

Cookridge Primary School Attendance Policy 2024-2025



Reviewed – September 2024

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The Attendance Policy will be published on the school website.

'Together We Achieve the Extraordinary'



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Introduction

At Cookridge Primary School we are committed to providing a broad, balanced and effective education for all the children who attend our school. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We believe regular attendance is of the greatest importance because children:

- Have full access to the curriculum and are more likely to achieve
- Are able to build positive relationships and develop social skills which prepare them for the next phase in their education
- Are able to develop their self-esteem, their sense of worth and sense of belonging
- Are able to develop a positive attitude to school and the world of work, understanding how important it is to be punctual and reliable
- Are safe from harm and remain within the law

Legislation and Guidance

- This policy is based on the Department of Education's guidance, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf
- The Education Act 1996 states that: All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who are absent for more than ten days without explanation.
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.

[Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) - Part 6

[Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) - Part 3

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>



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Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for you child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the curriculum
- Anti-bullying
- Children missing education

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on whole school attendance on our website.
- Letters will be sent home at regular intervals regarding punctuality and attendance. If attendance is below 96% parent/carers will be invited into school to discuss how we can work together to improve this. If needed School Attendance panels will be put in place.

Understanding types of absence

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school and where the school accepts there is good reason for absence. Some examples would be

- Genuine illness
- Medical or dental appointment (where possible routine appointments should be arranged out of school time)
- Bereavement – (Headteacher's discretion)
- Religious observance (The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong)
- Approved leave in term time where there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the Headteacher.
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence



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An authorised absence requires a written or telephone communication from the parent/carer. A child's own word **cannot** be taken as reason for absence. Phone calls home are made on the first and every successive day of absence, unless information has been received from parents about reasons for an extended absence. If contact is not made between school and parents/carers to determine the reason for not attending school, the absence will remain unauthorised. If the child has been absent for three days a home visit will take place – if there is no one home at this point the attendance will be unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. This includes:

- Being late after the registers have closed - 'U' code
- Staying at home to care for younger children or sick relatives
- Going shopping or having a haircut
- Where no explanation is offered by the parent or carer
- Where the school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- Special occasions e.g. birthdays/weddings
- Holidays/leave in term time
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment
- Translating for family members
- Visiting sick relatives
- Exceptional term time leave longer than agreed by the Headteacher

Unauthorised absences affect your child's attendance figure, if your child's attendance falls below their target of 96% intervention will be put in place by the Family Support and Attendance Manager or your case may be referred, which may result in sanctions such as a fixed penalty notice or ultimately court proceedings which could lead to fines, a criminal record or supervisory orders.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend please do not cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter, does not get to the bottom of the issues underpinning their reluctance to attend and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is highlighted as a priority and will be referred to the Family Support and Attendance Manager who will then contact you. Absence **below 90%** will cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to overcome this. We therefore consider any absence below 95% a cause for concern and you will be invited into school to meet with the Family Support and Attendance Manager to discuss how we can work together towards improving the position. All our PA children



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and their parents will be recommended for a Parenting Contract. If with the support of the Parenting Contract the child's attendance continues to be below 95%, school will initiate fast track.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the School Office (Tel: 0113 3862500) as soon as possible on the first day of absence, leaving a voicemail if calling before the office opens.
- Email susan.brosnan@cookridgeprimaryschool.org.uk with a full explanation of your child's absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- As part of Safeguarding Procedures, if we have not heard from you we will telephone/contact you via app. Where we are unable to establish first day contact - we may visit the home of the absent children to verify their whereabouts and ensure their safety.
- If we have not heard from you after three days, a home visit will take place we may refer the matter to the Attendance Improvement Officer and visit your home to assess the reason for absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Family Support and Attendance Manager and/or the Head teacher if the absence continues.

Requests for leave of absence

Parents are asked to submit a formal request for leave via the 'Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term Time' form to the Head Teacher, these forms are available from the School Office. This must be completed at least 10 days prior to the leave date requested. All formal requests for leave will be acknowledged, and responded to via email.

On the 1st September 2013 amendments were made to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, making clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Once a pupil returns from leave school is under a duty to complete the relevant paperwork and forward this to the local authority to process the fine.

If a pupil misses 20 consecutive school days without valid reason or if they are not in the country, Cookridge Primary School can remove the pupil from the school roll, and cannot guarantee that there will be a place for them if they return.

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and Cookridge Primary School has worked in partnership with all schools locally to agree a consistent policy towards holiday absences. Parents should make a formal request for holiday in term time using the form available from the school office. Please note requests for absence in term time for family holidays **will not** be granted under this agreement and any days taken for these purposes **will be unauthorised and may lead the school using the Attendance Improvement Officer to impose sanctions e.g. a fixed penalty notice or ultimately court proceedings which could lead to fines, a criminal record or supervisory orders.**



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School will follow the latest guidance from the government:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Children Missing in Education (CME)

A child who is absent as well as missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

Children Missing in Education Categories-

- 1) Children missing (with parents/carers, whereabouts unknown)
- 2) Children Out of Education (not on roll) – these include new arrivals, excluded pupils and pupils taken off roll

If we do not know where a child is, or if a child is moving school but we have not had confirmation from the receiving school we will telephone parent/carer, write a letter and conduct a home visit. If we are still concerned about the child's whereabouts. The school will contact the Children Missing in Education Team (CME); who will then make every effort to locate the child. In order to protect children, pupils should not be removed from the school roll until it is confirmed that they have been admitted to a new school or until the Attendance Improvement Officer advises. Children missing education is the responsibility of ALL schools, services and agencies. Where a child is reported to be missing education we will comply with our statutory duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who falls within the reporting notification requirements outlined in [Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE September 2016\)](#) and follow the Leeds Children's Services LA procedure and contact: cme@leeds.gov.uk. Tel: 0113 3789686.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss learning and vital information and news for the day. Late pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

It is also as important for parents/carers to collect their children on time from school – at 3.20pm. If due to unforeseen circumstances parents maybe late, please contact the school office as soon as possible.

How we manage lateness

The school doors are open at 8.40am until 8.50am. During this time, we expect all children to arrive at school and be in class ready for the register to be taken at 8.50.

When the school gates are closed children must be brought to the school office and parents must complete a late slip, providing a valid reason for the late arrival of their child. If your child arrives after the gates have closed, they will be marked on the register as 'L' which means they have arrived late for school

At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark (U) that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a



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present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

School will record the time your child arrived at school and the amount of time that has been missed.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Family Support and Attendance Manager to resolve the problem.

Attendance targets and monitoring

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated via the app regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will receive regular attendance updates in the Head teacher's Report. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. Weekly 'whole school' information will also be reported on the school website. shared with all stakeholders.

Reception Pupils Only

Premature and Summer Born children – we do not encourage part time attendance and request that at the point of application this is declared and discussed with the Head teacher and Attendance and Family Support Manger. If this is agreed, the reduced timetable would be at the discretion of the school and must be adhered to. Absence outside of this would be classed as unauthorised attendance.

Personnel responsible for Attendance matters at Cookridge Primary are:

The Family Support and Attendance Manager; the Attendance Administrator (school office) and the Head teacher.

Please contact us if you have any concerns about your child's attendance and your ability to meet the needs of this policy.