

Cedars Park Primary School



"No limit to learning"

Policy on Attendance

History:

	Date of Review	Committee	Lead	Comments	Next Review
	Nov 2022	LIB	Toni Calvert		Sept 2023
	Mar 2023	LIB	Toni Calvert	Policy reviewed to rectify error in Appendix A and update relevant appendices.	Sept 2023
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1. Introduction

Cedars Park Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community - students, parents and carers, teaching, support staff and the Local Board - have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's parts in this.

The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and local authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School Responsibilities

2.1 School Staff

All staff (teaching and support) at Cedars Park Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting 100% school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel a valued member of the school community and look forward to coming into school every day. Staff always have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 Attendance Lead

The Assistant Head Teacher (Attendance Lead) will oversee, direct and coordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Attendance Lead will follow government guidance in relation to school attendance in the event of any school closure.

The Attendance Lead will also ensure that up to date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, and are made regularly available to staff, students, parents and carers, (they will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that reports are prepared for the governing body. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

3. Registration

3.1 Students of compulsory school age must have their attendance register taken twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. It is the practice at Cedars Park Primary to register all students (including those over compulsory school age).

3.2 The register will be opened and called promptly at 8:40 AM and 12:45 PM for EYFS, and 1:00PM for all other year groups and a mark will be made during that registration in respect of each student.

3.3 The registers will close 20 minutes after they open in the morning and 10 minutes for the afternoon session. Any students who arrive after the register closes will be counted as 'Late' and will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness.

3.4 At Cedars Park there are two types of 'Late' marks: 'Late whilst the register is open' and 'Late after the register has closed' which is marked as an unauthorised late.

In the mornings, the expectation is that children will arrive at their class before the register opens. The

school gates open at 08:30am to allow children to arrive in time for the school day to begin at 08:40 when the classroom doors open and the register opens.

The register then closes at 09:00am. Any child arriving after 09:00am will receive an unauthorised late mark.

A child arriving at the classroom after 08:45am will be marked as 'Late whilst the register is open'. This five minute window, between 08:40am and 08:45am, is in recognition that some parents may have more than one child to drop off in the mornings.

The school gates remain open until 08:50am after which time children would need to enter school via the school reception. The closing of the school gates coincides with teachers closing registers in the classroom. However, the registers remain open for a further 10 minutes, after this time, until 09:00 am, as previously stated.

4. Absences

4.1 As a guide the school is likely to **authorise** absences in the circumstances below:

- Where the school is satisfied that the student is too unwell to attend.
- Where the student has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours where possible and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send them to school beforehand).
- Where there is an avoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the families controlled e.g., extreme weather conditions
- Where the absence occurs on the day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the students can parents/carers belong
- Where the student lives in catchment but more than three miles from school and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the local authority.
- In other exceptional circumstances e.g., the wedding of a close family member or a family bereavement and for a very limited period.

4.2 Absences will be **unauthorised** when:

- No explanation has been given by the parent /carer
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation of the absence
- The student is staying at home to mind the house or care for a relative
- A student is absent because of parent/carers work commitments or trips
- The student is absent for other reasons e.g., a birthday, concert, festival or show, sporting matches/games, family gathering or celebrations, oversleeping or lateness due to a social event
- The student is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission, or where insufficient notice has been given for the absence request to be processed.
- The student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carers is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence
- A student has been collected (or has asked to be collected) from school without following procedures

4.3 If a student accumulates ten or more sessions of unauthorised absence, the Education Attendance Service will be involved and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued

5. Punctuality and Lateness

5.1 Students are expected to arrive at school on time and be in the classroom promptly, every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class if they are late. Students who arrive late whilst the register is open will be marked as such with the number of minutes late recorded (See paragraph 3.3.3 and 3.3.4). Students may be sanctioned in line with the Behaviour Policy and may be

expected to make up the time they have missed. Students arriving after the register closes will be marked as an unauthorised late.

5.2 Persistent lateness is defined as six or more late marks recorded in one academic year and will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. Where students are developing a pattern of lateness, parents/carers will be contacted by the school with the aim of resolving the matter. If punctuality does not improve, a late mark (code L) will be replaced with an unauthorised mark (code U).

6. Term Time Leave

6.1 School term dates and holidays are published a year in advance and holiday periods exist at Half Term as well as Christmas Easter and in the Summer.

6.2 Cedars Park Primary Schools' policy is **not** to grant a leave of absence for holidays other than in the most exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence form must be submitted **in advance** for the intended holiday. Request to the school should be made **prior to booking** and the school requires **15 working days** in order to make a response

Cedars Park Primary School will not authorise a holiday:

- during periods of National tests i.e., SATs
- where a student's authorised absence is above 4% for any reason

6.3 Cedars Park Primary School will only consider authorising holiday leave in the following circumstances:

- For Armed Service Personnel (Army, Navy, RAF) whose specific tour and duties prevent them from taking holidays during term time.
- For Emergency Services Personnel (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastguard) who were unable to take leave at any other time due to national event or a period of national significance

All requests of leave of absence for holiday must be submitted using the leave of absence form - see appendix G.

7. Intervention

At Cedars Park School we understand that attendance figures will be heavily skewed by even a single absence in the first half term. Therefore, our intervention strategy will not be implemented (i.e. letters being sent) until the second half of the autumn term (after October half term). However, there may be circumstances where this is brought forward or where meetings will be the immediate system (i.e. if a letter would not be productive).

7.1 Cedars Park Primary recognises that early intervention can help to prevent poor punctuality and attendance. We recognise that a range of students may experience difficulties and we will always strive to help and support wherever possible. Our aim is for all students to secure 100% attendance and assistance is available through our Early Help Offer.

7.2 Within the context of support and assistance being provided at an early stage, the school adopts a staged response to student attendance involving the Education Welfare Service:

Stage 1 When attendance drops below 95%, a first letter is sent (Appendix B).

Stage 2 Attendance drops to 92%: appointments made for parents/carers to come into school to discuss and make plans to improve the student's attendance.

Stage 3 Where attendance continues to fall to 90%, a second letter is issued (Appendix C). No further authorised absences. Attendance leader invites parents/carers in for formal target setting meeting.

Stage 4 Attendance reaches 87%. EAS referral is made and a warning letter is issued (Appendix I).

Stage 5 Attendance continues to decline to 85%: Meeting in school with the Attendance Lead, Education Welfare Officer, parents/carers and student, to discuss plan.

Review date will be set for 4 weeks.

(Where parents/carers do not attend the meeting with the Education Welfare Service, a further letter is sent requesting contact within 3 days. Where this is not forthcoming, the school will move automatically to Stage 7).

Stage 6 A review meeting takes place to consider the progress that has been made. If the plan has been successful, the involvement of the Education Welfare Service will end.

Stage 7 Where attendance has not improved, a final warning letter will be sent and a court date is fixed.

7.3 It should be noted that at Cedars Park Primary School when monitoring pupils, where attendance is a concern, the following criteria are considered when applying the staged approach above:

- Persistent lateness
- Pattern of absence
- Pattern of sibling absence
- Unauthorised compared to authorised absence
- EWO involvement
- The student is on the SEN register
- There are Safeguarding concerns around the student
- The student's academic progress is a concern

This may mean that the stages above may be progressed through at different % thresholds to those outlined above. This will be communicated clearly with parents/carers in those instances.

8. Rewards

The school will reward good attendance in the following ways:

Weekly:

- The class with the highest attendance % receive 'class cookies' and are publicly celebrated in the school newsletter.

Mid Term:

- Class with highest attendance % (each Key Stage): non-school uniform day

Annually:

- 100% attendance - certificates and public celebration through school newsletter.

9. Penalty Notices for Absences

9.1 We have a duty of care shared with the Local Authority to challenge poor attendance. From 1st September 2014 Suffolk's Education Attendance Service began issuing Penalty Notices. Penalty Notices will be issued for Cedars Park Primary School in the following situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

9.1.1 A student has been identified for the first time as having eight sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in current academic year; this includes being persistently late;

9.1.3 Where a child takes a holiday during term-time which is not authorised by the school.

9.2 If a referral is made for a Penalty Notice, this will result in a fine of £60 per parent/carer per child

increasing to £120 if not paid within 21 days. This applies to all parents/carers with parental responsibility. Unauthorised holiday leave for parents/carers for two children would amount to £240.00 rising to £480.00 if unpaid within 21 days.

9.3 If penalty notices are not paid within 42 days, the Local Authority is obliged to prosecute.

10. Systems and (Strategies) for Managing and Improving Attendance

10.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Cedars Park Primary School and is regularly promoted during assemblies and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in the Bulletins and at school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment. Weekly attendance figures are displayed within the weekly school newsletter.

Cedars Park Primary School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week.

10.2 Response to Absence

- **First Day** If a student is absent without explanation (i.e. the parents/carers have not reported an absence by 9.00am) then parents/carers will be telephoned to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify any students who may be absent without their parent/carer's knowledge.

Where it is not possible to make contact with parent/carers on the first day of absence, the school will send an email reminding parents/carers of the importance of attending school

- **Second Day** if the student's absence remains unreported and no response has been received to the day one email, then contact by phone will be pursued over the course of the day.

- **Third Day** if no response has been received to the attempts to make contact by phone, and no response has been received to the email, a home visit will be made/welfare check will be requested from the police.

10.3 Where absence is linked to illness, medical evidence will be required for any absence beyond six sessions (3 days). If medical evidence is not forthcoming, any further absence (beyond day 3) will be regarded as unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with this policy.

10.4 The school's Attendance Officer and the Attendance Lead with responsibility for attendance will meet regularly to identify students with attendance which is falling below 96%.

10.5 Concerns relating to attendance will be communicated via a staged response (see section 7.2). Letters will vary according to the severity of the student's absence at the time. The intention of the letters is to maintain effective channels of communication and to work together to resolve the issues at hand.

10.6 We would ask all parents/carers to respond and engage with the school regarding attendance concerns. Should there be a concern that communication may be breaking down, or that strategies are not being followed, a senior member of staff may contact parents/carers and invite them to a meeting. The meeting may also be attended by a member of the Local Board.

10.7 The school's Attendance Officer and the Attendance Lead with responsibility for attendance will always try and work supportively with students and their families. Progress teams, too, will support students to achieve the highest possible attendance. Strategies may include part time timetables or alternative provision.

11. Parent/Carer Responsibilities

11.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and fulltime education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child).

11.2 Cedars Park Primary School in line with Local Authority protocols, expects parent/ carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- not expect the school to agree automatically to any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school

11.3 Parent/carers are also expected to:

- notify Cedars Park Primary School on the first and each subsequent day of absence as early as possible from 7.30am. The dedicated number is 01449 778230
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day
- arrange, wherever possible, dental or medical appointments outside of school hours
- advise the school of any absence for appointments beforehand, for example, providing medical evidence to the Attendance Officer
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parent/carers' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities
- accept that parent/carers do not have the right to take students out of school for holidays in term time
- completing an exceptional leave of absence form at least 10 school days before the date
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives.

Please see Appendix A (a) for parent/carers frequently asked questions relating to attendance

12. Student Responsibilities

12.1 All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their tutor, Progress Leader or the Attendance Officer.

12.2 It is the student's responsibility to:

- attend school regularly;
- be punctual to registration and lessons
- follow school procedures if they arrive late for school (enter the school via the office and provide a reason why they are late)

Students should always remember that help is on hand- see Appendix A (b)

13. Monitoring

13.1 Attendance figures are monitored in real time by senior staff at the school (and are also available to the Trust). Weekly figures will be shared with key teams in the school and actions discussed.

13.2 Termly figures and reports are submitted and discussed by the school's Local Board and subsequently by the Learning and Performance Committee of the Trust Board. Local Boards will support actions to ensure that levels of attendance are good with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students at the school.

13.3 The Attendance Lead, together with the Attendance Officer will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the policy and advise staff and Local Board members accordingly.

14. Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting students in school with medical issues
- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy

Appendix A

A Guide For Parents/Carers

When does my child need to be in school?

Your child needs to be in school and in Session 1 at 08.40am. Any time after 08.40 am and before 08:50 am is marked as 'late whilst the register is open'. The registers will close 10 minutes after they open (08:50 am). Any students who arrive after the register closes will be counted as late and will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness.

What happens if my child is late?

After the register closes your child enter school via front office, with an explanation as to why they are late. If they have a note or a letter from you this is to be shown, or an appointment card if it was a medical appointment. These can also be sent electronically to admin@cedarspark.net

How do I report an absence?

We would expect you to call the 24 hr attendance line on 01449 778230 on the first day of absence and every subsequent day unless you have been told otherwise. This will be recorded and a note will not be necessary on the child's return, unless you have been asked to do so. You can also contact us on the attendance email (above).

What reasons will the school accept for an absence?

We will accept the following:

- Illness
- Medical or dental appointments (if not available outside of school hours/term time)
- A religious observance (exclusively)
- An unavoidable absence (a catastrophic event at home)
- Exclusion from school
- Participation in a National sporting activity (with a sporting licence)
- Family bereavement
- Attending a High School visit.

Except in the case of Illness you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance (ideally 15 working days). You should fill out in detail the Leave of Absence form and hand it back to the attendance email or your child's form tutor. You will then receive a reply indicating if the absence is authorised.

What is an unacceptable absence?

The school will not authorise the following:

- Day trips
- Shopping or Haircuts
- Birthdays
- Looking after family members or visiting family
- Concerts, festivals, shows or sporting games/matches

Can I book a holiday in term time?

Holiday will not be authorised during term time. School term dates are published a year in advance, and holiday periods exist at half-term Easter, Christmas and Summer.

Time off school for family holiday is not a right and a Leave of absence form should be filled out prior to booking and the school requires 15 working days so a response can be given as to whether you will receive a fine. (see attendance policy).

My Child is avoiding school. What do I do?

Contact your child's class teacher in the first instance and openly discuss your worries. They could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school early and work together to tackle the problem.

For all other attendance questions please see the attendance policy or contact the school.

A Guide For Students

Regular attendance will help you make the most out of the opportunities here at Cedars Park Primary School. It will help you in the future by:

- Keep up with your school work and get the best results you can.
- Get a job – employers like people who are reliable
- For university applications

In order to maintain excellent attendance, we require our students to:

- Be aware of the importance of attending school regularly every day and punctually
- Attending on time for registration- morning register opens at 08:40 AM for everyone. Afternoon registration opens at 12:45 PM for KS1, 12:50 for LKS2 and 1:00PM for UKS2
- Arriving on time to every lesson otherwise you will be marked as late.
- Understanding that arriving persistently late to lessons will be dealt with under the behaviour policy.
- Be aware of your own attendance and how you can improve it.

Need Help?

Problems with school work? Are you being bullied? Are friends giving you a hard time? Are you finding things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not- it may even make things worse. **TALK TO SOMEONE** – your Teacher, Teaching Assistant, another member of staff, your parents/carers. We will all do everything we can to help you get over your problem.

Help is always here; you are not alone.

For all other attendance questions please see the attendance policy.

Appendix B

95% Attendance Warning Letter (letter 1)



Dear **PARENT/CARER NAME**

At Cedars Park Primary, we are committed to ensuring that every child can make outstanding progress and there is a proven link between attendance at school and academic achievement.

I am writing to advise you that **STUDENT NAME's** attendance at school since **DATE** has dropped below 95%. The actual figure as of **CURRENT DATE** is **PERCENTAGE**

We appreciate there are many circumstances that can affect a child's attendance. We would ask you to encourage excellent attendance from this point onwards so that your child's overall attendance improves over the next few weeks. Please be aware if attendance continues to decline, we will require medical evidence to authorise any further absences.

If we can support your child in improving their attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mr William Main
Attendance Lead

Cedars Park Primary School
Pintail Road
Stowmarket
Suffolk
IP14 5FP

t: 01449 778230
e: admin@cedarspark.net

Appendix C

90% Attendance Warning Letter (letter 2)



Dear **PARENT/CARER NAME**

At Cedars Park Primary, we are committed to ensuring that every child makes outstanding progress and attends school regularly as there is a proven link between attendance and academic achievement.

In monitoring attendance, we have noted that **STUDENTS NAME's** attendance since the start of the 2021/22 academic year is **PERCENTAGE**. Although some of these absences may have been authorised, it is important to address attendance issues quickly so that progress is not adversely affected.

When a student's attendance rate falls below 90% it is normal school policy to consider referral to the Education Attendance Service. Hopefully, **STUDENT'S NAME** attendance rate will quickly improve, but on the advice of the Local Authority Education Attendance Service, we will not be able to authorise further absences without medical or other valid evidence.

If there are ongoing medical issues, or concerns about attendance that you would like to discuss further, please do contact your child's progress team or xxxxxxxx. via the school office on xxxxxxxx. If absences are linked to an illness of which the school is already aware, please take this opportunity to pass on any updated medical evidence in the form of a Doctor's note or medical letter.

A copy of your child's attendance record is enclosed and we look forward to working with you to improve **STUDENT'S NAME** attendance record as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely

Mr William Main
Attendance Lead

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Pintail Road
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Appendix D

Punctuality Letter



Dear **PARENT/CARER NAME**

As you are aware, our school vision is *No Limit to Learning*. In order to achieve this ambition, students need to understand how to prepare themselves to learn. At Cedars we have The Cedar's ABCs and our school values of Organisation, Initiative, Resilience, Leadership and Communication, which serve to remind students of our core expectations in the classroom.

We have spent time this term reviewing our basic expectations: punctuality, uniform and having the right equipment to learn.

Unfortunately, **STUDENT NAME** was late on at least one occasion this week. We will continue to monitor their punctuality and expect to see an immediate improvement. In the meantime, I should be most grateful for your continued support in ensuring that **STUDENTS NAME** arrives at school on time.

Thank you and we look forward to **STUDENTS NAME** making great progress over the rest of the year.

Yours sincerely

Mr William Main
Attendance Lead

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Appendix E

Register codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual Register)
C	Other Authorised Absence (not covered by any other appropriate codes)
D	Dual Registration (pupil attending another establishment)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
F	Extended Family Holiday
G	Family Holiday NOT agreed
H	Family Holiday Agreed
I	Illness only (not Medical or Dental Appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late
M	Medical / Dental appointment
N	No Reason yet provided
O	Unauthorised not covered by any other code
P	Approved sporting Activity
R	Religious Observances
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after register closes)

V	Educational Trip or Visit
W	Work Experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence- or Covid related absence
Y	Enforced school closure
Z	Pupil not yet on roll
#	School closed to pupils

Covid Codes

I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19
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Request for notification of absence

Dear **PARENTS/CARERS NAME**

Unfortunately, we have been unable to contact you regarding **STUDENTS NAME's** absence from School today.

Please contact the school as soon as possible to confirm that **STUDENT'S NAME** is safe and to avoid the absence from being recorded as unauthorised.

Yours sincerely

Mr William Main
Attendance Lead

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Pintail Road
Stowmarket
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t: 01449 778230
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Appendix G

EAS Referral Warning letter



Dear **NAME**

At Cedars Park Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that every child makes outstanding progress and attends school regularly as there is a proven link between attendance and academic achievement.

STUDENTS NAME's attendance since the start of the 2022/23 academic year is **PERCENTAGE**.

The Department of Education classifies students with attendance of below 90% as 'Persistent Absentees'. When a student's attendance rate falls below 90% it is normal school policy to refer the student to the Education Attendance Service. **STUDENT'S NAME** attendance has not improved, you will be required to attend a formal meeting to discuss this matter and set targets for improvement. Failure to attend this meeting or adhere to the agreed actions could conclude in final warning and court date being issued.

If the absences are caused by prolonged or frequent illness, please contact Mr Main (Attendance Lead) to keep him updated. If the absence is linked to an illness the school is aware of, please pass on any updated medical evidence in the form of a Doctor's note or medical letter.

We would like to say we are happy to be working with you on this and we will hope to see an improvement in **STUDENTS NAME's** attendance in the near future. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Main (Attendance Lead) or Mrs Macdonald (Attendance Officer) for support or advice.

Yours sincerely

Mr William Main
Attendance Lead

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