

Attendance Policy

Cornelius Vermuyden School



Approved by: Full Governing Body

Date: Spring 2023

Last reviewed on: February 2023

Next review due by: February 2024

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I. Aims

Our 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
- Every child has a fundamental and **legal** right to be educated.
- Parents and teachers have a **legal** duty to ensure maximum attendance at School.
- Attendance at school on a regular basis is essential for our students to achieve.

We are committed to reducing the overall level of absence of our students in order to reduce its impact upon their learning and maximise their potential for the future.

It is imperative that parents/carers understand the expectation that all pupils should attend school whilst it is fully open (Tier 1) during this time of COVID-19.

We recognise that persistent absence can have a detrimental impact upon our students in several ways and our work in this area is vital and plays an integral part of our intention to –

Promote children's welfare and safeguarding

- Ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that students succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that students have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.
- Raise awareness of the need for our students to attend school on a regular basis amongst their parents and carers.

We are committed to improving levels of school attendance and punctuality. We aim to do this by:

- Enabling maximum student attendance through valuing and promoting the importance of high attendance and punctuality rates;
- Rewarding students with high levels of attendance and punctuality and those who are significantly improving their attendance and punctuality;
- Encouraging students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities;

- Identifying all students who have poor attendance or punctuality, **at an early stage**;
- Working to resolve any personal or social difficulties that may be contributing to poor attendance and punctuality;
- Recognising the external factors which influence student's attendance and punctuality and work in partnership with parents, the Attendance and Education Welfare Service and other agencies to address difficulties.
- Recognising the internal factors which de-motivate and alienate students and to reduce their influence by maximising positive relationships and meaningful learning experiences by using the curriculum creatively.
- Providing effective and efficient systems, which allow us to monitor daily attendance, punctuality and truancy, from school and individual lessons;
- Reducing all forms of absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism; (A child is classified as being a persistent absentee if he/she has an absence rate of 10% or more)
- Using a range of actions and intervention strategies that promote monitoring, review and regular liaison with all parties.

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.

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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the tutor session. Subsequently, it will be taken every lesson. 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 I 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 8.05am on each school day. This will be indicated by the first bell.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.10am and will be kept open until 8.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.50pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Absence Procedure for Parents

- Parents are asked to contact the school by telephone by 8.00am if their child is going to be absent.
- Parents are expected to phone each morning unless they have specified the number of days their child will be absent.
- Parents will need to provide a letter for their child's tutor on their return to school.
- Any absence over five days will need to be supported by a medical certificate or letter from the doctor
- The School telephone number is 01268 685011 ext 304

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.

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. Parents will need to contact the school via the absence number to confirm a medical absence.

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 (L code). All pupils arriving late for period 1 must sign in via the Pupil Reception desk. All lates will be documented by the member of SLT undertaking signing pupils in. The following measures will be applied to pupils who are late:

1st Late: a text message will be communicated to parents/carer advising of their child's lateness to school;

2nd Late: a second text message will be communicated to parents/carer advising of their child's lateness to school;

3rd Late: a formal letter will be sent and this will be followed up by a phone call.

4th Late: will result in staff issuing detentions .

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U code). This will count against their attendance. Any pupil who has 5 U codes on their registration certificate will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance compliance team

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 by conducting daily home visits. These will be conducted by the school's attendance ambassadors.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Each half term parents will receive a letter from the school to outline the pupil's attendance and punctuality. Furthermore, parents/carers will be able to access their child's attendance records through the G4S website/app.

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'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the 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
- 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

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.

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.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

5.1 Promoting Attendance

Positive Attendance: Attendance and Punctuality Incentives and Rewards

- The school recognises that by raising awareness of attendance and lateness issues by using a variety of strategies that this will have a positive impact on the overall attendance and punctuality figures.
- Half Term 100% weekly attendance raffle
- Certificates and House Points will be awarded termly to those students who have achieved 100% attendance and punctuality each term.
- Each tutor group will receive House Points for individual students with 100% attendance and punctuality.
- 100% attendance trip

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly basis and this is shared with Heads of Year and SLT.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above four days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an Attendance Compliance Team.

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.

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.

6.1 Addressing Serious Attendance Concerns

The School works closely with other agencies to seek support for individual students with a view to securing regular and sustained attendance. These agencies include the Family Operational Hub, Family Solutions, Children and Family Services, Social Services, the Health Service, the School Counsellor, the Police, Hospital Schools, EWMHS¹. (Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health service).

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Identifying students below 90%

- The Attendance Officer produces a report for each Head of Year on a weekly basis. This allows each Head of Year to monitor the progress of the students in their Year who are causing concern about attendance.
- All parents of students who have an attendance level below 90% are contacted by the Head of Year and invited to attend a meeting to discuss reasons for level of attendance and to make them aware that we are monitoring the situation.
- Most students with an attendance level of below 90% will be placed on a Home/School monitoring program
- All concerns are made clear to the Tutor who can provide additional support.
- The Head of Year and Attendance Officer monitors these Students via a fortnightly meeting.
- Referrals will be made to MECES (Attendance Compliance team) for support and early intervention when appropriate.

6.2 Monitoring Holidays

If parents/carers still wish to ask for leave of absence (including holidays), they should apply on a 'Leave of Absence' request form, which can be obtained from Mrs Bennett in the main reception. It is important that all of our pupils have attendance as close to 100% as possible, as any time missed has a detrimental effect on students' education.

The Department for Education recently published amendments to the Education Regulations that make it clear that Head teachers should not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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.

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
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the Attendance Compliance team 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 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Assistant Head responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection policy

Appendix I: 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