

Attendance Policy



The Cottesloe School

Policy Type:	Statutory
Reviewed by:	Teaching, Learning & Achievement Committee Date: 3 March 2020
Last reviewed:	February 2018
Next review:	Spring Term 2022 (earlier any legislative change)

Intent

The Cottesloe School recognises the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality so that all students can maximize their potential and be fully prepared for adult life. **Prepare, Aspire** and **Succeed** are clear aims of the school and this relates directly to excellent attendance. There is an expectation that all students, parents/carers, staff and Governors uphold the attendance standards that are necessary for effective teaching and learning. It is important that students are praised for high attendance.

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 SEND.

The school will:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act quickly and decisively to address any attendance issues.
- Support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly.
- Promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

The Cottesloe School expects parents/carers to:

- Adhere to procedures in this policy (see sections 2.2 and 2.3).
- Ensure that their child is punctual to school.
- Talk with their child and promote the importance of attendance.
- Contact the school if there are any attendance concerns.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive by registration at 8.40am.
- Be on time to all lessons.

Implementation

1. 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.

2. School procedures

2.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all students 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 student 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.

Students 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.

2.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on each day of any unplanned absence by 9.00 am. We ask all parents/carers to call the absence line on 01296 689720, if this is not possible email parents/carers can, as a last resort, email the school: 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/carers/carers 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.

2.3 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/carers/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student 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.

2.4 Lateness and punctuality

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

If a student is late to any lesson, teaching staff will record this on the schools systems and any minutes late will need to be made up by the student during the scheduled lunchtime Senior Leadership Detention.

2.5 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/carers 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.

2.6 Reporting to parents/carers

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

3. Authorised and unauthorised absence

3.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students 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 leave 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 performing 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 student's parents/carers/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. A maximum of two days per academic year can be authorised for this.
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision

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

3.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can refer parents/carers to the Local Authority for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents/carers 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 student 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.

A penalty notice referral may also be made if school attendance is irregular and falls below the minimum expectation, once all efforts have been made to increase attendance.

Please see Appendix 2 – Bucks Council Guidance – Penalty Notice – Term-Time Holiday

4. Strategies for promoting attendance

The expectation is that all students should achieve maximum attendance. The school promotes the positive impact that this has on academic achievement. (For example 'Attendance Matters' poster displayed around the school)

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.

5. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors student absence on a daily, weekly, monthly and historic basis. We will contact parents/carers if attendance falls below our expectation. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee. Warning letters are sent to all parents/carers when attendance levels fall below 90%. If no improvement is seen in 5 weeks parents/carers are invited into a Parent Contract Meeting (PCM). The Cottesloe School uses this as a supportive measure to improve attendance. Appendix 4 -Sample letters

Student-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.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 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.

6.2 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 students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

6.3 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

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

6.4 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 and adding minutes late to the schools' attendance system.

Impact

The Cottesloe School recognises the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality and will continually evaluate the attendance trends within the school to ensure that students attain their potential and are fully prepared for adult life. It fully utilises its attendance strategy to evaluate attendance trends and to quickly react to any concerns.

7. Review arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Attendance Officer and the Leadership Team every two years (earlier if any legislative change). At every review the policy will be presented to the Governing Board.

8.0 Links with other policies

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

February 2020

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 Council Guidance – Penalty Notice – Term-Time Holiday

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/carers 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.

If prosecution is the most appropriate route – County Attendance Team proceed with prosecution and inform school of outcome

1A Letter

Dear

By law parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. I am writing to you as your son/ daughter's attendance at school is currently irregular and therefore a cause for concern.

His/Her attendance has been monitored and is currently XXXX%. The expectation is for a minimum of 96% attendance for all students.

Every effort will be made to support XXX if you feel he is experiencing significant difficulties that may impact upon his attendance. Should this be the case, please contact me to discuss the matter further. In the meantime, I will continue to monitor XXX's attendance for a further five weeks, during which time I expect to see a significant improvement.

Only the Headteacher has the authority to authorise absence; further absences may not be authorised without supporting evidence that your child was unable to attend school with good reason.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 came into effect on 27 February 2004. Under Section 23 of this Act, the Education Act 1996 was amended with the introduction of two new subsections under Section 444 (subsections 444A & 444B) which has made it possible for Penalty Notices to be used as an alternative to prosecution in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

This means that parents/carers/carers may be subject to a fine of £60.00, per parent/carer, per child, if paid within 21 days rising to £120.00, per parent/carer, per child, if paid between 21 and 28 days, if their child is absent from school without a valid reason (i.e. the school does not approve the reason given for the absence).

Should XXX's attendance remain irregular I will have no choice but to refer the matter to the County Attendance Team who may consider the issue of a penalty notice as an appropriate course of action. Before this happens I would invite you into school for a Parent Contract meeting.

Yours sincerely

PCM Invite Letter:

Dear

As you are aware we have been concerned over your son/daughter's attendance for some time now. We have written to you to bring this to your attention and have been monitoring the attendance over a five week period.

Unfortunately during this time we have not seen a significant improvement in the attendance and therefore we would like to invite you to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting. If this date is not convenient please make contact as soon as possible to rearrange.

Date:

Time:

Venue: The Cottesloe School

Meeting with:

The aim of the meeting is to explore the reasons behind the irregular school attendance and to look at ways in which we can offer support. We are committed to working with all families to ensure that students are reaching their full potential – regular attendance is essential for this.

Whilst your involvement in a Parenting Contract Meeting is voluntary, you should be aware that if you decline the offer of support and Oliver's attendance remains irregular, the Local Authority may take formal action against you.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:-

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have; either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice and/or Prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which if convicted could result in a maximum fine of £2,500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.

It is imperative that your child attends this meeting with you. If you need to re-arrange the appointment time, then please contact your child's Head of Year.

Yours sincerely