



# Le Cateau

## Community Primary School

### Attendance Policy

#### Introduction

At Le Cateau, we aim to educate the whole child and to ensure children are happy, healthy and fulfil their potential in terms of development of skills for life, social and moral values and academic success.

Children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. We encourage all children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

We aim to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. If allowed to remain unchecked, ***persistent absence and lateness*** can significantly impact on a pupil's progress and achievement. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved.

#### Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

#### Roles and responsibilities

##### **Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Attendance is overseen by the School Performance Committee with termly reports provided ahead of the meetings. This sub-committee reports to the Full Governing Body with 'attendance' set as a standing agenda item.

##### **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

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- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **The Inclusion and Attendance Manager**

The school attendance manager:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office through the school's MIS (Arbor).

### **School Office staff**

School Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Admin staff are also responsible for completing '*first calls*' by 9:45am each school day to identify where pupils are and why they may not be attending. This is part of our Safeguarding Duty.

### **Reporting Absences**

It is parents responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. Parents are expected to contact the School Office on the first day of absence before 9am giving as much information as is available at that time. If the absence is prolonged, interim information would be appreciated, so that the school can help with homework or other necessary arrangements.

Where possible, supporting evidence confirming the reason for their absence and giving any other appropriate information should be shared. This can be presented in physical form or via electronic means to the following email; [admin@le-cateau.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:admin@le-cateau.n-yorks.sch.uk).

In the event of no contact having been made regarding a child's absence, the parents will be contacted by the School Office (*first call*). If unexplained absence continues, or the school is concerned regarding irregular attendance, the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted and a meeting arranged between the school and the parents.

### **Registration**

Under regulation 3 of the Pupils' Registration Regulations 1956, all schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The 1991 Regulations also state that registers must state whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. The school uses an electronic Management Information System called Arbor to do this.

### **Authorised/Unauthorised Absence**

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. (Section 199, Education Act 1993).

The question of authorised and unauthorised absence is an important issue and to help parents distinguish between the two the following guidelines are included. If after reading these guidelines you are still in doubt please contact the Headteacher.

Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments - If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (ie. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or on production of an appointments card.

## **Lateness**

The school policy is to encourage punctuality but to also actively discourage lateness as it can seriously disrupt lessons. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded. If a child arrives after 9.15am then the lateness will be marked as unauthorised unless an acceptable explanation is given. The school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason, however, if a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Inclusion & Attendance Manager in order to reach a satisfactory solution. Late is after 9:00am. Any pupils arriving after this time **MUST** report to the School Office to record their arrival.

## **Requests for Absence that could be deemed to be for 'exceptional reasons'.**

### ***Family Circumstances***

It is for schools to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not: much will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. Only **exceptional circumstances** will be sanctioned through authorised absence after discussion with the Headteacher.

### ***Family Bereavements***

The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.

### ***Holidays***

It is unlikely that requests for leave of absence for the purpose of holiday will be authorised unless deemed by the Headteacher to be an **exceptional circumstance**. Please see letter attached from the Corporate Director Children and Young People regarding absence and in particular the definition of '**exceptional**'. This could include a request for leave following the return from 'active deployment' by a parent serving in the Armed Forces.

### ***Requests for leave of absence***

Any request should be made on a **Leave of Absence Form**. This form can be obtained from the School Office or downloaded from the school website.

**Requests for leave of absence are unlikely to be sanctioned unless the Headteacher agrees that the reason for leave is *exceptional*. The Headteacher has been delegated the power to authorise such leave during term time and it is essential that requests for such leave are made ***PRIOR*** to booking any holiday.**

### ***Days of Religious Observance***

Absence of a pupil for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong can be classified as authorised.

It is essential that the school is given advance notice of religious observance days.

### ***Applying for Leave of Absence***

All requests for Leave of Absence should be made on the relevant form (Appendix 1) available from the School Office or downloaded from the school website. A formal response will be provided stating whether the absence will be authorised or not authorised.

### ***Implications for absence that is not authorised***

The North Yorkshire Policy outlined below regarding penalty notices will be followed for those parents who promote, and take no action, against serious periods of unauthorised absence.

### ***Definition of a parent***

A parent means:

- > All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- > Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,

- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

### **Context of the school attendance measures**

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen. From September 2013 all 16 year-olds will be required to continue in education or training, until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From September 2015 they will be required to continue until their 18th birthday.

### **School Attendance Orders**

If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order. The order will require the child's parents to register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.

### **Prosecutions by local authorities**

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs.

Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996). As a school, we work closely with North Yorkshire County Council to ensure attendance is high. Further guidance can be found here; <http://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Education%20reform/Information%20for%20Parents%20V3.docx>

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

### **Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school.**

Penalties may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period suspension or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the suspension or exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 set out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. This includes a requirement that every local authority must draw up and publish a Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices, after consulting all schools, including academies, and the police.

The code should set out the criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice. These could include:

- a number of unauthorised absences, perhaps within a rolling academic year;
- one-off instances of irregular attendance such as holidays taken during term time without the school's permission;
- where a suspended or excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

The local authority administers the scheme for all schools in its area, including academies and Free Schools.

### **Payment of Penalty Notice (As of the 1st September 2013)**

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority. The parents can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

Only local authorities can make decisions on whether parents should be prosecuted for school attendance offences. All schools (including academies) have a duty to refer regular absence (authorised and unauthorised) to the relevant local authority. This may include any evidence to show how they supported the pupil and parent to improve attendance. It is for each local authority to judge each referral on its own merits and make a decision on the next probable cause of action.

It is the statutory duty of local authorities to carry out investigations including witness statements leading up to prosecutions.

### **Monitoring of Attendance**

The attendance of children from Reception to Year 6 is closely monitored:

The following systems are in place for addressing attendance:

- Each term an attendance tracker is produced showing every child's percentage attendance.
- The Headteacher and Attendance manager look at children's attendance under 95% with a particular focus on those under 90% (the figure classed as persistent absence).
- Parents may be contacted either by letter or phone informing them that their child's attendance and/or punctuality is low and a meeting may be requested.
- Minutes are taken from that meeting.

The purpose of these meetings are to:

- Make parents aware of their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Ensure parents are aware that a referral to EIS may be necessary if there are a significant number of unauthorised absences.
- Discuss reasons for absence.
- Look at additional support that may be available, eg. Early Help
- Look at strategies for promoting good attendance, eg. Certificates/badges.
- Raise awareness of the impact of good attendance on pupil outcomes.
- Ensure that parents understand the impact and possible consequences of further absence.

If a child has not been at school and no contact has been made with parents, then a home visit by the Attendance Manager and/or Headteacher may be requested by the school, particularly if there are any additional safeguarding concerns.

If a child is absent from school for 10 days and cannot be located then the child may be reported to the local authority as CME – a child missing in education.

There is also a statutory obligation to report any child to the local authority if there has been an absence for 10 or more days unless agreed as a holiday.

### **Reporting on Attendance**

Each half-term, a monitoring report is produced and shared with the school leadership team and the link Governor.

### **Attendance Incentives**

- Children with 100% will receive a certificate
- The class with the best attendance each half term will receive an award as part of the school award system
- Children with 100% attendance through the whole school year will receive a certificate and a badge
- Children who maintain 100% attendance for their whole time at the school will receive a special award

### **Why Attendance and Punctuality Matters**

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

### **In Conclusion**

It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school's success.

Le Cateau Community Primary School greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays.

The School is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2- Application for Leave of Absence during term time form

### **APPLICATION FOR PUPILS LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to school as far in advance as possible and at least 6 weeks before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission before making any arrangements for leave in **exceptional circumstances**, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as a right. The Education Regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in **exceptional circumstances**. Each application is considered individually by the school.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as **'exceptional'**:

- Service personnel returning from active deployment.
- Where inflexibility of the parent's leave or working arrangements is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production of confirmation from the organisation/company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of the parent's or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

**Please note: Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.**

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be **exceptional circumstances** which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the Local Authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term time, without the permission of the school, risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application, parents/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.

Please complete the application form and return it to the school office.

# Le Cateau Community Primary School

## APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Name of pupil(s)	Class(es)

I request permission for my child/children to be absent from school:

Date from	Date to
Total number of school days	

**Exceptional circumstances for this request:** Please complete this section and explain the reason why your child/children will need to be absent from school in term time.

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Signature of parent/carer:	Date:
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<b>FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY</b>			
Seen by		Date	
Decision		Date Reply returned	

### Appendix 3: Authorising Absence – Notification Letter

Dear

**RE: Request for exceptional leave in term-time**

I have considered your request for leave in term-time and I have agreed/not agreed to grant permission on this occasion for the following reasons:

>  
>  
>

Your child(ren) (insert names and dates of birth of pupil(s)) will be marked as authorised absence from( insert dates)

He/she/they are expected to return to school on (insert date of return)

If your child(ren) do not return to school on this date, further absences will not be authorised. This means that you may be issued with a penalty notice. A penalty notice of £60 is payable within the first 21 days and rises to £120 thereafter. The Local Authority will take legal action if the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days of date of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record for each parent.

Please note your child(ren) may lose their school place if they do not return to school after the agreed date.

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child(ren)'s school file.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher