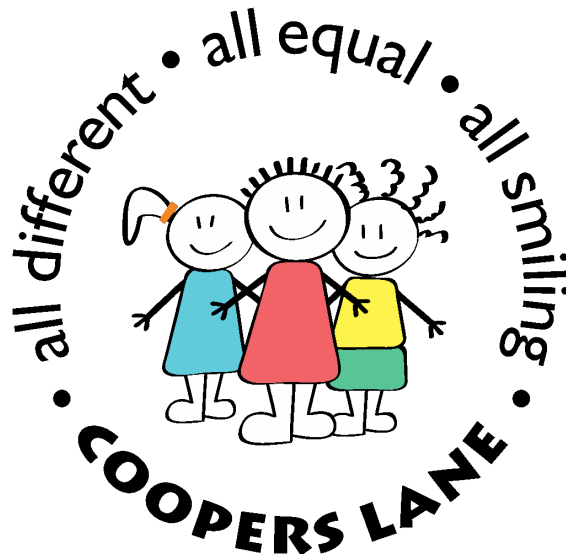


Coopers Lane Primary School



Attendance Policy

Author/ Checked:	Amy Riley	Date:	June 2024
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A Coopers Lane Learner...



Introduction

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances, it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning - children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Regular school attendance can facilitate positive peer relationships, which is a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head Teacher and governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

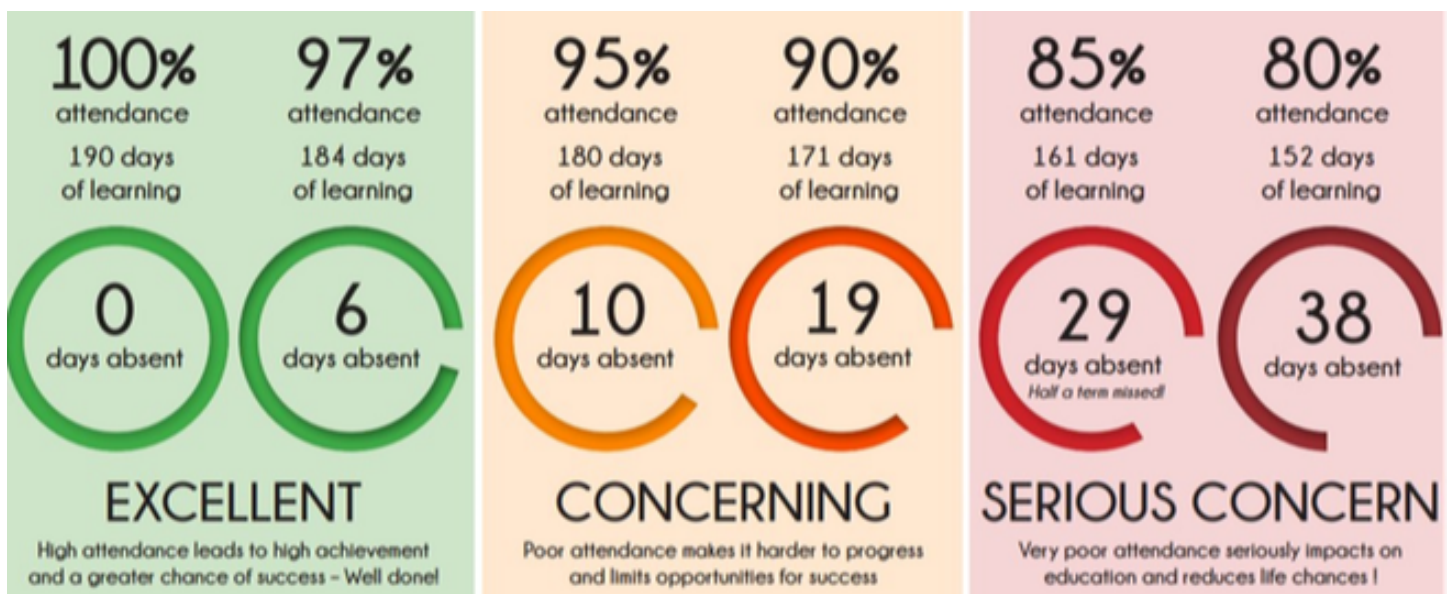


Aims and Objectives

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. This policy also ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils from Nursery to Year 6.
- Create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of **96%** attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence by promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Support pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Raise the awareness of pupils and families about the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Maintain effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- Build strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Act early to address patterns of absence by working in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Attendance Welfare Officer so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Recognise the key role that all staff, but especially class teachers, have in promoting good attendance.



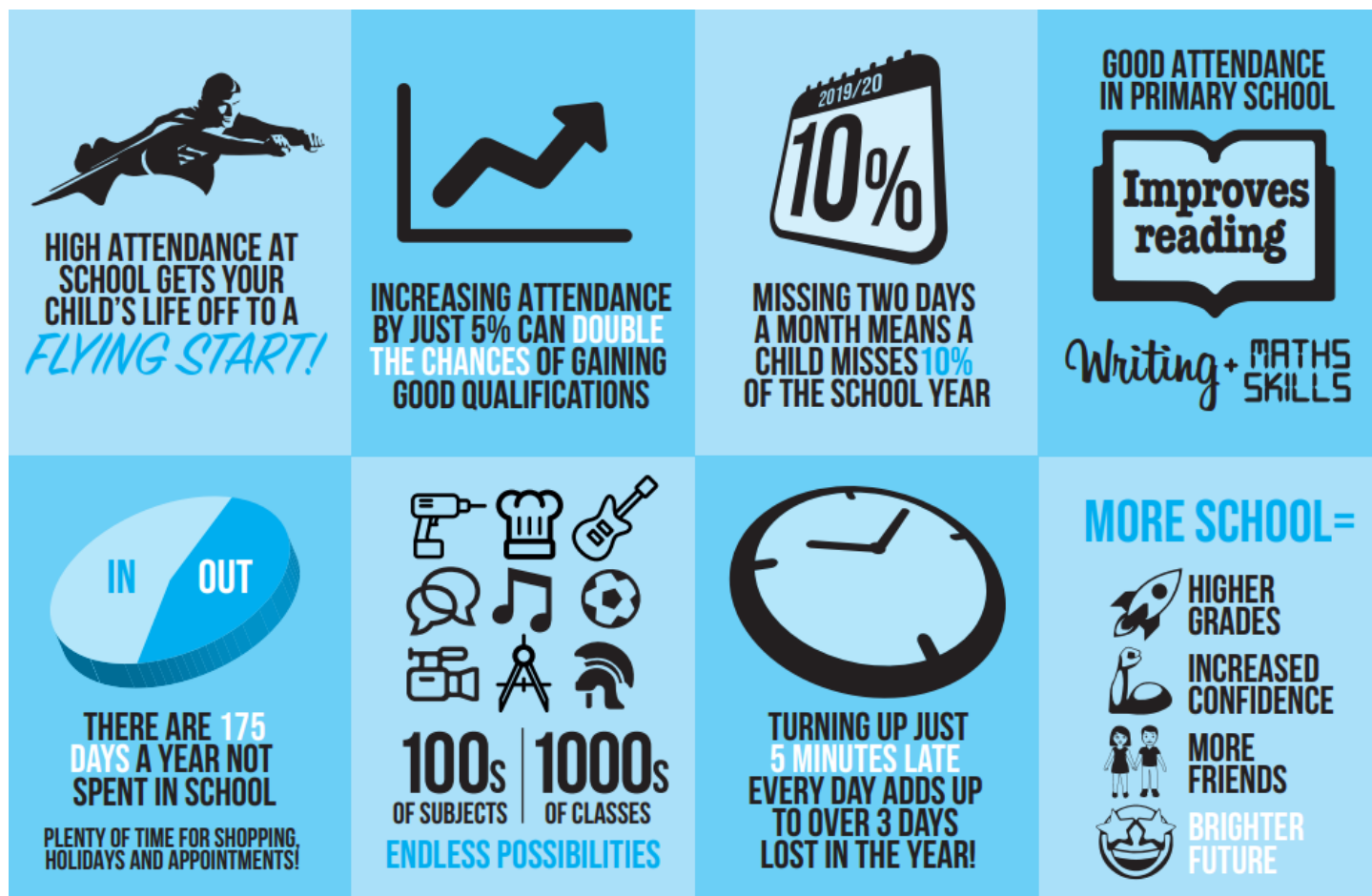
Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)



Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Governing body

The Governing body are responsible for:

- Ensuring all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy
- Appointing a Link Governor to liaise with the Attendance Champion and report back to the Governing Body
- Ensure that the Attendance Policy is carried out
- Asking questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent absence
- Monitoring termly progress towards attendance targets
- Taking responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to families

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance and reporting to the governing body
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Senior Attendance Champion to be able to do so
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Attendance Welfare Officer
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'Senior Attendance Champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

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The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Amy Riley and can be contacted via email on ariley@cooperslane.org

The school attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head Teacher/Attendance Champion when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Karen Hill and can be contacted via 0208 857 7680.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their families
- Informing the Senior Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Discussing attendance issues at Academic Review evenings where necessary

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head Teacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All-natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

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Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Procedures

Absence

All absences must be reported to the school office by 8.30 am on each morning of your child's absence.

It is not sufficient to inform the class teacher. All year groups including Nursery must follow these procedures. Please telephone the school office on **0208 857 7680** and leave a message on the absence line stating the full reason for the absence. You can also email the school office at info@cooperslane.lewisham.sch.uk

Any medical absence exceeding three days would need medical evidence supplied to the school. This could include a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the register. The Head Teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

In order to minimise the disruption to a child's education, whenever possible all medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process.

Office staff will check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent.

There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Any vulnerable children or children in Year 5 or 6 who have permission to walk to school on their own will be prioritised and their parents will be contacted first.

Long-term Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School during Term Time

With effect from September 2013 the government **abolished** the right of Head Teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to five days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Head Teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Whilst the Head Teacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused. Requests must be made on the School's official 'Absence Request Form' (see Appendix 1), which is available from the school office.

Parents are asked to complete a holiday request form requesting permission to take their child on holiday. Where permission is not given, the absences will be coded as unauthorised (G code). This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice, (£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days / £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21 and 28 days), where there have been 10 sessions (a session is counted as either a morning or an afternoon attendance mark) or more of unauthorised absence recorded in the last 12 weeks. (Please note that this is a rolling 12 weeks and may cover more than one academic year e.g. July and September). If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

For Religious Observances, a maximum of three days absence is allowed.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least **96%**.

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- Parents are invited to attend an informal meeting with the Senior Attendance Champion and the Lewisham Attendance Officer to explain their child's repeated absence.
- Support will be offered if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
- If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
- If there is no improvement then appropriate action will be taken which may include Fixed Penalty Notices
- Where there has been a leave of absence of 5 days (10 sessions) or more taken during term time without the authorised person's consent, Lewisham Council will issue a Penalty Notice without prior warning.
- The Attendance Welfare Officer (AWO) will issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents where there has been a referral to AWO from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Attendance Welfare Officer visits once a month to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). They work with the school to improve attendance and may issue Fixed Penalty Notices if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

School Attendance and the Law - Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application has been made in advance and the Head Teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers **no longer** have the discretion to authorise up to five days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013).

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

A Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued in cases of unauthorised absence or when an excluded pupil is found in a public place without good reason.

Fixed Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444, Education Act 1996 or Section 36, the Children's Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

Under Sec 105(1) Education and Inspections Act 2006, an FPN can be issued for an offence under Section 103(3) in the case of an excluded pupil being present in a public place during school hours on a school day. The Attendance and Welfare Service delivers this responsibility.

Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued as a result of a pupil being stopped by Truancy patrol officers or as the result of a referral having been made to the Education Welfare Officer as part of the school's process to address poor attendance patterns when procedures implemented are not met by the parent/carer and attendance remains poor. Fixed Penalty Notices may also be issued for unauthorised leave (holidays) taken during term time.

Registration

All the school gates open at 8.30am, the whistle is blown at 8.40am and children go to their classrooms. School starts promptly at 8.45am.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00am and by 1.30pm or 1.40pm for Year 4 & 6. These registers are then sent electronically to the school office.

All attendance records are documented using ScholarPack software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of six years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 8.50am parents must take their children to the school office and register their reason for being late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late. This is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

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Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out/going shopping
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Term time holiday
- Parent's illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for an absence or the school considers the reason given for the absence unsatisfactory.
- Absence following or prior to a period of school closure or authorised leave unless satisfactory evidence to justify has been provided

Evaluation and Review

The school has a legal duty to publish its attendance figures to parents and to promote good attendance.

Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure their children attend school.

Coopers Lane School is committed to working with parents to ensure that the highest level of attendance and punctuality is achieved for all its pupils.

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Appendix 1 - ABSENCE REQUEST FORM (exceptional circumstances only)

To: Head Teacher of Coopers Lane Primary School
 I wish to apply to have an 'unavoidable' absence authorised for:

Child's name Class/Year
 Date from date to(inclusive)

Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Office use only			<input type="checkbox"/> Authorised Absence Code ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised Absence
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	% Attendance	
			Signed _____ Head Teacher

✂-----

This portion to be returned to parents/carers

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable,

Pupil(s) name(s) & Class

.....

- Absence authorised fromto (Inclusive)
- Absence unauthorised current attendance % as of/...../20...

Signed (Head Teacher) Date

NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS: The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on satisfactory attendance up to the date covered by this request.

Warning: If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Appendix 2 – NHS Advice: Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school, nursery or playgroup when they're unwell. There are government guidelines for schools and nurseries about [health protection and managing specific infectious diseases at GOV.UK](#). These say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school or nursery on the first day. Let them know that your child won't be in and give them the reason. If your child is well enough to go to school but has an infection that could be passed on, such as a cold sore or head lice, let their teacher know.

What to do about other conditions

High temperature - If your child has a [high temperature](#), keep them off school until it goes away.

Feeling anxious or worried - It's normal for children to feel a little anxious sometimes. They may get a tummy ache or headache, or have problems eating or sleeping. Avoiding school can make a child's anxiety about going to school worse. It's good to talk about any worries they may have such as bullying, friendship problems, school work or sensory problems. You can also work with the school to find ways to help them.

If your child is still struggling and it's affecting their everyday life, it might be good to talk to your GP or school nurse. [Find information and advice about how to help children with anxiety](#)

Coughs and colds - It's fine to send your child to school with a minor [cough](#) or [common cold](#). But if they have a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

Chickenpox - If your child has [chickenpox](#), keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.

Cold sores - There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a [cold sore](#). Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

Conjunctivitis - You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have [conjunctivitis](#), unless they are feeling very unwell. Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

COVID-19 - If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school. Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) and they either:

- have a high temperature
- do not feel well enough to go to school or do their normal activities

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What to do if your child has tested positive: Your child is no longer required to do a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test if they have symptoms. But if your child has tested positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test.

Ear infection - If your child has an [ear infection](#) and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away.

Hand, foot and mouth disease - If your child has [hand, foot and mouth disease](#) but seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

Head lice and nits - There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You can treat [head lice and nits](#) without seeing a GP.

Impetigo - If your child has [impetigo](#), they'll need treatment from a pharmacist or GP, often with antibiotics. Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment. Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school.

Measles - If your child has [measles](#), they'll need to see a GP. Call the GP surgery before you go in, as measles can spread to others easily. Keep your child off school for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears. They should also avoid close contact with babies and anyone who is pregnant or has a weakened immune system.

Ringworm - If your child has [ringworm](#), see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP. It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.

Scarlet fever - If your child has [scarlet fever](#), they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease) - You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [slapped cheek syndrome](#) because, once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious. But let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

Sore throat - You can still send your child to school if they have a [sore throat](#). But if they also have a high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away. A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of [tonsillitis](#).

Threadworms - You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [threadworms](#). Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

Vomiting and diarrhoea - Children with [diarrhoea or vomiting](#) should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).