



Attendance and Lateness Policy

2026-2027

“Work hard, be kind”

Introduction

At Carnarvon Primary School, we aim to 'Work hard, be kind'. We are a welcoming school where everyone is highly valued and where tolerance, honesty, cooperation, and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Carnarvon Primary School, we aim to develop an ethos that demonstrates to children, parents/carers, and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

If pupils are unable to attend school for any reason, we expect parents to let us know first thing in the morning, by 8.45 a.m. at the latest. They can do this by leaving a message on the answerphone, calling, or emailing. If a child does not arrive at school, we will endeavour to contact you via telephone to ensure your child is safe.

As a safeguarding measure, parents and carers must contact the school on each day of a child's absence, even when the absences are consecutive. This ensures children's well-being and that the school always knows where children are.

Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly, then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are when the school either approves in advance of the child's absence or accepts an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments (with evidence of appointment cards)
- days of religious observance
- exclusion
- family bereavement
- 'Exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by the school on an individual basis)

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence occurs when no explanation has been given for the child's absence or when the school considers the explanation offered unacceptable.

Absence should not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g., shopping, minding the house, I'm not well, I couldn't get him/her to school, Gran's not well, He/she had a late night, couldn't get him/her up in time, etc.)
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances)

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is an absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee; therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised). See – ‘A Graduated Response to Absence Section’ at the end of this document.

Approved Educational Activity

Children educated off-site, dual registered, or engaged in supervised educational activities away from the school premises need not be marked as authorised absent and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that activities such as educational visits or approved sporting activities can be counted as ‘present’ for statistical purposes. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded using an appropriate code. This is important to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on-site at any given time is instantly available. All absences will need an authorised legal confirmation letter from an appropriate leader.

Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily—once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Carnarvon Primary School expects parents/carers to ensure that children are on the premises by 8.40 a.m. for the Upper and Lower Schools, or by 8.45 a.m. for Reception, for the morning session.

The morning register closes at 9.00 am for Upper and Lower School and at 9.05 am for Reception.

- Pupils arriving within 20 minutes of the start of their school day will be marked with an L, indicating they are late for school.
- Pupils arriving later than 20 minutes after the start of the school day, i.e. when the register has closed, will be registered with a U showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning. This will count as an unauthorised absence.

All late arrivals must enter via Reception and report to the School Office.

The class register is of paramount importance in considering attendance levels. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, the information in the register will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements concerning the keeping of registers for schools are set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

Monitoring and Management of Absence

Data extracted from accurate, up-to-date attendance registers will support more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, and the whole school) concerning overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a half-termly and annual basis;
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc);
- match attendance trends with attainment trends;
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy
- report attendance matters to parents/carers

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for regularly monitoring attendance and punctuality, and the Governing Body is kept informed of attendance figures.

First Day Response

As a vigilant and caring school, we apply a first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absences on the first morning of absence by telephone. We expect a reply within 24 hours. No reply will be classed as unauthorised and a potential cause for concern.

Punctuality

In addressing punctuality at Carnarvon Primary School, we:

- have clear procedures – school starts at 8.40 am or 8.45 am for Reception, and registers close 20 minutes later.
- publicise this policy in school and communicate it to parents/carers
- balance any sanctions with positive encouragement
- praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality
- ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and lessons
- follow up on the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

Leave of Absence

There is no legal entitlement to any leave of absence from school in term time.

Applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the relevant forms available from the school website or the school office. A request for leave of absence can only be authorised where the school accepts that there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised in these circumstances:

- during the first few weeks of any school year – this is a vital part of the school calendar for all pupils
- during an assessment/test period – e.g., End of Key Stage 2 SATs in May
- when a pupil's attendance record includes any unauthorised absence.

Absence for Religious Reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day expressly set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member, and this will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents/carers require an additional day, this must be requested in advance and can only be authorised if exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

Penalty Notices

The law gives the Local Authority and other designated bodies the power to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child attends school. Reducing school absences is a national and local priority because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels and disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution as it does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.

Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid prosecution and conviction. Penalty notices are issued at £ 120 per parent, per child. However, if paid within 21 days, the cost is £60.

If a child has lost more than three school days (6 half-day registration sessions) to unauthorised absence within 6 weeks, the school may issue a Penalty Notice. In cases of unauthorised absence, parents/carers will receive a warning that a Penalty Notice may be issued.

A child with a record of attendance below 95% for the current or previous academic year. A child with a record of attendance below 95% for the current or last academic year is more likely to have an application for leave of absence refused and very likely to receive a penalty notice if unauthorised absences exceed the criteria in the paragraph above.

In cases of unauthorised absences and holidays, warnings will be issued where notice of the intended absence has been given. However, if insufficient notice is given, Penalty Notices may be issued without notice.

Children at risk of missing education

Our school ensures that we follow robust processes to respond when children are missing from education or missing from home or care.

School leaders and designated safeguarding leads follow Nottinghamshire County Council guidance <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/2329358/nottinghamshire-children-missing-education-strategy.pdf> (appendix 1) when children are at risk of missing education. (See also the school's Child Protection Policy)

A Graduated Response to Concerning Absence at Carnarvon

1. Monitor all attendance below 90%
2. Letter sent to Parents if attendance continues below 90%
3. Parents invited in to talk with HT/Attendance Lead. EHAF and possible penalty notice discussed.
4. Parents are invited to talk with HT/Attendance Lead. EHAF set up, penalty notice considered.

	October	January	February	May
School Procedure	At the beginning of Autumn 2, attendance is scrutinised, and all children below 90% are recorded.	At the beginning of Spring 1, attendance is scrutinised, and children who attended below 90% the previous year and any new children who attended below 90% are monitored.	At the beginning of Spring 2, attendance is scrutinised, and children who previously attended below 90% are monitored, as are any new children who attend below 90%.	At the beginning of Summer 1, attendance is scrutinised, and children who previously attended below 90% are monitored, as are any new children who attend below 90%.
Communication with Parents	If attendance has improved from the previous year to above 90%, parents should receive an appreciation letter.	<i>(Stage 2 implemented)</i> If a child attended less than 90% of school the previous academic year, a letter is sent to parents to alert them to ongoing monitoring and to offer support.	<i>(Stage 3 implemented)</i> If a child with poor attendance last year continues to have attendance below 90%, a letter is sent inviting them to a meeting with the HT/Attendance Lead. EHAF/ Penalty Notices discussed	<i>(Stage 4 implemented)</i> If a child with poor attendance last year continues to have attendance below 90%, a letter is sent inviting them to a meeting with the HT/Attendance Lead. EHAF is completed to support the family. Penalty Notice considered.
	<i>(Stage 4 implemented)</i> For any child who reached Stage 3 in the process at the end of the previous academic year, the percentage is below 90% for the current year.		<i>(Stage 2 implemented)</i> If a child has attended less than 90% to date this academic year, a letter is sent to parents to alert them to monitoring and offer support.	<i>(Stage 3 implemented)</i> If a child has attended less than 90% to date, a letter is sent to parents inviting them to a meeting with the HT/Attendance Lead. EHAF/ Penalty Notices discussed

We are mindful that attendance figures during the Autumn term can be misleading due to the relatively few possible attendance sessions. During this term, the graduated response to attendance will only be activated in exceptional circumstances.