

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR STUDENTS - FEBRUARY 2018

Appendix 2 added September 2019

Reviewed at Teaching, Learning & Achievement Committee - 27 February 2018

Adopted at Full Governing Body Meeting - 27 March 2018

Review date - Spring Term 2020

1. Aims

The Cottesloe School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential. The Cottesloe School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. The Cottesloe School values all students and we will work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and SEN.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken during registration at the start of each school day and once at the start of Period 5. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes. Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.00pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on each day of any unplanned absence – by 9.00 am or as soon as practically possible. We ask all parents to preferably call the absence line on 01296 689720 or if this is not possible email studentabsence@cottesloe.bucks.sch.uk

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences through the Leave of Absence request procedure available on the Contact Us section of the school website at least one week before the planned absence. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. If a full days' absence is expected at a clinic or hospital appointment then The Cottesloe School will require a copy of the appointment letter. Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. The school will contact parents daily via phone and/or email to ascertain any unexplained absences. In cases where we are concerned about student welfare and safeguarding we will make unannounced home visits.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents alongside academic progress 4 times a year. Attendance forms part of the reporting system.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where absence is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, if the school is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- To attend a funeral of a close relative.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence will be required.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. A maximum of two days per academic year can be authorised for this.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Requests that do not meet any of the above criteria will not be deemed as an exceptional circumstance.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/education-support/attendance/>

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Please see Appendix 2 – Bucks County Council Guidance – Penalty Notice – Term-Time Holiday added September 2019.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The expectation is that all students should achieve a minimum of 96% attendance. The school promotes the positive impact that this has on academic achievement. (See Attendance Matters poster).

100% attendance is rewarded at the end of every term in each Celebration Assembly. Students with 100% attendance or those that have met attendance targets are invited to Achievement Breakfast as and when required. Letters and postcards are also sent to specific students who meet attendance targets set by Head of Year or Attendance Officer.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly, monthly and historic basis. We will contact parents if attendance falls below our expectation of 96%. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Warning letters are sent to all parents when attendance levels fall below 90%. If no improvement is seen in 5 weeks parents are invited into a Parent Contract Meeting (PCM). The Cottlesloe School uses this as a supportive measure to improve attendance.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. This is the responsibility of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment committee.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Takes calls from parents about absence and records it on the school system
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education with the LA to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Form tutor and class teacher

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for accurately taking a register during form time and the first 10 minutes of every lesson.

8.0 Review arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Attendance Officer and the Deputy Headteacher every two years (earlier if any legislative change). At every review the policy will be presented to the governing body.

9.0 Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour management and SEND policies.

February 2018

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Bucks County Council Guidance – Penalty Notice – Term-Time Holiday Added September 2019

Penalty Notices may be considered in the following circumstances:

- There are 10 or more sessions of consecutive G codes (excluding weekends and school holidays).
- Students are of compulsory school age when holiday was taken – ie. the term after the student turns five and up to the end of June in the year when the student turns 16.
- Referrals are sent in promptly to the County Attendance Team. This should be as soon as possible after the student returns to school. Late referrals may be considered within the same half term or within the proceeding 8 week period, but no longer. These should be signed off by a senior manager, who will consider a fine to be appropriate.
- Referrals should include the referral form including all information: - Dates match those days actually taken off school coded as G, Parents full names provided, copies of holiday request – letter, form, e-mail, phone message (if relevant), refusal letter (either version), copy of Registration Certificate which includes Student's name at top etc.

County Attendance Team consider referral and either:

1. Reject because the referral is incomplete; school to reapply with correct documentation.
2. Reject because the evidence would not meet the criteria for issue/prosecution.
3. Issue Penalty Notice to parent(s), within two weeks of receiving, wherever possible – confirmation sent to school.
4. Withdraw fines where they have been incorrectly issued or further evidence has been provided, which deems them to have extenuating circumstances.
5. Inform school if parent(s) fail to pay the Penalty Notice and agree if prosecution is appropriate.
6. If prosecution is the most appropriate route – County Attendance Team proceed with prosecution and inform school of outcome.