Coalbrookdale & Ironbridge C.E. Primary School

Policy

Attendance

Last Review: Autumn 2025

Responsible: M. Dhaliwal (Headteacher)

Review Date: Autumn 2026

Vision Statement

Jesus said: 'Love each other as I have loved you'. John 15:12

Our school motto, 'Living life in all its fullness' is at the heart of everything we do and believe.

At Coalbrookdale & Ironbridge C.E Primary School, we aim to prepare the children in our care to become well-rounded members of society on their journey through school life and beyond.

We strongly believe that children learn best and achieve their full potential when they are happy and feel secure. We strive to provide a safe learning environment with a warm and welcoming atmosphere that fosters a sense of belonging among children, staff, families and the wider community. We value each individual's uniqueness and diversity, promoting respect and acceptance of one another as equals and celebrating the differences that make our community so special.

We have high expectations of the children, and we work hard to support them to become the best that they can be. For our children to flourish, socially and academically, we aim to provide an outstanding education that is both challenging and inclusive. All children are encouraged to embrace the many opportunities, and the support school provides, so that they become curious learners who are motivated and resilient with a 'Can do' attitude. Our aim is to provide the children of Coalbrookdale & Ironbridge with countless positive experiences, along with happy lifelong memories, from their time with us. We also have high expectations of attendance. We encourage families to be at school every day and to arrive on time in order to not miss any learning.

Through our supportive and inclusive Christian ethos, we are proud to foster our school values of trust, responsibility, respect, compassion and perseverance, embedding these within everyday life at school. We believe that the emotional health and wellbeing of the whole school community is fundamental to the ongoing success of our school.
We aspire to make our school a place of excellence where we educate, nurture and value everyone; that ALL children will enjoy learning and achieve their potential.

'Flourishing For All'
This policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, age, disability as well as SEND, gender reassignment, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

'Let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love.' Mother Teresa.

We are proud of our attendance record over time.

Our attendance as a whole school September 2024 – July 2025 was 96.05%

Our attendance target as a whole school for the academic year 2025-26 is 96.5%.

Introduction and Aims
At Coalbrookdale & Ironbridge CE Primary School, we are committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. Maintaining a good level of attendance is not only essential for pupils' day to day learning but is also crucial in setting positive habits and mindsets for their future.

As a school, we organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as rapidly as possible. Our attendance team, which includes the Headteacher, our Pastoral Team, Nominated Attendance Person (NAP) and Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) all play a significant role in supporting parents in getting children to school on time and every day.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100 % attendance for all our pupils.

Our school gives a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance.

The Senior Attendance Champion in school is Mandy Dhaliwal (Headteacher).
The Nominated Attendance Officer is Caroline Hodgkins (Administrator).
The Education Welfare Officer from Telford and Wrekin is Toni Bohn.

Principles
The school will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session
- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence
- reward good and improved attendance of all pupils (attendance is discussed as a whole school each week during our 'celebration' assembly)
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils who come in late or who are returning after absence

- consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Support Team in developing and maintaining the whole-school attendance policy

- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors

- a specified attendance team meet half termly to scrutinise attendance and impact of intervention

- send regular newsletters to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues, additionally update school website with any attendance related issues

- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed

- have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members

- Deploy attendance incentives such as 'Ace the Attendance Mascot' week where our attendance mascot stays on the entrance gate welcoming children into school.

Statutory Duty
Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

Absence Procedures
Our expectation is for parents/carers to ring/message school before 8.40am if their child is absent.

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, we will:

- follow 'First day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone/text message

- request the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and/or member of school staff, to conduct a home visit if no response is received after 3 days of absence (this could be sooner depending on circumstance), and consider a referral to the local authority attendance team or contact 'Family Connect', (T&W Policy is 5 days but as a school we believe it is necessary to make authority aware sooner)

- If a child is absent for 10 days, school will initiate the Missing Child In Education Protocol as advised by Telford and Wrekin Council's Child Missing from education Policy

- Invite the parents into school for an 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) if a child is persistently absent (attendance less than 90%) unless other action is planned. This meeting should include a senior member of staff, parent, pupil and the EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

- Help the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

- Contact Family Connect 01952 385385 for further guidance on available support.

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

Children Missing Education (CME)
Children Missing Education (CME) are a vulnerable group of children. All agencies who work with children have a duty to support the Local Authority in ensuring all children are safe and looked after appropriately.

CME includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown) and are children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school needs to be registered as a CME
- Sudden school departure with the destination unknown

It is our responsibility as a school to work with the LA Education and Inclusion team, by making referrals. If a child is missing from education we will follow advice and guidance in the Telford and Wrekin Child Missing in Education Policy.

Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence (SA)
To support schools in monitoring and improving attendance, the Department for Education (DfE) sets out clear definitions for different levels of absence. These definitions help schools to identify pupils who may require additional support or intervention.

Persistent absence: A pupil enrolment is classified as persistently absent if they miss 10 % or more of their possible sessions (i.e. 10 %+ of the total school sessions available to them).

Severe absence: A pupil enrolment is classified as severely absent if they miss 50 % or more of their possible sessions.

Performance
It is important to set a realistic target for attendance; this target is set at the start of each academic year, in consultation with the Interim Executive Board (IEB).

The IEB receives termly attendance reports including PA trends and early help interventions which are in place to support attendance.

The IEB must approve the school target for attendance to be set for the following academic year. In compiling an Action Plan, the school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process. When evaluating success, the school will consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved
- Persistent absence has reduced
- Punctuality has improved
- Parental response to absences has improved
- Re-integration plans have been successful
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the

attendance procedures operating within school
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in collective worship, PSHE lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

Good Practice
The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data including attendance of vulnerable children
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Liaising closely with the school's NAP/EWO, if appropriate
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages
- A signed copy of any correspondence is retained by the school
- A referral is made to AST (the Attendance Support Team) for intervention

Ofsted Statutory Guidance
Ofsted guidance makes it clear that 'grey exclusions' are illegal. "Where a pupil is sent home for disciplinary reasons for a part of the school lunchtimes, fixed term exclusion is the only legal method of removal'.

Informal or unofficial exclusions are illegal, regardless of whether they are carried out with the agreement of parents or carers.

School Times
The classroom doors are open at 8.40am, registration is taken at 8.50am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in class at this time. Pupils who arrive to school after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised absence.

Appointments
Parents are encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school office.

If the appointment is during the day the pupils are expected to attend school before and after the appointment where possible.

Religious Observance
The school will take advice from the attendance team within Telford & Wrekin Council to establish the appropriate number of days absence required for religious festivals.

Parent/Carer will be required to complete a request for absence during term time form.

Request for Absence during Term Time
The DfE guidance about holiday in term time makes the following points:

- Each request can only be judged on a case-by-case basis
- Even in exceptional circumstances it is expected that Headteachers will use their discretion sparingly
- Headteachers should not apply policies (for example, blanket bans) which might suggest that each application has not been considered on its individual merits

As a general guide any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13 weeks holiday time should not be authorised during the school term.

School will confirm in writing our decision whether to authorise any leave in term time or not following any requests for leave in term time. This provides parents/carers with written information about the possible consequences of taking leave that has not been authorised.

Managing Absence
We understand that at times, there may be genuine reasons why your child is absent from school for instance when they are too poorly to attend, but when there are not, we encourage all children to attend school every day.

Parents should inform the school if their child is absent due to illness by 9:00am on each day of absence.

If the reason for absence is unknown, and parents have not informed school of their child's absence, the administration team will call parents to understand the reason for absence.

If a child is absent for a second day due to illness, a courtesy call will be made to parents by the administration team at the end of the day. During this call, opportunities to support the child and family in returning to school are discussed.

If cases of illness are prolonged, medical evidence may be requested by school. School will follow procedure in supporting children with specific medical needs. Further detail is included in the Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs policy.

In cases of a reason being reported but there is genuine doubt as to the authenticity of absence, communication with other agencies will take place.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) works closely with school to monitor attendance. At times, home visits are completed by the EWO.

We do administer medicines in school with parental permission and parents are reminded to complete a form from the school office.

National Framework for Penalty Notices
The government introduced new 'National Framework for Penalty Notices'. These will apply across Telford & Wrekin from 1 September 2024. This means there is a tightening of the guidelines around pupils arriving late. If pupils are consistently late this could contribute to their unauthorised absence levels and result in action being taken by the Local Authority. The details of these new penalties are listed below.

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school-week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive. Unauthorised absences are recorded for children who are late after the register has closed (from 9.15am), do not provide medical evidence or have not contacted school.

- Penalty Notices are increasing to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.

- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160.

- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.

- If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday

- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on school's website or a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

- Absence for leave in term times will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances – please note that holidays or extended leave for family visits cannot be considered as exceptional circumstances. We will be updating our Attendance Policy to reflect this.

'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from school.' (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence).

In developing and publishing the new national framework, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The members of the IEB (Interim Executive Board) and Headteacher of this school support this and children will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Aug 2024) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 38.)

Each application for leave in term time will be considered and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent or posted to the parents' home address.

As a school we are asked to inform you that in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10-week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed above.

Promoting Good Attendance
We promote and celebrate good attendance in school with the children.

The weekly attendance is shared in the weekly parent newsletter showing the class with the highest attendance and most improved.

Attendance records are shared during parents meetings and end of year reports.

Parent-friendly posters regarding attendance are shared with parents via school-home communication channels and parent newsletters.

Appendix – Request for Leave During Term Time Form

Telford & Wrekin Council

Request for Leave during Term Time

To: The Headteacher of: Coalbrookdale & Ironbridge CE Primary School Date.....

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child(ren):

(full name) .....

from (date) ..... to (date) ..... for ..... school days.

My child(ren) will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer): ..... and (parent/carer): .....

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

(If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to this form)

If parents are only able to take holiday at a set time (determined by your employer) please include a letter from your manager (on company headed paper) confirming this with your Request for Leave form. If this is not received the holiday will not be authorised. If leave is requested for a family event that is taking place on a week day eg. wedding or funeral, one day would be authorised for this. If time off is for a wedding, please include a copy of the wedding invitation.

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s)) ..... School(s) attended .....

....

Name of 1st Parent/Carer(s) ..... Signed: .....

Current address: .....

Mobile No: ..... Email: .....

Name of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) ..... Signed: .....

Current address: .....

Mobile No: ..... Email: .....

Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not. Please do not confirm any holiday booking until you have confirmation of permission for the leave in term time from the Headteacher.

For Office Use Only

Date Request for Leave during Term Time received by school: .....

Current Attendance: .....% Last Year's Attendance: .....%

Number of school sessions previously taken as leave in term time: .....

For Office Use Only

Re: **Siblings:** other schools confirmed? .....

What action are other schools taking? .....

.....

Leave in term time Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is **agreed/is not agreed** for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed: ..... Job Title: .....

Print Name: ..... Date: .....

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent: .....

Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave in term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send the request form below to the Headteacher. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **before** the desired period of absence. (Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any planned absence before receiving the school's decision regarding their request). In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the leave in term time requested dates to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.

2. The granting of leave of absence in term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the Headteacher. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) Guidance '*Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb 2024)*' states that: *Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance*. Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) policy supports that view. Where such requests are made, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances** before the leave is granted, if the leave is granted the Headteacher has the discretion to agree the duration of that leave.

3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents, therefore, need to consider very carefully before making any request for leave in term time, the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school may also take account of: -

   - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
   - whether the child is compulsory school age;
   - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
   - whether the same trip could be taken during the 13 weeks school is closed to pupils?
   - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.

4. Where parents have children in more than one school, a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, there is an expectation that all schools involved will communicate and all agree a decision whether to authorise or not. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any leave requests.

5. Where requests for a grant of leave in term time are received from only one parent the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all parents are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent may receive a penalty notice.

6. Should the school decide to grant the leave. but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave in term time period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, **his/her place at the school could be lost.**

7. Should the School decide **not to grant the leave** and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £160 per parent per child. This Penalty Notice fine will be reduced to £80 if paid within the first 21 days. Failure to pay the £160 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings, which could ultimately result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or imprisonment of up to three months.

8. If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday.