

The Community College Whitstable Attendance Policy



**Reviewed and agreed by Governors at the Full Governing Body
meeting held on 8 March 2017.**

GS

Mr Graham Saltmarsh, Chair of Governors

Date:

AGI

Mrs Ana Gibson, Headteacher

Date:

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years but will be amended before then if required.

Next review due: March 2020.

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Attendance Policy

Section 1: Regular Attendance

- i. The school recognises the importance and value of the regular attendance of all its pupils as a significant element in their education. It is accepted that a proportion of the pupil population will be absent on any one day, for legitimate reasons, but unauthorised absence is unacceptable.
- ii. The school is committed to encouraging all its pupils to attend school regularly: absence from school affects not only the individual pupil but can also adversely influence the pace and scope of teaching and learning in a class. An individual attendance of above 95% is expected from all pupils not experiencing a major medical condition.
- iii. The school is therefore committed to restrict absence to unavoidable, legitimate causes according to the statutes regarding attendance. Figures for each tutor group are calculated. Percentage figures for the whole school are presented at Governors' meetings.
- iv. Full attendance is a school-wide goal and is recognised and rewarded publicly through inter-tutor group and inter-community competition and the award of individual certificates for full attendance.
- v. A record of lateness is maintained to record the time of arrival of pupils late to school and their reason for being late. Repeated lateness is dealt with through school detentions as a sanction.
- vi. If a pupil arrives after registration has closed without satisfactory explanation, this may result in an unauthorised absence being recorded.

Section 2: The Completion of Registers

Registers are completed twice daily by tutors (or a substitute member of staff), as required by law. These are completed according to instructions issued by the school's management. The instructions correspond with DfE requirements.

Section 3: Absence

Guidance to Pupils:

- Pupils will be advised to monitor their own attendance and ensure that it is as good as possible.
- Pupils will be advised that their achievement will be affected by poor attendance.
- Pupils will be advised that they must catch up with any work missed as soon as possible.

Guidance to Parents:

- Parents must inform the school on the first day a pupil is absent, by note or by phone. It is an obligation on the part of a parent or carer to explain absence from one or more school sessions. It is desirable for the tutor to also receive a note on the pupil's return, especially if the illness is for more than one day.
- If no reason for an absence has been received on the day of absence, a text message will be sent or contact by telephone will be made. If the school still receives no response, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. In some circumstances a home visit will be carried out.
- Pupils must not be taken out of school during term time as this seriously affects their learning.
- In cases of predictable and allowable absence, a note should be received in advance.

- In the event of a protracted absence through illness, the school will endeavour to provide work for home study, on request.
- Occasional, random checks on attendance are organised: these, too, are a restraint on internal truancy.

Holidays in Term Time:

Holidays during the school term will only be authorised by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances. Holidays will not be authorised for pupils studying in Key Stage 4. Parents are reminded that they cannot expect the school to agree to a holiday during term time. In fact, the Governors of the school actively discourage this practice. Any such request must be submitted in writing prior to any holiday being planned and will be replied to. If the holiday is still taken, a penalty notice may be issued.

Under normal circumstances, absence will not be granted for a holiday. If a child is taken on holiday without permission, this will count as an unauthorised absence and will be reported as such on all reports and references.

Section 4: When Absence Gives Cause for Concern

- It is the responsibility of the tutor to monitor his/her tutees' attendance in the first instance, in liaison with the Attendance Office
- If the Attendance Officer is unable to make telephone contact using the home or mobile telephone number regarding an absence, s/he will contact the work place(s) of the parent(s). If unsuccessful on these numbers further contact numbers held will be used.
- In the event of 4, or more, consecutive day's absence, confirmation is required that a doctor has been seen. Evidences such as an appointment card, a copy of a prescription, label from medication etc will be acceptable. In the event that medical confirmation is not received, absences may be recorded as unauthorised.
- The Attendance Office should refer pupils to the Attendance and Behaviour Service through the relevant AHT if a pupil's attendance continues to be a matter of concern.
- Where reason for absence is not received from parent or carer and the Attendance Office is unable to make contact with parent or carer, a letter will be sent and the absence recorded as unauthorised until a reason for absence is received.
- In exceptional circumstances, the Attendance Officer, or other senior member of staff may exercise his/her judgement and make a home visit to discuss the absence.

Section 5: Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absences

The school is required to comply with the Kent County Council Code of Conduct on the provision of penalty notices to address poor attendance at school, the statutes for which are contained in its introduction.

The following circumstances will be considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per pupil per academic year. As with prosecutions under Sec 444 Education Act 1996, a Penalty Notice may be issued to EACH parent liable for the offence or offences.
- In cases where families contain more than one poor-attending student/pupil, multiple issues may occur but this will be the subject of careful consideration and co-ordination.

- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Overt truancy (including students/pupils caught on truancy sweeps).
- Parentally-condoned absences.
- Excessive holidays in term-time.
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed).

To ensure consistent delivery of Penalty Notices the following criteria will apply:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current term.
- Other than in specific circumstances* the liable parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement.

** the deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without/against school/alternative provision permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not been/would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions.*

Schools and alternative education providers must consider every aspect of a student's/pupil's case before considering whether a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. This must include strategic discussions with the assigned EWO and any other attendance-support staff who have involvement with or knowledge of the pupil/family.

The school will ensure that this information is regularly published and promoted in newsletters.