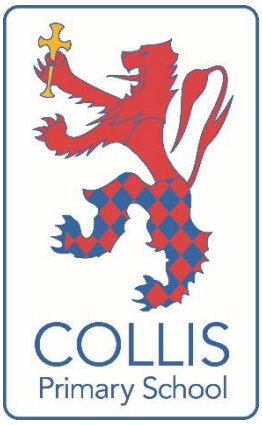
COLLIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



Collis Primary School
Fairfax Road, Teddington TW11 9BS

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Non-Statutory Policy

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1. Introduction

Collis Primary School aims to work together with families in order to achieve aspirational levels of attendance and punctuality for all children. Regular attendance is crucial to having a positive impact on children achieving their full potential in learning. At Collis Primary School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is also important that children arrive at school on time. The guiding principle of this policy is that the children must come to school every day, on time.

Regular school attendance is essential for children to make the most of the educational opportunities that are available to them. Good attendance ensures better progress both academically and socially, improves children's future life chances and establishes a resilient work ethic early in life. Punctuality also impacts the progress of children within school. The school has a duty to make the children's time at school interesting and worthwhile. Parents/guardians have a duty to make sure their children attend. We are committed to working with parents/guardians as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Absence from school is usually due to ill health, however it can also be an indication of other issues such as safeguarding concerns. Therefore, attendance is closely monitored. At Collis we aim to maintain an attendance rate of at least 95%. The school reports its attendance information, including figures for authorised and unauthorised absence, to the Local Authority each half term. Any attendance below 90% is ***automatically*** referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

2. Absences

Pupil attendance is noted in the school's electronic register. Registers are taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session. The registers close at 9.00am. If a pupil enters class after 9.00am they are officially marked as late. If they arrive after 9.30am when registers are closed, they are marked as absent for the morning session. If we are not pre-notified of an absence prior to 8:30am it will likely result in an automated email from our MIS.

A child can only be acceptably absent if the reason is unavoidable. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law. The school must take the register twice a day (am and pm) and show whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

2.1. Authorised Absences

Whilst we expect all children to attend school every day, we understand that there are some situations where a child is unable to be in school. These will be reviewed case by case and authorised at the Head Teacher's discretion. Absence from school will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness (up to 4 days without a doctor's note)
- Medical/dental appointments, (non-emergency appointments should be made outside school hours)
- Secondary school transfer visits
- Exams – dance, music, etc
- Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement
- Religious observance – only one day of absence per academic year will be authorised

2.2. Unauthorised Absences

Any application for holiday during term time will not be authorised, unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

Absence at the start of a school term, particularly in September will not be authorised. Permission will not be granted for absence during formal assessment periods or in the run up to Statutory Assessments.

Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as birthdays, anniversaries, special treats, or a parent's work commitments.

3. How Absences are Handled

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

3.1. Illness and Appointments

If a child is unable to attend school, a parent or guardian must telephone the school by 8.30am and leave a message on the absence line 0208 977 1458, alternatively you can email the office at info@collis.richmond.sch.uk. If parents do not contact the school with a reason for their child's absence the school will endeavour to call home after 9.00 each day of absence. Be sure to leave your child's name and class in the message.

Absences will not be authorised unless a reason has been provided and parents are required to contact the school on each day of absence. For absences involving illnesses longer than 5 days we will require a doctor's note or other proof, e.g. doctor's/hospital appointments, prescription. If this is not provided the period of absence will be unauthorised.

3.2. Other Legitimate Reasons

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency, e.g. family illness or bereavement.

Where possible, medical appointments should be made outside school hours but where this is not possible, the school should be notified in writing in advance.

When collecting their child during the school day, a parent/guardian or designated adult must report to the school office. Children will not be allowed to leave the school premises on their own. The school is responsible for the children until the end of the school day or until they are collected by a parent/guardian or a designated adult.

3.3. Holidays

Parents do not have the right to take their children out of school during term-time. By law you must request permission from the Head Teacher for your child to miss school for any reason. Parents must arrange their family holidays within the school holidays so that their child's education is not disrupted.

Terms dates are published in our weekly newsletter and on our website.

All holiday absence in term time is at the discretion of the Head Teacher and will be automatically treated as unauthorised unless exceptional circumstances apply and prior approval given.

Requests for absence **must be made in advance** by completing a 'Request for leave of absence during term time' form, available from the School Office, or from our website.

3.4. Lateness

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their children arrive at school on time so that they can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being late causes embarrassment for the child and disruption in the classroom. Being picked up on time is also important, especially for young children who can be upset if they are the only ones left.

Children arriving at school after 8.50 am must sign in at the School Office with an explanation for their lateness. Children arriving after 8.50 am are marked as late in the register. Arriving more than 30 minutes after registration without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence. The parents/guardians of children who are regularly arriving late will be informed of the problem and asked to take action to improve the situation.

3.5. Safeguarding

It is essential that we know where your child is. For safety reasons if a child is absent from school and no explanation has been received the Attendance Officer will call the parents to establish the reason for absence.

3.6 Issuing Financial Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence During Term Time

Term time leave is not permitted. Any requests for leave must be made to the Head teacher in writing using the 'Request for leave of absence during term time' form.

In line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and after consultation with the Education Welfare Service and our Governing Body, the Head Teacher will request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice to parents who take their children out of school for five or more consecutive days without authorisation.

From August 2024 the penalty notice is a fine of £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 per parent per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Under new national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. Note these absences do not have to be consecutive.

If a Request for leave of absence form is not submitted, and the child's absence is called in as sick for 5 consecutive days without medical evidence, the absence will be reported as unauthorised. In this case, it may be deemed to be unauthorised holiday and a fine may be requested.

4. Concerns

It is agreed that children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Parents/guardians are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes small or seemingly insignificant things upset children which means they become unhappy and may not want to come to school. Parents/guardians need to be aware of this.

5. Role of the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service operates on behalf of the Local Education Authority in discharging its legal obligations. The service works in collaboration with schools across Richmond Borough by providing advice and support to improve attendance rates and reduce persistent absence.

If the School and parents/guardians working together cannot sort out an absence problem, the School will refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) assigned to the School. If attendance does not improve, legal proceedings may be considered by the Local Authority in accordance with Government Legislation.

6. Summary

At Collis we strongly believe that working together as a whole school community and championing the importance of attendance and punctuality, our children will flourish now an in the next chapter of their education and beyond.

Collis School will:

- Provide a safe learning environment
- Encourage good attendance and investigate all unexplained and unjustified absences
- Follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality
- Keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record
- Work closely with parents/carers should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern
- Ensure records of attendance are maintained according to Government guidelines and adhere to legislation

Parents/Carers are:

- Legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance
- Expected to ensure that the child attends school regularly
- Required to inform the School on the first day of absence and each subsequent day with a reason for their child's absences from school
- Expected to arrange family holidays during the school holidays only
- Expected to maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- Required to notify the school of any changes in contact details including all emergency contacts

Collis Pupils are:

- Expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually
- Expected to be ready to learn