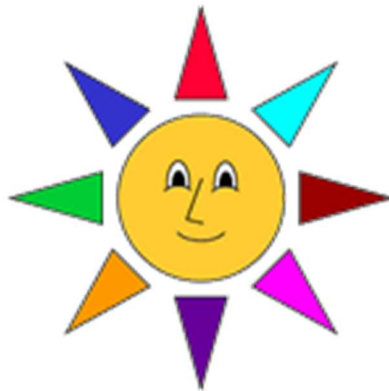


Ceres Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy, Procedures and Guidance



The practice and procedures within this policy reflect the
Fife Council Education Service Attendance, Participation & Engagement Guidance

Document Owner	Version	Date of Publication	Date of Next Review
Sarah Cloy	1	January '24	January '25

Rationale

Ceres Primary School is committed to supporting all learners to achieve their full potential by promoting good attendance and timekeeping.

Children enrolled with Ceres Primary School are expected to attend full time education with the school day starting at 9.00 am and finishing at 3.00 pm. Nursery attendance, whilst not compulsory, is encouraged to be full time starting at 9.00 a.m. and finishing at 3.00 p.m. for most children.

Good attendance and timekeeping are essential to every learner's progress in school, particularly in relation to the key areas of numeracy and literacy. Absences and late coming can result in disruption to learning and to pupils missing key teaching and learning experiences.

We appreciate that illness or exceptional family circumstances can lead to unavoidable absence from school and such absences will be recorded appropriately. School staff will do all that they can to support children and families if attendance and good timekeeping are difficult. Absence from school for family holidays will, except in very rare circumstances, be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Relevant legislation and national guidance Education Scotland Act 1980 associated with school attendance are referenced in this strategy. (see appendix 1)

The crucial legal points are:

- All learners of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or through other arrangements. If a child is registered at school, parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.
- The Council has a duty to ensure that parents carry out their responsibilities with regard to their child's education, including attending regularly if registered at school.
- Each school is required to keep a register of attendance of each learner enrolled at the school. Recording of attendance takes place twice a day, to note attendance and absence for each morning and afternoon session.
- Each child's attendance is reviewed throughout the school year by a member of the Senior Leadership team and a communication to parents and carers will be sent out to raise their awareness of attendance concerns. This highlights concerns regarding school attendance and the number of late arrivals.
- The register should be kept for a least a period of 5 years after learners leave school. The school has responsibility for identifying cases of non-attendance and the reasons for non-attendance and has the responsibility to take the necessary action to try to resolve the concerns. The school will work in partnership with the parents and carer to support any arising challenges or difficulties around attendance.

Attendance and Absence Procedure

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring that their children attend school each day and are on time. If a child is absent, parents/carers should contact the school using one of the three options shown below. **Text is the preferred option.** The office and phone lines can be very busy in the mornings and you may be unable to get through.

Please provide the information related to the absence and planned/expected duration of the absence.

Text: 07860 003688

Phone: 01334 659454

Email: Ceresps.enquiries@fife.gov.uk

Arriving late: If your child arrives late to school in the morning, or in the afternoon if they have been a home dinner, they must first go to the office to ensure they are registered appropriately.

The above procedure will be regularly included in Attendance Updates in newsletters.

Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher will check pupil attendance twice each day – 9 a.m. and after lunch. This must be **recorded in Seemis** using correct absence codes, and on the classroom fire register. If the reason for absence is unknown teachers should record as 'tbc' and this will be followed up by office.

If there is an issue with Seemis recording this must be reported immediately to the office staff and a paper register provided.

Class teachers will be advised of pupils whose attendance/timekeeping is currently being monitored.

Role of the school office staff

Office staff will take and pass on messages about pupil absences/lateness.

All reasons for absence/lateness will be recorded daily in office paper system and in Seemis.

When parents have not notified school on the first day of their child's absence with a reason why, office staff will:

1. Send an open text message via Groupcall requesting a reply with a reason for the child's absence.
2. Should a reply not be received by 10.30 the text message should be followed up with a phone call to the parent/carer. Where phone calls are not answered they should be followed up before lunchtime.
3. If contact cannot be made with parent/carer then school will contact the emergency contact about the child's absence.

Should office staff have any concerns with regards to an absence these should be shared with the headteacher and principal teacher. Should office staff be unable to make contact with a parent/carer or emergency contact regarding an absence the headteacher and principal teacher should be informed.

Role of Senior Leadership Team

If a pupil is absent without explanation or contact being made for more than 5 days of school staff will follow procedures and enlist the help of other agencies to ensure pupils' wellbeing and safety.

A member of the senior leadership team will monitor time-keeping and attendance on a monthly basis. Attendance will be monitored when it drops below 90%. If there are no improvements the following month this will be recorded, however if still a concern monitoring will continue and an action will take place if needed to try and address the concern. At all times the school will work with the parents/carers and pupils as best they can to support and put things in place to encourage improvement. This will be the case for all absences even if they have been explained.

Twice per session, around 1/3 and 1/2 of the way through the academic year (mid-November and mid-February) all pupils will have their attendance and lateness statistics shared with their parent/carer. (see appendix 2.)

The school may send a letter detailing your child's up to date attendance statistics at other times should there be concern, or we may phone or invite you into school to discuss your child's individual situation.

The school may involve partner agencies to ensure that the most effective support is being offered to the child and parent.

Appendix 1. National Policies and Guidance

Education Scotland Act 1980

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/44/contents>

Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance

Guidance to education authorities in Scotland on the promotion of good attendance and the management of attendance.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-1-positive-approach-promotion-management-attendance-scottish-schools/>

Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions

Part two of guidance document 'Included, Engaged and Involved', which refreshes the national policy on school exclusions.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-2-positive-approach-preventing-managing-school/>

Scottish Government - School attendance: a guide for parents

This booklet stresses the need to help children get to school regularly; and that when there are difficulties that these are best solved when parents, children, schools and other agencies work together.

[Part 3: Using the law when children do not attend school - School attendance: a guide for parents - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/part-3-using-the-law-when-children-do-not-attend-school-school-attendance-a-guide-for-parents-gov.scot/)

The Promise

"An independent, root and branch review of the care system" to look at "the underpinning legislation, practices, culture and ethos". The Independent Care Review's (Care Review) aim was to identify and deliver lasting change in Scotland's 'care system', leaving a legacy that will transform the wellbeing of infants, children and young people.

<https://thepromise.scot/>

UNCRC

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the basis of all of UNICEF's work. It is the most complete statement of children's rights ever produced and is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history.

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

Appendix 2. Letter to all parents/carers, sent twice per session

Attend to Achieve

As we are now **<one third/half way>** through the academic year we are sharing your child's attendance figures with you. The attached print out highlights overall attendance % as well as the number of times they have arrived late to school.

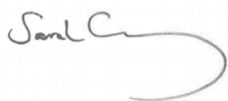
Research has shown a significant correlation between attendance and achievement in school. Children can suffer academically if they miss 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days. That can be just one day every two weeks, which can happen before you know it. We want to promote the message that pupils must **'Attend to Achieve'**. It can be easy for attendance to slip without parents realising - the odd day here and there can really add up.

Figures like 90% or 85% sound quite high overall, but as you can see in the table below, these numbers translate into several weeks of missed school.

Attendance %	Days absent per session	Level of Attendance
100%	0 days	Excellent
95%	9 days (nearly 2 school weeks)	Satisfactory
90%	19 days (1 month within the school session)	Poor
85%	27 days (more than 5 school weeks)	Very Poor
80%	36 days (more than 7 school weeks)	Unacceptable
75%	47 days (more than 9 school weeks – a quarter of the school year))	Unacceptable

We appreciate that illness or exceptional family circumstances can lead to unavoidable absence from school and such absences will be recorded appropriately. School staff will do all that they can to support children and families if attendance and good timekeeping are difficult.

If we can support you in any way in improving either attendance or late-coming, please contact me in school. We know there can be challenges around getting kids up and out in the morning, and are more than happy to work with you in supporting your children.



Sarah Cloy
Headteacher

Appendix 3. Examples of communications (exemplars from Fife Council Attendance, Engagement & Participation guidance)

Low Attendance Letter

Dear Parent,

Re: _____ (Pupil Name) _____ (DoB)

Following a recent check of our registers, we have noticed that _____ (name) has an attendance figure which is below the expected level. _____ (name) has an attendance figure of _____%, (X number of days missed) compared with an expected figure of _____%. (X number of days missed) A copy of your child's attendance has been attached for your information.

We understand that sometimes children may be absent from school due to health or medical needs. If there is an ongoing persistent health need, which as a school we are unaware of, please do provide further information about this.

It is important that all our pupils attend school as much as possible to ensure that they are able to fully succeed with their learning and the opportunities presented to them.

I hope, that by highlighting this matter to you, steps are taken to improve _____ (name) attendance at school. If you would like to discuss how we can work together to improve _____ attendance then please contact me on _____(contact details). I will help as much as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Phone Calls

Whenever a pupil has been absent for several consecutive days or is identified as having a pattern of absence across a month or two it can help to have key members of staff contact home. It can help to have the class teacher make this call or another known and trusted adult who has some relationship with the pupil.

These calls would be open and supportive and would emphasise that the pupil is missed when absent and that is important for them to attend every day.

If a pupil's attendance improves then a follow up call would be made to provide positive feedback and appreciation to the family for helping them get back to school.

Texting

Why send parents text messages about their child's attendance?

Parents play a critical role in their children's school attendance. However, research shows that parents tend to underestimate the total number of days their child has been absent by around 6 days across the year. Several studies now show that messaging parents about attendance can reduce chronic absence. While messaging strategies using mailings (i.e., periodic postcards and letters) have been shown to reduce pupil absences, there are advantages to using text messaging.

Advantages to using text messaging-

- Good reach: Mobile phone ownership is high
- Texts can reach parents quickly, and most received texts are read within minutes.
- Real-time information: Texts can be automated to provide "just in time" information on the day a pupil is absent.
- Flexible: Messaging via text can easily adapt in response to changing trends, such as increased absence rates for individual children.

Based on the evidence, the 'active ingredients' of effective parent messages on attendance are:

- Specifying the number of days missed (not a percentage attendance rate). Research shows that parents systematically underestimate the number of days their children have missed, and also may misinterpret attendance expressed as percentages (e.g. '90% attendance' sounds positive but actually reflects 15 days of school missed over the year). Specifying the exact number of days missed makes it more straightforward.
- Reminders about the importance of attendance and parents' role in it. Research shows that it is important to make the connection between attendance and attainment.