



Congerstone Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Signed – Chair of Governors	
Signed – Headteacher	

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Sept 2024	Sept 2024	AR	Meets new DFE guidance

Attendance Policy

At Congerstone

We celebrate the **unique** qualities and ideas everybody brings to our school.

Children become **self-motivated, independent and responsible learners**; inspired by a wide range of challenging opportunities, set within a stimulating school environment, which promotes a healthy body and mind.

We inspire a **passion for learning**, built on resilience and curiosity. Our children develop **high aspirations** so that undeterred by challenge and unfamiliar context, they confidently take their place within an ever-changing world.

Introduction

At Congerstone Primary School we believe that maximising children's attendance at school is key to ensuring they maximise their school experience and reach their full potential in attainment, wellbeing, and wider life opportunities. It is widely recognised children whose attendance is above 95% generally achieve more, and often exceed, progress expected of them. Schools have a responsibility to monitor and follow up on children's attendance.

In order for children to have good attendance, measures have been put in place to monitor and address concerns over attendance and absence. This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of parents and school in maximising school attendance. Parents' first port of call for day to day attendance queries should be the school office. They can be contacted by phone or email via school.office@congerstone.leics.sch.uk.

Expectations for Attendance at Congerstone Primary School

We expect children to attend school every day unless they are unwell or in exceptional circumstances where parents have successfully applied for term time leave of absence to the headteacher. See Appendix 2.

Children should arrive promptly for school; doors open at 8.45am each morning. By law, we must take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity off-site
- Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances

Attendance and Absence Codes

A set of national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics through the School Census system. The data helps our school, the local authority and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reason for, absence and the delivery of education. The codes used in our registers can be seen in Appendix 3.

The register opens at 8.50am and closes at 9.10am.

Children arriving after 8.55am but before 9.20am will be classed as arriving late after the register has closed and will be given code L.

Attendance of children who are persistently late for school will also be monitored and addressed by the School Office and Headteacher. The school day ends at 3.20pm.

Staff Responsibilities

The School Office, is responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of attendance and punctuality and will be the main point of contact with parents.

The headteacher, has overall accountability for improving school attendance.

It is the responsibility of every staff member to promote the benefits of good attendance and bring any concerns regarding attendance to the attention of the Attendance Officer.

Parental Responsibilities

1. To ensure their child attends school

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

“The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.”

From DfE publication ‘Working Together to improve School Attendance’ February 2024

2. To report absences

If a child is too unwell to attend school, parents must ring school before 9am on the first day of absence. The telephone number to call is 01827 880243. Parents can leave a voice recording on the answering machine when prompted to do so or can hold to speak to a member of the office team. [NHS guidance- Is my child too ill for school?](#)

3. To only request Term Time Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

Occasionally, parents request leave of absence during term time. Government guidelines, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, prevent Headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher at least 4 weeks in advance of the absence using the Leave of Absence Exceptional Circumstance form which is available from the school office as either a paper or digital copy (Appendix 2). Evidence of exceptional circumstances should be included as part of the request.

Parents will be notified in writing if the absence is authorised or not authorised. If leave is granted then the letter will state the number of days a child is authorised to be absent from school.

See also Appendix 1 Term Time Leave of absence FAQs for parents From Sept 2024

4. Book Medical Appointments out of school hours

Parents have been advised to book medical appointments outside of school hours where possible. If this is not possible, parents are asked to notify school before the appointment so that the attendance register can be amended to show why the child is not in school.

School responsibilities and procedures for managing attendance

1. To follow up on all absence on the first day

It is vital that school know where children are if they are not in school and the reason for absence to ensure that children are properly safeguarded.

In circumstances where a parent fails to contact school by 9am, and a child’s absence is therefore unexplained, a member of school staff will make attempts to contact one of the listed contacts on the pupil records:

- 1) By text message requesting parent to call school
- 2) By phone call and email

If no reason has been given for absence then this will show up as 'N' and these children can be identified quickly enabling follow up calls to be made. If no reason is provided for the absence or there is not a legitimate reason provided then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If there are significant concerns about a child's attendance through persistent illness then the school reserves the right to request medical evidence.

Pupils are given different codes depending on the reason for absence. See Appendix 4 Absence Codes.

2. Use strategies to reduce severe attendance issues or persistent absenteeism

The DfE class pupils with an attendance rate below 90% as persistent absentees.

We use a stepped approach to monitor and improve attendance, in line with DfE guidance. (see Appendix 2).

At Congerstone;

1. We **expect** all pupils to have good attendance at school. We create a welcoming environment where pupils feel safe and happy and want to be. If parents are concerned about their child's attendance we would encourage them to talk to the school as soon as possible, so school and home can work together to help improve attendance.
2. We have appointed an Attendance Officer, who will regularly **monitor** the attendance of every pupil in school. We will **notify** parents when we have concerns regarding a child's attendance or punctuality by letter and will work with families to support children and families to ensure attendance improves.
3. We will **listen** to parents' views to **identify and understand** any barriers to attendance. We will **offer and facilitate support** to overcome these. Text messages or telephone calls from the Attendance Officer will ensure the lines of communication are maintained.
4. Sometimes, the support may involve the completion of a **supportive action plan** or a **referral to Early Help**.
5. In rare circumstances where this type of support fails to improve attendance, the school may consider **formalising support through a parenting contract** or education supervision order.
6. Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will **enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution** to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Penalty Notices

If unauthorised absences take place then a referral can be made to Leicestershire County Council.

For unauthorised leave of absence,

- Penalty Notices are £160 per parent per child (discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days).
- If there is occasion to issue a second Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence within a rolling 3-year period, it will be issued at the higher rate of £160 per parent per child, with no opportunity to pay at the lower level.
- A Penalty Notice cannot be issued if there is a third occasion of unauthorised leave of absence in the rolling 3-year period. It is highly likely that the local authority will take direct prosecution action in the Magistrates' Court.

Fines are issued by the local authority and the money from the fine is not received by the school. Where requests are received from only one parent the school reserves the right to contact the other parent to ensure that both parents are fully aware of the intended absence and the possible consequences of taking unauthorised leave during term time. Referrals can also be made to LCC if there are significant concerns regarding attendance and unauthorised absence.

APPENDIX 1 Term Time Leave of Absence- FAQs for Parents- from September 2024

This document has been updated to reflect changes from September 2024 in the law and information from the new National Framework for the issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school.

1. Who can make the decision not to agree /authorise the requested leave of absence?

Headteachers can only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances'. Statutory regulations make it clear that any term time holiday cannot be classed as exceptional.

Leave is only authorised where 'exceptional circumstances' apply. It cannot be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. Potential savings made by travelling on holiday during term time are also not a factor which can be considered.

2. What evidence is required for requesting that an absence is for 'exceptional circumstances'?

Supporting evidence must be submitted, if parents wish the headteacher to consider their application as an 'exceptional circumstance'. This would require the 'Leave of Absence Exceptional Circumstance Form' to be completed and returned with supporting evidence from a verified email account. Examples may include:

Deployment records

Correspondence from an employer stating that no other dates are available for their employee to take leave during any of the 13 week school holidays available

Medical records or a letter from a medical practitioner

This evidence forms part of the legal record for authorising absence. The headteacher reserves the right to independently verify the provider of the source of evidence and may make contact with employers, if required. If the request for leave of absence does not have supporting evidence then leave of absence will be unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued if the leave is taken without the permission of the Head teacher.

3. Can a leave of absence be agreed/ authorised retrospectively?

No. If parents/carers have not applied to the school in advance then the request cannot be agreed / authorised retrospectively and should be coded as unauthorised absence. Leave of absence cannot be applied for retrospectively. Parents must apply for leave of absence at least 6 weeks prior to the first date of absence. Parents must obtain permission from the school before making any arrangements for leave.

4. When are penalty notices (fines) issued by the Local Authority? (From September 2024)

Penalty notices will be issued when the threshold is met. The threshold is:

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. A session is a morning or afternoon- each school day consists of 2 sessions.

This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence :

- e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after registration closes all within 10 school weeks.
- These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week)
- Or not consecutive (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).
- The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

*** From September 2024 * Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences**

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

From the start of the autumn term 2024, **only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:**

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. (previously £60 if paid within 21 days)
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first.

In a case where the national threshold is met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks) for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

5. How do I apply for term time leave of absence?

Parents must complete an official request form and submit it to school at least 6 weeks prior to the first day of absence requested. Forms are available from the school office or can be downloaded from the school website. Evidence must be provided if parents wish the headteacher to consider any exceptional circumstances.

6. How will I be notified of the decision?

The headteacher will respond in writing to your request. As the letter is key evidence in any possible future court case, the letter will be sent home as a hard copy with your child, as well as being emailed to you. This ensures that the letter is deemed as served to you, the parent, with regard to legal requirements.

We will address the letter to both parents if they live in the same household. If parents live in separate households, we will also send the letter to the absent parent.

7. Will children under 5 years be issued with a penalty notice if an agreed leave of absence is taken in term time?

Children become of mandatory school age the term after their fifth birthday, only children of mandatory school age come under the regulations. This means that some children in EYFS may not be of statutory school age and therefore no penalty notice would be issued.

8. Does the school or the LA make the decision to pursue the issuing of a penalty notice?

Following parents/carers taking the child/ren on an agreed/ unauthorised leave of absence which meets the criteria for the issuing of a penalty notice i.e. 10 school sessions within rolling 10 school weeks, the Headteacher must submit relevant documentation to the LA as follows:

- Certificate of absence for un agreed leave of absence for the period in question
- Witness statement written and signed by the Head teacher
- Copy of leave of absence application form from parent/carer including reason for request and the Head teacher's reply (if possible)

The LA will then determine whether a penalty notice should be issued.

9. What if I take my child out of school without completing prior a written application?

No request for leave of absence can be granted retrospectively so in such circumstances, leave would be unauthorised.

10. Is the Penalty Notice issued per parent per child?

A penalty notice of £80/ child is payable within the first 21 days and rises to £160 thereafter. The Local Authority will consider taking 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/carer.

In line with legislation the LA can issue penalty notices per parent per child.

11. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, what happens next?

The LA would consider progressing the case to the magistrates' court under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1). An officer of the Education Social Work Service would present the case initially but, if a not guilty plea is entered by the parent, then the initial hearing would be adjourned to prepare for a full trial.

Appendix 2 – Leave of Absence Exceptional Circumstance Form

Please complete and return it to Mrs Ruff-either as a hard copy or via school.office@congerstone.leics.sch.uk

Leave of Absence Exceptional Circumstance Form					
<p>Government guidelines prevent Headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Requests should be made in writing to Mrs Ruff at least 4 weeks in advance of the absence.</p> <p>Evidence of exceptional circumstances should be included as part of the request.</p>					
Name of Child		Date of Birth			
Year Group		Class			
First day of absence		Return to School			
Reason for absence					
Reason this absence is believed to be exceptional					
Evidence provided in support of this application					
Signed					
Relationship to the child					
For School Use					
Date Received	Number of days	Unauthorised	Authorised		Referred

Appendix 3 Attendance support and monitoring process

1. Ethos & Values which expect good attendance

Congerstone Primary School aspires to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents by creating a happy and safe environment where all children can and want to be; A place where children are ready to learn and feel inspired to achieve success. Attendance is celebrated at the end of each term



2. Monitor

Attendance data is rigorously monitored to identify patterns of poor attendance Children whose attendance has fallen below 95%, will be monitored closely. Parents will be notified by letter if attendance falls below 90% and encouraged to talk to the headteacher.



3. Listen and understand

Where a pattern is spotted, school will discuss with the pupil and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how we can all work together to resolve them.



4. Meet and support

If attendance does not improve at stage 2 or 3, parents will be invited to meet with school to discuss any barriers that may be preventing good attendance. We aim to support parents and children in any way we can, to overcome these barriers. At this stage an attendance plan will be put in place with targets to support improvement (Appendix 2). If necessary, we will support families in accessing wider services in order to remove barriers.



5. 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 in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order



6. Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will engage support from the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO will write to parents, arrange meetings and in some circumstances visit the home. Parents may be prosecuted in order to protect the child's right to an education

Pupils with medical conditions or Special Educational Needs

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than others. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as any other pupil. We will work closely with parents of these children in order to put additional support in place to ensure the best attendance possible. If necessary, we will work closely with outside agencies, such as medical professionals, to remove barriers

Appendix 4 Statutory Attendance Codes

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent-leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent - other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In police detention - Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, o - Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent - unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered

#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays
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Appendix 5 Congerstone Primary School attendance improvement plan

Pupil information	Pupil name	Date of birth	Age	Year	Class
Purpose of document					
Current attendance percentage					
Known barriers to attendance					
Overview					
Previous interventions	Attendance interventions				
Coordinated by					
Current interventions	Attendance interventions				
	Autumn term	Spring term	Summer term		

Co-ordinated by			
Timetable of interventions			
Review date			
Comments on attendance	Comments		
	Parents' comments		
	Pupil's comments		
Timescale for review			
Child's name attendance improvement plan will be formally reviewed during the week of the.			
Autumn review date	Spring review date		Summer review date

Headteacher signature:
