that it is crucial to work in close partnership with parents, particularly where a potential concern arises. To this end we have clear processes in place to both alert parents to changes in their child's attendance and, where necessary, to help them improve this. These processes include the following steps:

- Classteachers initially speaking with parents/carers, as soon as a decline in attendance or punctuality is noticed. This is to see if there are any possible reasons for this, which can be supported and managed.
- Sharing with parents, either by letter or text message, their child's current attendance, how this equates to the number of sessions missed as well as to inform them of the possible impact this could have on their child's education if it persists. (**N.B** – Parents will also have an opportunity to come in and discuss this further if they wish, if they have concerns or questions, or if they would like further support.)
- Where attendance does not improve, informing parents that absence will only be authorised where it is supported by medical evidence.

- Hold an initial meeting with the parents to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school.
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance.
 - Explain the help that is available.
 - Explain the impact absence from school is/will have on their child's learning as well as the consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence.
 - Review any existing actions or interventions.
- Where attendance continues not to improve, meeting with parents to share (in more detail), their child's absence rates, the impact this is having on their education and to agree actions to improve this. will form an agreed plan between the parents and school. For children of statutory school age, this plan will form an 'attendance contract' between the school and parents and focus on helping to address irregular attendance and the possible reasons identified for this. It is also aimed at reducing the risk of the school issuing a 'notice to improve', a 'penalty notice' or the need to refer the case onto the 'Surrey Attendance Service' where in some cases the parents may be interviewed under caution or considered for prosecution.
- Where attendance still does not improve, for children of statutory school age, the school will liaise with the local authority's Attendance, Advice and Intervention Officer to consider next steps, which could include the school issuing a 'notice to improve', a 'penalty notice' or the need to refer the case onto the 'Surrey Attendance Service' where (in some cases) the parents may be interviewed under caution or be considered for prosecution for failing to ensure their child regularly attends school.

N.B – The school may also decide to liaise with the local authority's Attendance, Advice and Intervention Officer at any stage identified above for advice and support.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to our strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with the school's safeguarding policy.
- Follow the process outlined in the 'attendance and late management' section above.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant.
- Consider alternative support to remove any attendance barriers and re-engage the pupil. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence. For example, children suffering from 'Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance' (EBSNA).
- Implement sanctions, where necessary. (See 'attendance and late management' section above and the 'sanctions' section below.)

Pupils absent due to complex barriers, mental or physical ill health, medical conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, including 'Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance' (EBSNA).

Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil, so the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as for any other pupil. That said, in working with parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place, where necessary, to help them access their full-time education.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

When needed:

- The Headteacher, parents, class teacher and SENCO will meet to identify the barriers to good school attendance. If appropriate, the child's views will also be gathered.
- If appropriate, the attendance policy will be implemented alongside other relevant school policies, e.g. the 'children with medical needs policy' or the 'Special Educational Needs Policy'.
- An attendance contract may be put in place to support progress towards improved attendance.
- School-based interventions may be offered such as ELSA support, soft starts and 'adult meets' on arrival at school and, if required, again before the child goes home. In exceptional cases, where felt appropriate and after other strategies have not had the desired outcome, a time-limited part-time timetable may be considered with the aim of helping the child rebuild the feeling of success and subsequently the amount of time they are attending school.
- The use of a home-school book to help maintain clear communication between the parents and classroom staff.
- Friendly Face: If the child agrees, another child will be appointed as their 'friendly face', in addition to a 'staff champion'. Both will support the child through the day through ongoing academic and social interactions.
- External Interventions may be offered: referrals to Primary Behaviour Support, Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, Early Help/Family Support Services

Sanctions – For children of statutory school age

To help tackle poor attendance, where appropriate, the school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions including, but not limited to, the use of 'notices to improve' and the use of 'penalty notices' (see sections below) Decisions about the most appropriate course of action will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support being provided is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may issue parents with a 'notice to improve'. This aims to give parents a final chance to engage with support, whilst outlining the possible steps that may be taken if they don't.

'Notices to improve' will be issued in line with local authority guidance and include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning about next steps if attendance does not improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like. (This will be decided on a case-by-case basis and could include the issuing of a 'penalty notice' or a referral to the Surrey Attendance Service, which may result in an 'interview Under Caution' or consideration of possible prosecution.
- A clear improvement period timeframe.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice or referral to the Surrey Attendance Service may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Penalty Notices

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carers for their child's unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued include:

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.
Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.
3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carers has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carers per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carers per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carers per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Parental advice for supporting good attendance

What can parents do to help?

- Parents must let the school know as soon as possible why their child is away.
- Parents should try to make appointments outside of the school day wherever possible. Where appointments during the school day are unavoidable, parents will be required to provide evidence of their time and date.

What can parents do if they are worried about their child's attendance?

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple.
- Talk to the class teacher or the staff at school.
- If concerns continue, make an appointment to meet with the Deputy Headteacher / Headteacher to

discuss this further and formulate an agreed plan to help resolve your child's worries or concerns and subsequently improve their attendance.

Review:

Date reviewed by governing body: January 2026

Date due for review: January 2027