Community Academies Trust

Birchwood Primary School Policy

Attendance Policy

This policy was drafted by N Coleman. It was presented in draft version to the full staff compliment for discussion and revision. The final version was presented to Governors for consideration, approval and adoption.

Date adopted by Governors:	**January 2020**
Date for policy review:	**January 2021**
Person responsible for review:	**Headteacher**
Signed by Chair of Governors:	**January 2020**

Contents

1. Aims
2. Importance of Good Attendance
3. Parents
4. Authorised absence
5. Unauthorised absence
6. Punctuality
7. Leave of absence
8. Leavers
9. Children missing in Education
10. Legal note
11. WCC Attendance Policy Extract

1 As a school we aim to:

- Increase the attendance rate and maintain a level above 97% or higher (top quartile) and reduce incidences of lateness
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance and non-lateness
- Positively reward good attendance and punctuality in school
- Actively discourage lateness, poor attendance and any holidays in term time

2 Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

3 Parents should support their children and the school by:

- Telephoning school on the first morning of all absences by 8.30am with the reason for the absence
- Arranging dentist and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Sending in a signed and dated note (or completing the 'school absence slip') explaining the reason for absence on a child's return to school after an illness
- Keeping the school updated by telephone each day if a child has an extended period of absence due to illness

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls not received by 8.30am
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school prospectus.
- Publish our attendance rate in the school prospectus and newsletters
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality through certificates
- Publish your child's attendance rate as part of there annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or lateness
- Monitor attendance on a weekly basis and track those pupils whose attendance falls below 95%
- If attendance falls below 95% it will be classed as persistent absence and a referral may be made to the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS), who review and support on attendance matters

4 Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, a family bereavement or religious observance.

We realise that there are occasions when there might be a particular problem that might cause a child to be absent.

5 Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Unapproved Holidays

Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

Any unauthorised Absences that occur are reported to Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) who may consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences. The Headteacher may choose not to authorise absence where reasons given are unsatisfactory or there is doubt over the reasons given. The School Attendance Officer continually monitors levels of attendance and lateness.

Any pupils with below 95% attendance will be monitored by Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS).

Warwickshire County Council’s Attendance Service (WAS) carry out regular checks on pupil attendance and lateness.

6 Punctuality

- Children are permitted on site at 8.30am. A bell rings at 8:30am when outside doors will be opened. A bell rings for morning registration which starts at 8.40am.
- It is very important that children are on time, as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If a child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DFE guidance.
- All late marks, before and after registers close, are monitored on a weekly basis and letters are sent to inform parents when their child has been late. If punctuality continues to be an issue parents are then invited in to discuss the situation with the schools Attendance Officer and a Casework Officer from the Warwickshire Attendance Service.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of the school day time will wait at the office if no message has been received. The school reserves the right to charge for childcare after the end of the day at the rate of £25 per hour or part of.

7 Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances**

and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.

- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance).

- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in exceptional circumstances
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- If Leave of Absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child’s academic progress
- This form MUST be completed by the resident parent(s)/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child
- Failure to make a request for a Leave of absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised

The regulations do not state how or what form a request for Leave of Absence must be received, however we strongly encourage parents to complete the ‘Application for Leave of Absence for a school pupil in term time in exceptional circumstances only’ form (see appendix b)

If a verbal request is made the school will keep accurate notes of any conversations with parents including detail of the exceptional circumstances suggested, along with dates and time of those conversations and what was discussed. The school will respond to all requests using only the documents provided by the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS).

8 Leavers

If a child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to their secondary school, parents must:

- Give the school full information about their plans, including date of move, new address, new school and start date when known.
- Confirm the school has your current mobile phone number
- Inform the new school of the child's previous school so that the new school can easily contact us and records can be transferred. A 'leavers form' must be completed.

9 Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and parents have not given us the above information, and the school cannot contact parents, a child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education.** This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child.

10 Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DCSF and the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Officer aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

11 Warwickshire County Council Attendance Extract

Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- **Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.**

- **Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.**

- **Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.**

- **The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.**

- **Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.**

- **Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.**

- **All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.**

- **The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance).**

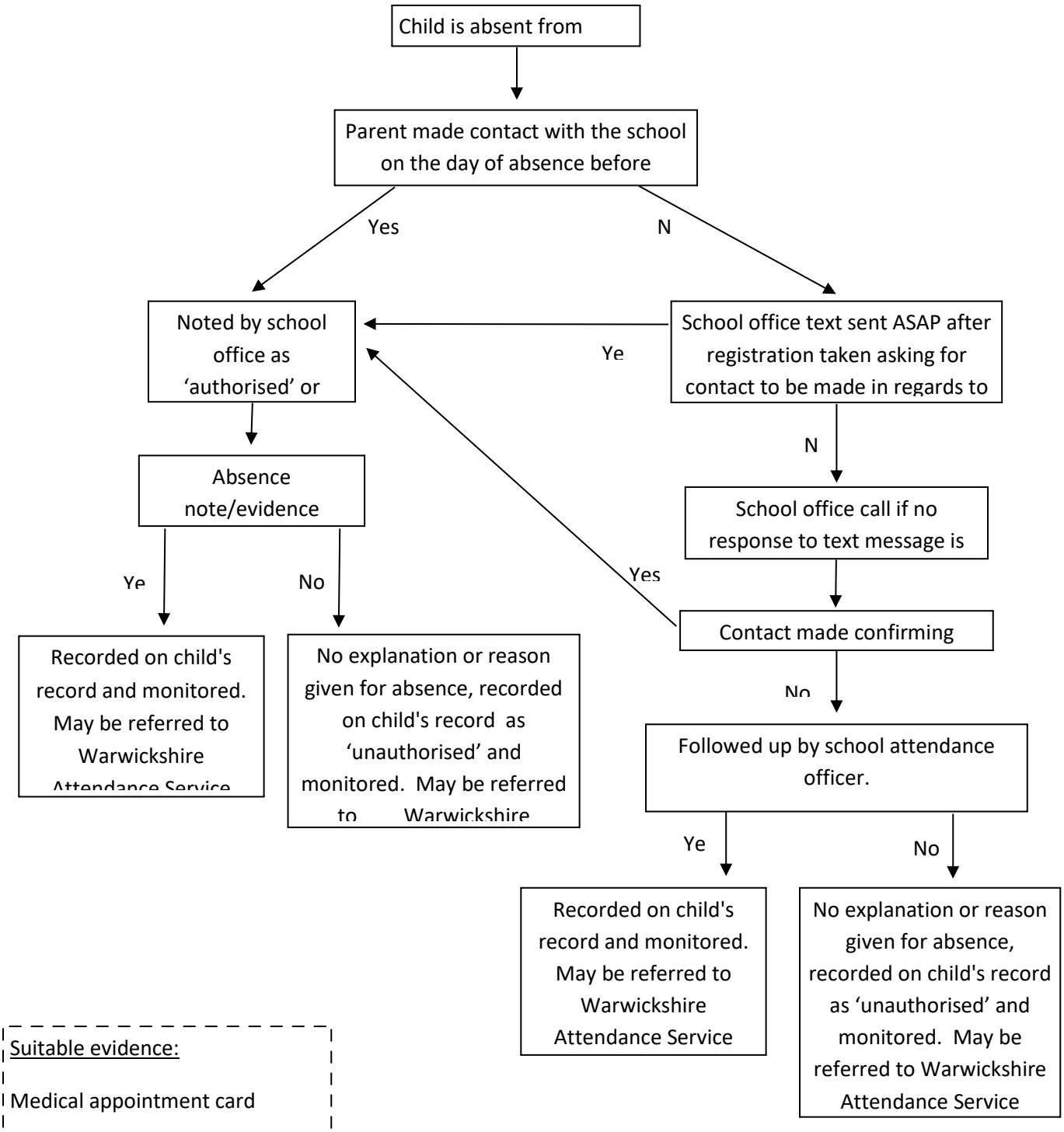
- **If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.**

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Appendix A – Attendance / Absence process
Appendix B – Leave of Absence request form example
Appendix C – example letter to parent

Appendix A - Attendance / Absence

Attendance / Absence Process



Suitable evidence:

Medical appointment card

Letter from GP

Copy of Prescription or Medicine

School Attendance Officer Monitors all

Warwickshire County Council
Communities Directorate

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

Important Information for Parents/Carers

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in **exceptional circumstances**
- **If** the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- If Leave of Absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- This form **MUST** be completed by the resident parent(s)/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child
- Failure to make a request for a Leave of absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised

Please note: ***Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.***

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child: _____ Form Group: _____

First Date of Proposed Absence: _____ Last date of Proposed Absence: _____

Expected date of return to school: _____

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence *(they can only be exceptional circumstances)* (*see overleaf before completing*)

.....
.....
.....

Total Days Requested On This Occasion ☐

(For siblings) I have also applied to _____ School/Academy for leave of absence for _____ *(Insert child/children's name)*

Signature of resident Parent/Carer: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

For school use only: NAME OF CHILD: _____ **Date received by school:** _____

1st date of absence requested: ..... Last date of absence requested:.....

Expected date of return to school: .....

Absence Authorised: Yes/No

The reasons for this decision are:.....

- **LOA record sheet to be completed by school and submitted where verbal requests made/ for other relevant information**

Head Teacher/Attendance Lead: .....Date: .....

- ***Copy of this completed section must be sent back to parent with letter***

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 state:

1. Head Teachers **shall not grant any** leave of absence during term time **unless:**

   A) An application has been made in advance, by the parent with whom the child normally resides

   AND

   B) They consider there to be exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

2. The Head Teacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.

3. The Head Teacher can determine how long an absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (ie home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996).
- If a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996).
- Parents whose children have unauthorised absence may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.
- Any Fixed Penalty Notices issued and/or prosecution will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend school.

Parents:

1. The application must be made in advance by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with.
2. Any leave of absences taken which have not been requested in advance will recorded as unauthorised.
3. Parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuted for unauthorised absence including holidays.

We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.

© Warwickshire Attendance Service
Application Form for Leave of Absence in term time January 2019

Appendix C – example letter

«date_of_printing»
«salutation»
«address_block»

Dear «salutation»

«forename» «surname» «year_reg»

Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time in Exceptional Circumstances
Leave of absence period between <<date 1>> and <<date 2>>

An application/request for a leave of absence has been received in respect of the above named child.

I have carefully considered the application/request and reviewed the exceptional circumstances outlined.

As you are aware Government regulations prohibit Head Teachers from authorising absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

In this instance I do not consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to your application and **will not** authorise this Leave of Absence request. Your child is therefore required to be in school on these dates.

Any absence taken during this period will be recorded as unauthorised (***please see the attached Leave of Absence form for details***).

As parent(s) you have a legal duty to ensure that your child receives a full-time education (section 7 Education Act 1996). You may be liable to further action including the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution through the court if your child is absent during the period requested in your application.

Failure to secure a child's regular attendance at school may be a criminal offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. If a leave of absence is not authorised this could result in:

- **The issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice to you (£120.00 fine to be paid within 28 days of issue, which reduces to £60.00 if paid within 21 days); or**
- **A criminal prosecution against you**

Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in respect of EACH absent child, so the fine will apply to EACH parent in respect of EACH child as set out in the fixed penalty notice(s).

If the Fixed Penalty is not paid then the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's legal department to consider instigating a criminal prosecution against you under the Education Act 1996. If criminal proceedings are issued and you are found guilty, the court could sentence you to a fine of up to £1,000 for a Section 444(1) conviction; or £2,500, a community sentence period or a custodial period of up to 3 months for a Section 444(1A) conviction.

Evidence shows that pupil absence has a negative impact on pupil performance and social development. We urge you to consider this matter very carefully before making a decision to take your child out of school.

This matter will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance (WA) Service.

If you have any concerns about the content of this reply please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

© Warwickshire Attendance Service

Policy Review Sheet

Please note any comments or suggested amendments on this sheet. You may also choose to complete your comments in confidence on a separate piece of paper. Please add your initial to any comments.