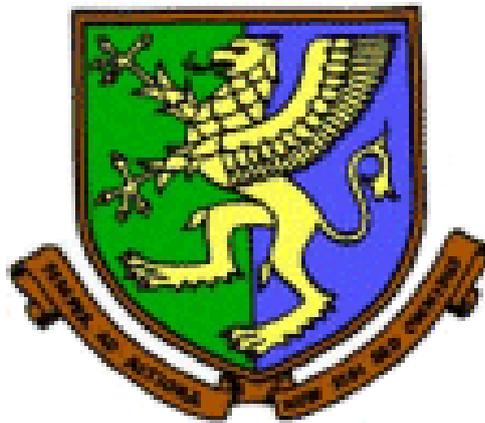


COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE



Attendance Policy

Updated August 2016

Statutory Framework

A pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter/message authorises the absence.

Rights and Responsibilities

School

Cowley International College expects all pupils to attend regularly and to arrive on time in a fit condition to learn. All staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality with all pupils.

The school employs a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and works closely with parents when attendance/punctuality gives cause for concern.

Parents who use English as a second language or who have literacy problems will be offered support from school in matters of communication if school are made aware of these issues.

Parents are informed promptly of any attendance concerns that may arise.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend regularly and on arrive on time. Pupils will be encouraged to achieve and maintain a good attendance through assemblies, in lessons and via incentives and rewards certificates / schemes.

Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

Parents are responsible for informing the school before 9.00am (or as soon as possible) on the **first day** of any absence of the reason why their child is absent by phone call or personal visit. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to support absences.

Parents should avoid routine medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours unless it is a specialist appointment that cannot be arranged outside school hours. Parents should inform school before an appointment and a copy of any documentation should be shown to the school office so that the absence can be authorised.

Parents are expected to attend meetings on request if concerns arise about their child's attendance.

Registration

The attendance register is a legal requirement and must be taken twice daily. The register is taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. School must distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences.

Registration is an important time when children are welcomed by the Form Tutor, news and information is shared and assemblies are held. Children who arrive late miss out on this crucial time.

Registers are recorded electronically and coded in accordance with current government advice. Pupil absence will be recorded as 'N' (reason not known) until school accept a reason for the

absence. This will then be changed to either an authorised or unauthorised code. School will make the decision whether an absence will be authorised.

If the computer system fails a paper register will be taken by the class teacher. This will be entered on to the system at the first opportunity.

The school day

Children are expected to be on the school site by 8.30 a.m. (Breakfast Club available to all students from 8:00a.m. in the main canteen).

Children are admitted into the main school building from 8.25 a.m.

Registration begins at 8.35 a.m. At this time the school gates are locked. Registration ends at 8.55 a.m. Children arriving after 8.35 a.m. must enter through the main entrance so as to receive a mark; they will be coded 'L' late on the register. The morning register will close at 8.55 a.m.

School takes punctuality very seriously. If parents do not address this issue promptly it can lead to legal sanctions such as a Penalty Notice fine. Parents of children who arrive late on a regular basis will be invited into school to discuss the issues and concerns around the punctuality of their child.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

All absences should be explained by the parent before 9.00 a.m. or as soon as possible thereafter on the first day of absence.

School employ a 'first day response' system for following up all unexplained absence; this is a safeguarding strategy. If school cannot make contact with parents the school's Family Liaison Officer will be requested to visit the home to find out the reason why children are absent. School will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence. Parents are requested to return their child to school as soon as possible after an absence even if there is only one day of the school week left.

Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- illness
- unavoidable medical appointments (with evidence)
- days of religious observance (with evidence)
- exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

If a child's absence is a cause for concern school can ask the parent for medical evidence such as prescriptive medicine, doctors stamped appointment cards, care at the chemist booklet etc in order to authorise further absence. Parents will not be asked for doctor's notes that incur a cost.

The school nurse is available by appointment (via the school office) to give assistance and advice to parents.

Absence from school **will not** be authorised for:

- shopping
- looking after siblings or other family members
- minding the house
- birthdays
- holidays
- prolonged illness without supporting medical evidence

Parents of children with a high incidence of unauthorised absence may be subjected to Legal Sanctions such as Penalty Notice fines OR prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Leave of absence during term time

School cannot authorise time off for family holidays during term time and parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays.

Parents can only apply for **leave of absence** during term time in **exceptional circumstances**. Parents must apply in writing to the Principal well in advance of the absence. The Principal will decide if the leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised.

If the Principal does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents decide to take the leave anyway, the absence will be unauthorised and the parents may receive Penalty Notice fines. Penalty Notice Fines can be issued to each parent for every child concerned.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

1. Parents and pupils will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, assemblies, parents' evenings etc.) of the importance and value of good attendance.
2. Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.
3. The school employs the services of a Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to support the school in meeting its legal obligations with regard to school attendance. The EWO, in collaboration with the school's Family Liaison Officer, will investigate all arising attendance issues in accordance with current government guidance and legislation.
4. Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 95% may be invited to agree an attendance action plan OR a Parenting Contract with the EWO and the Principal to help improve their child's attendance; this may include supportive referrals to the school nurse or a parenting course.
5. A pupil with an attendance of 90% or below is categorised by the government as a **Persistent Absentee (PA)**. All PA's will be targeted for improvement by the EWO and the school's Senior Management Team. Parents of PA's with a high incidence of unauthorised absence may be the subjects of legal sanctions including **Penalty Notices** OR **prosecutions in the Magistrates Court**.
6. The school will support pupils who are absent through long term chronic or life threatening illness by adhering to current government guidance for children with medical needs. This may involve a plan of support with home tuition and a re-integration plan back into school.
7. Teachers and support staff who become aware of issues, which may lead to attendance difficulties, will report the issues in a timely manner to the Head of Care, Guidance and Support.
8. When appropriate school will liaise with other agencies – Educational Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service, Social Services, the School Nurse Service and other agencies to support and help pupils with attendance difficulties.
9. The Principal will report to the school's governing body termly on attendance matters.

This attendance policy adheres to current government legislation and guidance. For further information please refer to:

- ✓ School Attendance and Absence www.gov.uk
- ✓ School Behaviour & Attendance June 2015 www.gov.uk
- ✓ Cowley International College website
- ✓ St Helens Council website