



**CANSFIELD**

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

# Attendance Policy

<u>Approval Date</u>	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2022
<u>Policy Review Date</u>	September 2023
<u>Chair of Governors</u>	
<u>Headteacher</u>	

## **1. Aims and Purpose**

Regular school attendance is essential if pupils are to achieve their full potential. At Cansfield we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling pupils 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.

Cansfield values all pupils 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 working together to improve school attendance 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:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- 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. Principles**

Parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## **4. Attendance and Absence at Cansfield High School**

### **4.1 Encouraging and Improving Attendance and Punctuality**

The school sets attendance targets each year. We set a target of 100% for each pupil but will accept 97% as a minimum. These targets apply to individuals, groups and the school as a whole. Our aim as a school is to

consistently achieve higher than the national average. Heads of Year will monitor attendance and punctuality for the year group and review at regular intervals the year achievements in relation to targets set. We seek to develop strategies and procedures which encourage pupils to achieve the best attendance possible, these include:

- Acknowledgement in assemblies for forms and individuals.
- Individuals with full attendance for the whole year will be acknowledged for their excellent record.
- Awards will be made to forms with the highest levels of attendance and punctuality from their year on a regular basis.
- Regular displays will be made highlighting the best year, best form and most improved form in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Information and graphs are produced regularly for use in forms and year assemblies to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Individual pupils may be monitored for attendance and punctuality in an effort to overcome problems.
- Letters of praise to those targeted pupils who achieve improved attendance and punctuality records.

Year assemblies will be used to raise the awareness amongst pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. By placing due emphasis on the need for attendance and punctuality, we are helping our pupils to make the most of the opportunities school has to offer. The good habits developed will benefit pupils in their transition to college or the world of work.

Parents Evenings will be used to raise the awareness of parents in relation to:

- Informing parents of the link between attendance and achievement.
- Implications of taking pupils on holiday during term time, ie issuing Education Penalty Notice fines as appropriate in conjunction with the LA and highlighting any prosecutions for non-school attendance.
- The need to have early confirmation of a pupil's absence from school on the first day of absence.
- A note on return to school to 'close' the absence.
- Encouraging medical / dental appointments to be taken after 3.15pm as far as possible.
- Notification of our concerns about pupil absence.

The support of the Attendance Enforcement Team at the Local Authority is also utilised to encourage and support pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. Group work, individual action plans, home visits and one to one sessions with pupils will be used to encourage attendance.

#### **4.2 Categorising Absence (see Appendix 1)**

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents must advise the school by telephone, text, email or via the school app by 8:15am on the day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up with medical evidence should a child have visited a doctor / dentist etc. This can be in the form of an appointment letter / card or a copy of a prescription.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Head to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical / Dental Appointments Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils must attend school for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement.

Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Head. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing, outlining the conditions of leave granted.

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrates' court.

Religious Observance Cansfield acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration by written request by the parent of authorised absence. Such absence will be authorised up to a maximum of two days annually.

Late Arrival Registration begins at 8.30am, and pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.30am and pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late. This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate. The school gates close at 8.30am and pupils arriving after this time must report to Pupil Reception. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided; for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

Unauthorised Absence Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Head.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's / family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniform.
- Looking after siblings.
- Having their hair cut.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes.
- 'Couldn't get up'.
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school.
- Family holidays.

## **5. School Procedures**

### **5.1 First Day Absence**

Parents are asked to notify school on their first day of absence. If notification has not been received by 9.45am then contact by phone will be made by the Attendance Officer. If contact is successful a note will be made of

the reason for absence. If unsuccessful than a text message will be sent. This procedure will be repeated again the following day, and if necessary until an explanation for absence is received. On the second day of an unexplained absence the attendance team will then do a home visit. The Headteacher and Pastoral Head of Year will be informed of any anomalies or concerns on a daily basis and will investigate where necessary.

## **5.2 Frequent Absence**

The Form Tutor should be aware of any emerging attendance concerns and bring these to the attention of the Pastoral Head of Year. Similarly, the Attendance Officer may notice emerging trends. It is the responsibility of the Pastoral Head of Year to monitor and respond to patterns and trends. In cases where pupils begin to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problems with parents. If this is unsuccessful the school may refer to the School Nurse if the problem is due to medical reasons. In other cases, the school will seek advice and support from the Attendance Support Team at the Local Authority.

## **5.3 Persistent Absence**

All steps will be taken to prevent pupils falling into the persistent absence category. A pupil is considered to be a persistent absentee when their attendance drops below 90%. Individual target setting, meetings with parents and attendance support groups are used to support pupils and parents, and so ensure they do not become a persistent absentee.

## **5.4 Referral to Startwell**

This will be made when despite intervention and support, attendance continues to decline and certainly when an individual's attendance drops below 85%.

## **6. Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils can be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
- Transfer between schools.
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the pupil.
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
- In custody for more than four months.
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the school has tried to locate the pupil.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after the school has tried to locate the pupil.
- Death of a pupil.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

Cansfield believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

### **7.1 Governing Body**

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents.
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

- Ensure that the Registration Regulations (England, 2013) and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets and, where appropriate, link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

## **7.2 Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance. For example, good teaching and learning experiences that encourage pupils to attend and achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are able to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations (England, 2013) and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named Senior Leader to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Ensure that all the above priorities are shared with and reinforced by all relevant school staff.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Use the standard documents to support a move to legal proceedings should that be necessary.

## **7.3 Parents**

Parents are asked to:

- Talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.

- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home. For example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Head in good time.

#### **7.4 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and do all that they can to avoid unnecessary absences.

#### **8. Using Attendance Data**

Pupils' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupils' attendance is a cause for concern. The Attendance Officer will provide Form Teachers with weekly information regarding attendance for each pupil within their form group. Expectations around attendance are displayed in all Form Rooms.

#### **9. Support Systems**

School recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Cansfield also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Parenting contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Pupil voice activities
- Reward systems
- Time limited part-time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages
- Internal alternative provision
- Implementation of an early help
- Support from the Attendance Support Team at the Local Authority

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Cansfield will consider the use of legal sanctions.

## **10. Longer Term Medical / Hospitalisation**

The duration of such absence is determined by the decisions of the appropriate medical authority. The school medical service and the school nurse may be useful in eliciting information and advice, though many medical facilities do make direct contact. However, the school will consider the following:

- Provision of work from school and a means of moving work to and from the place of treatment.
- Contact and cooperation with the educational provision in the place of treatment.
- The process of reintroduction to school, which may need to be phased. In addition, other pupils may need to be prepared for ways in which they can help and be involved.
- Home tutor provision may be needed in cases of prolonged home convalescence. The Local Authority should be asked for advice in such cases.

Disapplication of the National Curriculum or pupils “missing” a year (i.e. repeating a school year and thus joining a group chronologically one year younger) may only be undertaken with full parental support. The implications of such a step need to be fully discussed with the SENCO involved.

## **11. Penalty Notices**

See also ‘Wigan Council Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct’ on the school website.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. It is essential that parents maximise the educational opportunities available for their children and provide the best possible start in life.

An Education Penalty Notice warning is communicated to all parents at the beginning of the academic year and subsequently each term. An Education Penalty Notice may be issued following an Education Penalty Notice warning being sent.

School would request that the Local Authority issue an Education Penalty Notice if a child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12-week period;

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
- 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence
- Persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration.

The Local Authority will consider issuing a Penalty Notice to each responsible parent.

### **11.1 Payment of Penalty Notices**

The cost of an Education Penalty Notice will be £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 to be paid within 28 days.

### **11.2 Non Payment of Education Penalty Notices**

If payment is not received within 28 days, the Local Authority will consider prosecution for the unauthorised absence to which the Education Penalty Notice relates. Non-payment of an Education Penalty Notice may result in legal action being taken by the Local Authority. These actions will be considered where a significant improvement of school attendance is not apparent. The prosecution is not for the non-payment of the notice but is for failure to ensure regular attendance at school. The instigation of legal proceedings for unauthorised absence from school under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 may also be considered where it is deemed to be appropriate. In these circumstances, the school is required to provide the Local Authority with a signed school attendance record of the pupil.

## 12. Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003)

A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance. The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly. The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

## 13. Appendix 1: Absence Notations

The school uses the following codes, which 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
<b>Authorised Absence</b>		
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
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
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
<b>Administrative Codes</b>		
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

<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day