

Attendance Policy

Consett Infant School

Academic Year

2023/24

Attendance Policy

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Document History Log:

Author of document:	Mrs Julia Graham	Job role:	Head teacher
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Attendance key contact List

Name	Role	Contact details
Mrs J Graham	Head Teacher	j.graham@bcfed.co.uk 01207 504464
Mrs J Graham	Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance	j.graham@bcfed.co.uk 01207 504464

Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
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Mrs M White	Business Manager – Parents will report absences to Mrs White and she will monitoring daily attendance and give advice to parents on school systems and the monitoring of each child	m.white@bcfed.co.uk 01207 504464
Mrs A Richardson	Parent Support Advisor – Mrs Richardson will provide advice and support to parents if they are experiencing difficulties with their child’s attendance	a.richardson@bcfed.co.uk 01207 504464

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Consett Infant School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children’s wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils’, improving attendance is everyone’s business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

Here's what the data shows:

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Recognising the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. Consett Infant School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

At Consett Infant school we also recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).

This policy is supported by our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Bullying
- Behaviour
- Inclusive learning



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

The school and all partners will work together to:



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Aspire to high standards of attendance and help pupils and parents to parents and support that they need to overcome barriers to school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

1. Expectations

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

We will ensure that:

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available



What is expected of the pupils?

ENFORCE

- ◆ To respect themselves and others.
- ◆ To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually.
- ◆ To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied.
- ◆ To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- ◆ To be happy and encourage others to feel happy.

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 2013 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance at school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, attendance improvement team and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

What is expected of the Parents?

- ◆ To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum.
- ◆ To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence.
- ◆ To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- ◆ To work closely with the school and the Parent Support Advisor(PSA) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.
- ◆ To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for leave of absence during term time will be refused except in exceptional circumstances.
- ◆ To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATs.
- ◆ To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

What is expected of the School?

- ◆ To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.

- ◆ To meet the legal requirements set out by Government.
- ◆ To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- ◆ To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absences with effective monitoring and intervention.
- ◆ To consistently record authorise and unauthorised absences
- ◆ To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- ◆ To encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- ◆ To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees.
- ◆ To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the Pupil Casework Manager.
- ◆ To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

2. Attendance data

Recording

The electronic register is printed in classes, providing a paper version of the electronically stored information. The register can have an audit trail of changes printed with it to provide a 'history of change' for the registration period printed. These printouts are stored to form a record of attendance and are retained for the required period in a secure location.

The Business Manager reviews attendance data for all children on a weekly basis data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most. Our school uses this attendance data rigorously to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

If a child's attendance falls below 95% a message will be sent home via Class Dojo advising the parent of the attendance percentage figure and offering help and support from Parent Support Advisor

If a child's attendance falls below 93% another message will be sent. The Parent Support Advisor will contact to offer support to try to resolve any problems that may be impeding the child from attending school,

If a child's attendance falls below 90% a letter will be sent and the head teacher will contact the parent.

Pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if after a two week period there appears to be no improvement the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the head teacher to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending.

If the parent/s does not attend the meeting or after such a meeting the attendance does not improve a formal referral to the Attendance Improvement Team will be made.

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues.

4. Facilitate support

At Consett Infant School we intend to remove barriers and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome any difficulties they experience with school attendance outside of school.

When a child's attendance is a concern (e.g.falls below 93%) contact will be arranged between parents and our PSA to discuss and understand barriers to attendance and decide how all partners can work together to resolve them. This discussion might include an early help or whole family plan where there are wider issues affecting attendance. If a child's attendance does not improve after this support has been offered, a formal meeting with parents will be arranged with the Head Teacher as part of the school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence. This meeting will consider whether a referral to an alternative support service is required to remove the barriers to attendance and whether this support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.

5. Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

6. Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

General / frequently asked questions

When can children be absent from school?

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Your child's headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes

Attendance and absence management

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

- ◆ Class teacher will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.
- ◆ Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals.
- ◆ Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.
- ◆ Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and an education action plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.
- ◆ All late arrivals will need to give a reason. Persistent late arrivers will be reminded of the importance of punctuality and referred to the PSA if appropriate.
- ◆ Leaflets have been created to encourage full attendance at school and to arrive on time.
- ◆ Awards for 100% personal attendance and class awards for the best attendance are promoted each term.

Communication

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

On the first day of absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

Periods of extended absence

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will contact parents to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

Enforcement Measures

We will follow the Local Authority procedures on penalties and enforcement.

Enforcement Measures	Trigger 1	Trigger 2
Fixed Penalty Notice Warning	14 sessions unauthorised absence in	

	a maximum 12 rolling school weeks	
Fixed Penalty Notice	Any further unauthorised absences in the 3 school weeks following the FPN warning.	14 sessions unauthorised holiday in a maximum 12 rolling school weeks trigger FPN without prior warning.
Formal Warning	10 sessions unauthorised absence in a maximum 12 rolling school weeks	
Attendance Case Conference	14 sessions unauthorised absence with attendance below 90% in offence period	

Persistent Absence

If a child has below 90% attendance e.g. 38 or more sessions over the academic year they are classified as persistently absent. This is broken down over the year below.

	10%
Half-Term 1 – Autumn 1	7 or more sessions
Half-Term 1-2 – Autumn	14 or more sessions
Half-Term 1-3 - Spring 1	20 or more sessions
Half Term 1-4- Autumn & Spring	25 or more sessions
Half-Term 1-5 – Summer 1	31 or more session
Half-Term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

Punctuality:

The final registration time is at **9:15 am** at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time (9:30am) then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions

Any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason

Parents will be required to attend a meeting in school with the Head Teacher to discuss any difficulties they are experiencing and agree an action plan to improve their child's punctuality.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

School will contact the Local Authority Attendance Improvement team to initiate enforcement action.

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer.

Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; considering the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Pupils with specific needs

Our policy accounts for the specific needs of pupils/pupil cohorts, is applied fairly and consistently and considers the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance. For example, if a child has a medical need which requires them to attend regular appointment, this will not trigger action from school

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

Roles and Responsibilities

Please see key contact list and details at the start of this document.