



The COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL *Leftwich*

Achieving Excellence

Document Control Sheet

Document Type	Policy
Document Name	Attendance and Punctuality Policy
Originator	Margery Yates
Approved by	Inclusion & Culture
Review interval	Annual
Date of last review	September 2024
Date of next review	Autumn Term 2025
This document is part of the group which include	Behaviour for Learning, Anti-Bullying, Acceptable Use, Online Safety, Suspensions Policy, Statement Additional & Special Education Needs, Drugs' Education, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Use of Images, Student Illness, Accident & First Aid, Use of Force, Recruitment, Supporting Children with Medical Conditions, Single Equality Scheme, Searching Screening & Confiscation, Transgender and Health & Safety Policies.
Equality Act 2010 fully considered	Yes - considered to have a neutral impact
EIA Form Completed	Yes

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School Attendance

KEY PERSONNEL

Name	Role	Responsibility
R Warburton L Kane	Headteacher Deputy Headteacher	To oversee the work of the School's lead professional for attendance
M Yates	Assistant Headteacher	To monitor and promote attendance throughout the School including the attendance and welfare of vulnerable groups
	Learning Leader (Year)	To monitor the attendance situation of individual children or young people in the Year Group
	Form Tutor	To monitor and promote the attendance of students in their tutor group
M Pimlatt	Governor	To monitor the school's work to promote and maintain good attendance
	Local Authority	To provide legal support as appropriate through its Education Welfare Service

Attendance Policy Statement:

1. Introduction and Aim

- 1.1 The County High School, Leftwich recognises the importance of good attendance and the impact it has on children’s progress, attainment, enjoyment of learning and relationships within school. Good attendance helps a child to realise their potential and ensure they are motivated, confident and enjoy a diverse range of curricular opportunities and experiences. Our school policy promotes good attendance, which is recognised and rewarded as an achievement. The school monitors attendance and ensures quick and early intervention if a problem is identified. We recognise that whole school preventative and proactive approaches are key to promoting children’s wellbeing and attendance. A child must attend every day that they are required to do so unless an exceptional circumstance applies.
- 1.2 Our policy is accessible to leaders, staff, pupils, and parents, and is published on our school website. It will be sent to parents with any initial information when pupils join the school and they will be reminded of it at the beginning of each school year and when it is updated. A child must attend school every day that they are required to do so unless an exceptional circumstance applies. As the barriers to attendance evolve quickly, the policy should be reviewed and updated as necessary. In doing so, we will seek the views of pupils and parents. The Attendance & Punctuality Policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.
- 1.3 All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

2. Legislation

- 2.1 Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. Regular attendance is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities and further development.
- 2.2 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”
- 2.3 Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that “if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence.”
- 2.4 Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. Additionally, regular attendance is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities and further development.
- 2.5 Section 576 Education Act 1996 – Meaning of “parent”
 - 2.5.1 for the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a “parent” and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:
 - 2.5.2 all biological parents, whether they are married or not

- 2.5.3 any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- 2.5.4 any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

3. Expectations:

- 3.1 to have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- 3.2 to ensure that such data is available and used effectively by the Senior Leaders of the school and student-facing staff
- 3.3 to agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these in the school's attendance plan
- 3.4 to keep parent(s)/carer(s), students and governors informed of policy and practice
- 3.5 to ensure that the school actively promotes good attendance and the educational welfare of vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children, SEND and those identified as Pupil Premium students

4. Procedures:

- 4.1 Children or young people are expected to attend the school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. The school has a duty to safeguard all its students. If a child is absent, the parents/carers should inform the school on the **first day of absence, and each following day of absence**, stating the reason
- 4.2 There are two types of absence:
 - 4.2.1 Authorised (where the school approves student absence)
 - 4.2.2 Unauthorised (where the school does not approve absence)
- 4.3 If contact explaining the child or young person's absence is not made by parent(s)/carer(s), then the school will contact home on the initial day. If the absence is not explained it will be 'Unauthorised'. **This contact will be recorded in the register.**
- 4.4 The Headteacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- 4.5 Children or young people with 100% attendance will be recognised by the school at regular intervals throughout the year and across Key Stages

5. Absence Monitoring

- 5.1 School robustly monitors and analyses attendance data to promptly identify and address possible concerns and allow for early interventions to support the child/family's underlying needs.
- 5.2 Attendance data is compiled by Senior Leaders and analysed in comparison with national statistics
- 5.3 Each week, members of SLT responsible for the strategic approach to attendance will meet to analyse absences. Students whose attendance is giving cause for concern will be discussed and strategies agreed **and implemented to support improvements to attendance.**
 - 5.3.1 This will include –
 - 5.3.1.1 Weekly attendance code analysis

- 5.3.1.2 Specific cohort and group monitoring – particularly for vulnerable groups
- 5.3.1.3 Monitoring of lesson attendance across all subjects
- 5.3.1.4 ‘Welcome back’ conversations for all pupils that have been absent for 5 days – to check wellbeing and ensure there are no ongoing needs that will impact on attendance.
- 5.3.1.5 The school’s strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.
- 5.3.1.6 The school’s strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.

6. Early Identification and Intervention: assess, plan, do and review

- 6.1 For any child / child person who is absent from school it is essential to fully understand the reasons for this so that targeted, evidence-based interventions and support can be put into place. All staff have a part to play in promoting attendance. We recognise the importance of ensuring that key members of staff from across the school, including Form Tutors, attendance, pastoral and SEND staff work in collaboration to consider and identify the holistic needs of the child/young person and to overcome barriers to attendance. In accordance with the principles of early intervention, a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review will be followed utilising a range of school-based resources, evidence based interventions and seeking advice and support from external services at an appropriate stage, when needed.
- 6.2 Appropriate assessments will be important to help understand the underlying reasons that may be contributing to attendance difficulties. This may be an assessment that focuses on the individual child’s needs such as an SDQ, SEND assessments and wellbeing assessments or may include the holistic needs of the family, such as a TAF assessment. Assessments will include the views of the child/young person as well as parents/carers, and identify strengths (what is working well) and needs (what is working less well).
- 6.3 Assessments undertaken may identify that a child/young person is experiencing underlying emotional based needs that are contributing to non-attendance. Cheshire West and Chester Council has developed guidance for schools - Emotionally Based School Non-attendance: Good practice guidance for schools. This is a whole school framework with a graduated approach to support the early identification and intervention of children/young people who may struggle to cope in school/attend school.
- 6.4 Information from assessments will inform a SMART action plan with focussed targets developed in partnership with families, and other services as appropriate. For example, Early Help and Prevention and Social Care may have a part to play in the delivery of support and intervention to promote engagement and attendance. Attendance Improvement Plans should be personalised to effectively meet a child / young person’s needs and improve attendance and wellbeing outcomes.
- 6.5 Regular reviews of support and Attendance Improvement Plans are essential to monitor the impact of interventions and to adjust these accordingly. If, despite targeted support and intervention, attendance and wellbeing concerns persist, we may seek further advice

and support from external services including mental health services, specialist teaching and education services.

7. Registers

- 7.1 Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents and the register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school.
- 7.2 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' (section 6) Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, morning (a.m.) and once during the second session, afternoon (p.m.).
- 7.3 On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:
 - 7.3.1 Present;
 - 7.3.2 Attending an approved educational activity;
 - 7.3.3 Absent;
 - 7.3.4 Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 7.4 The school should follow up any absences to:
 - 7.4.1 Ascertain the reason;
 - 7.4.2 Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
 - 7.4.3 Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
 - 7.4.4. Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system as a priority and returned to the school office in a timely manner. This is used to download data to the School Census.
 - 7.4.5 Consider early identification, assessment, intervention and support processes that may need to be implemented.
- 7.5. The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the Department for Education (DfE) 'School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities). [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
 - 7.5.1 The school expects staff to ensure that registers are a current and accurate record of the attendance of students under their supervision. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all students; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for nonattendance at school
 - 7.5.2 The register should be marked using the symbols advised by the DfE and Cheshire West and Chester Council. Each register should be taken, saved and closed within the first ten minutes of Tutor Time/the lesson
 - 7.5.3 The school uses SIMS and Synergy management information services and the Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998

8. Lateness

- 8.1 We will apply a robust day to day process to track and follow up on absence and poor punctuality. We will ensure registers are completed accurately and on time, twice per day,

in accordance with the timings set out below. This will indicate which pupils are absent from or are late for school.

- 8.2 The school day starts at 8.45 am when all students are expected to be present for registration. If your child is in class at this time, they will be marked as present.
- 8.3 Any child who arrives after this time must enter the school by the main entrance and report to the school office to sign in. They will be marked as late and will receive the L code.
- 8.4 As the school follows a carefully structured Tutor Time Programme, any lateness is a loss to valuable learning time. Lateness will be shared with parents/carers via the school's electronic communication systems (~~InTouch~~) inviting further communication with school. Your child may also be required to remain in school for a short period of time, at the end of the week
- 8.5 In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if your child arrives after the registers close at 9.45 am, they will receive a mark, code U, that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Notice to Improve or other legal action if the problem persists
- 8.6 Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, you will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies
- 8.7 You may approach the school at any time for support and advice if you are having difficulty getting your child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance

9. Promoting and Incentivising Attendance (Rewards and Incentives)

- 9.1 At The County High School, Leftwich, rewards, incentives and competitions play an important part when working to improve attendance. The most effective schools consistently promote the benefits of good attendance. Rewards and incentives should be devised with the Children's and families' views at the heart. This will mean that our incentives and rewards are purposeful and meaningful. Our School Council will play an important part in this to ensure that we improve attendance in the most effective way. Schools that have good attendance recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture.
- 9.2 We understand that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. Therefore, it is important that attendance is recognised, celebrated and held in high regard, no matter how small the improvements might be. Improved attendance or improved punctuality should be recognised and praised, not just 'perfect' attendance. Every child has the right to feel they can achieve and be successful, so any reward/incentive system must be inclusive of those with children with additional needs. It is important that pupils see the attendance incentives and competitions as a team effort and not to blame individuals. At The County High School, Leftwich pupils will be taught about the positive link between attendance and high achievement through assemblies and dedicated EFL sessions.
- 9.3 Attendance information should be readily available for both children and parents. We will share attendance information in assemblies and information being sent home. Barriers affecting attendance in our school will be explored, taking both the children and parents' views into account, so that every staff member is clear about how they can help to improve

attendance and/or punctuality. This will be reflected in our rewards and incentives and time will be dedicated to such barriers in order to try to remove them.

- 9.4 Consequences might be used alongside our rewards and incentives. We are proud to be a Trauma Informed school, and as such, all pupils will be welcomed back to school by a key member of staff and reasons for their lateness or absence will be explored sensitively with barriers established and the necessary support provided.

10. Unauthorised Absence and Notice to Improve

- 10.1 An absence may be coded as 'unauthorised' if:
- 10.1.1 no reason for absence has been given
 - 10.1.2 medical evidence is not received when requested
 - 10.1.3 a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised
 - 10.1.4 a student arrives at school after registration has closed
- 10.2 Parents/carers should be aware that school may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the current term with a view to issuing a Notice to Improve or other legal action.
- 10.2.1 The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.
 - 10.2.2 Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
 - 10.2.3 A third penalty notice must not be issued within a 3 year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued and alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.
 - 10.2.4 A Notice to Improve may be issued per parent per child.

11. Persistent Absenteeism

- 11.1 A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason
- 11.2 Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and future opportunities. The school asks for the support and cooperation of parents/carers to tackle this. All absence is monitored thoroughly and with regularity, in particular, persistent absentee students. Through careful tracking of absence, combined with academic mentoring our intention is to limit the impact of persistent absence affecting academic attainment
- 11.3 We will share any concerns re attendance via telephone call and letter. We may also request evidence from a health professional to verify the reason for absence. For example, a Doctor's note, hospital letter, appointment card, copy of prescription or packaging from prescription medication

12. Medical Absence

- 12.1 Absence due to illness should be reported to school by phone on the first day of absence and any subsequent days. School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received. In the majority of cases, a parent's notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern.
- 12.2 Only where we have a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence. In instances of long-term or repeated absences for the same reason, seeking medical evidence may be appropriate to assist in assessing whether the child requires additional support to help them to attend more regularly, and whether the illness is likely to prevent the child from attending for extended periods. If a parent proactively seeks out a note from a GP, it does not imply a need for absence unless this is explicit in their letter.
- 12.3 If a medical absence is likely to be ongoing or long term, then school will seek support in accordance with statutory guidance relating to Children with health needs. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>
- 12.4 As a school we need to plan how children can access Education and how and when the child will return to school. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 we must also demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are made to meet child's Educational Needs.
- 12.5 For children who have a medical condition and cannot attend school, we will refer to the Cheshire West and Chester Council's Medical Needs Team. <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/education-and-learning/medical-needs-service/medical-needs-policy-latest.pdf>
Their policy states that referrals must come directly from the child's school and must be supported by medical evidence from one of the following health professionals:
- consultant paediatrician or adolescent psychiatrist
 - consultant child psychiatrist
 - hospital consultant
- Supporting evidence from a General Practitioner alone cannot be accepted.
- 12.6 As from 19th August 2024 schools must make a sickness return to the Local Authority and provide the full name and address of all pupils who have been recorded with the code I (Illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. This is to help the school and Local Authority to agree any provisions needed to ensure continuity of education of pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on Education for Children with health needs: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

13. Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

- 13.1 As of 19th August 2024, the law ceases to include a leave of absence for a family holiday. A leave of absence should not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Head Teachers are only

empowered to approve a leave of absence when it is requested in advance by the parent or carer with whom the child resides and when circumstances of the requested leave are 'exceptional'.

13.2 The Head Teacher and the Governing Body will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form available via the school website. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Notice to Improve to be issued to each parent/carer.

13.3 The following will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- 13.3.1 Family holiday
- 13.3.2 Availability of less expensive holiday
- 13.3.3 Availability of holiday accommodation
- 13.3.4 Parent/carer's working commitments
- 13.3.5 Holiday pre-booked by another family member

13.4 A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away but are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid.

13.5 The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring any attendance issues are dealt with in line with school policy.

14. What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?

14.1 Let the school know straight away why your child is absent. Home/school communication is extremely important in supporting your child to achieve and feel settled in school. Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.

14.2 It is important that school and parents / carers work together with a shared plan and outcomes when supporting a child / young person's attendance and wellbeing. If despite persistent attempts to work with parents, there continues to be a lack of engagement, then legal procedures may be followed to secure engagement and school attendance.

14.3 As a school we recognise that building respectful relationships with families and working in collaboration is essential to ensuring the best outcomes for children / young people. We require all parents to actively support the work of the school, including promoting attendance and engagement. We are committed to ensuring that systems and processes are in place with regards to promoting attendance and would encourage parents to make contact if they have concerns about their child.

14.4 We will provide parents / carers with information about Emotionally Based School Non-attendance to discuss needs and strategies to support their child, as appropriate

14.5 If you are worried about your child's attendance at school:

- 14.5.1 Talk to your child
- 14.5.2 Talk to your child's Form Tutor, Year Leader and key staff at school

14.5.3 Talk to the Education Welfare Service where guidance may be received to help you resolve this situation

15. Religious Observance

- 15.1 We recognise that some pupils may need to participate in days of religious observance.
- 15.2 Where a day of religious observance:
 - 15.2.1 falls during school time and
 - 15.2.2 has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs
- 15.3 We ask that parents/carers notify the school in writing in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.

16. Enforced School Closure

- 16.1 If The County High School, Leftwich was forced to close for a period of time, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. The expectation is children will still engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

17. Impact of Good Attendance

All pupils will achieve well by developing knowledge and skills on their journey through school. Due to robust monitoring of attendance, all pupils, including vulnerable children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), will have fair and equitable access to school in order to achieve the best possible outcomes. Pupils will leave The County High School, Leftwich ready for a successful transition to further education or employment.

- 17.1 The table below sets out the attendance targets and at what stage parents/carers will be contacted about their child’s attendance.

