

CLAVERHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

September 2021

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CLAVERHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

College Ethos

At Claverham Community College, we offer our students a high quality education allowing them to reach their full potential, in a safe, secure and caring environment. We endeavour to instil a love of learning, a sense of fairness and an appreciation of the importance of full participation.

We strive to develop students who, through their determination and resilience, reach their highest levels of academic and personal development. We insist upon consideration towards others and the maintaining of polite attitudes and manners, allowing all members of our community to take pride in their surroundings, behaviour and personal achievements. We believe in the value of positive contributions to our society both locally and nationally, aiming to support all students in their desire to become responsible citizens who will shape the future.

We encourage the acceptance of personal challenges, helping to ensure that students make decisions that benefit themselves and the wider community.

Aims

This policy reflects the vision and aims of the College by

- Encouraging staff, parents, carers and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents in matters relating to school attendance.

Principles

Children of school-age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it but also because it is the best way of ensuring children make the most of the educational opportunities available to them.

When a child is absent from school they miss not only the teaching provided on the days when absent, but are also less prepared for the lessons building on that when returning. Missing out on education has a significant effect on pupils' life opportunities. Everyone associated with the College – pupils, parents, all teaching and support staff and external agencies must do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality are an integral part of the College's work.

There may be occasions when a child has to miss school - for example, if unwell. Any other absences should be avoided.

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the College, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the College, not by the parents, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Definitions of Student Absence

Claverham Community College defines **absence** from school as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

Claverham Community College defines **authorised absence** from school as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency for which the school has granted leave.

Claverham Community College defines **unauthorised absence** from school as:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

Claverham Community College defines “persistent absence (PA) as

- Missing 10 per cent (10%) or more of schooling across the year for whatever reason.

Below is the Legal Framework that all parents and schools need to be aware of in relation to school attendance:

Legal Framework - Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient

full-time education suitable —

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age —

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) —

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

From September 2015 Section 2 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requires a young person to continue in education or training until their 18 birthday. Claverham Community College is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

Parents are expected to contact the College at an early stage whereby staff at the College can work with parents and pupils in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the College may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS), a part of the Local Education Authority. ESBAS will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the ESBAS officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Procedures

Pupils are registered for legal attendance purposes twice per day, during morning registration at 8.55am and after the lunch break at 1.40pm. Pupils are also registered at the beginning of each lesson for reasons of safeguarding and to ensure punctuality.

The College applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Authorisation for planned absence should be sought at the earliest opportunity, in writing to the pupil's Head of House.

It would not be appropriate for the College to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips, etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency, (e.g. bereavement), or for medical appointments which have to be made in school time.

In the event of an unplanned absence due to illness, for example, parents should contact the College by e-mail or text on the first day of absence. It is a legal requirement for parents to inform the College if a pupil is going to be absent or will be arriving late for any reason. Without a text message or e-mail the College staff have no way of knowing whether an absence is due to a child not being sent to school or being sent and not arriving.

If a child is still unwell after three days, or the absence goes over a weekend, we will require another call on the fourth day of absence. In these circumstances we may require parents to provide medical evidence.

Text Number: 07860 002593

Email: attendance@claverham.org

If a parent or carer does not contact the College to explain the absence of a pupil then the Attendance Assistant will contact the parents to notify them of the absence in order to ensure that the pupil is safe and that their whereabouts are known.

Pupils are registered at the start of each lesson. If a pupil is found to be absent from a lesson during the school day, and their whereabouts is not known, parents will be contacted and informed of this absence. If there is no acceptable reason for this absence then a sanction will be issued by the Head of House for that pupil.

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt a child's learning. A parent or carer may consider that an absence will be educational, but that child will still miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive. Children returning from a term time absence are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other pupils in the class. This is something we *all* have a responsibility to avoid.

Attendance Concerns

The Pastoral Team meet regularly to discuss attendance and punctuality. Heads of House track the attendance of all pupils within their house and use the College's Attendance Protocol to ensure consistency between houses.

Long term absence – pupils who are long term absentees for whatever reason, often find the return to College problematic. There are both academic and social difficulties which pupils may need time to overcome. For some pupils this may involve a personalised re-integration programme. The programme will be devised by the appropriate Head of House in conjunction with the Pastoral Support Assistant. Parents/carers will be involved throughout the reintegration process and staff will be informed.

Requests for 'Withdrawal from Learning' during Term Time

The Department for Education does not allow a Headteacher to authorise an absence in term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances, these may be defined as follows:-

- i) Armed Forces Personnel or Police, who are prevented from taking absence outside term-time, if the absence will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- ii) When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis. Please note for this exception to be allowed the circumstances would have to be extremely serious such as the serious illness or death of a close family member.

If parents consider that their request falls into this category then they need to complete a 'Withdrawal from Learning' request form, available from the College website. A response will be sent to the parents as soon as possible. If the absence is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and the parents nevertheless take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in line with County Council guidance.

A period of 'Withdrawal from Learning' taken without authorisation will be referred to the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

The penalty is per parent per child and will be £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if unpaid within 21 days.

Further legal proceedings may follow if a Fixed Penalty Notice is unpaid.

Authorising Absence

Absences due to genuine illness will be authorised unless a request has been made by the school for medical evidence to be provided prior to the absence being authorised. Such a request is made when a student is absent for four or more days, or their overall absence level begins to raise concerns.

Persistent Absenteeism

The Government threshold for Persistent Absenteeism is now any attendance of 90% or lower. This includes all absence whether as a result of genuine illness or for unauthorised reasons. The names of those on this figure or below are reported to East Sussex County Council on a termly basis.

If a pupil falls into this category the College may request that parents or carers provide medical evidence to support any absence in order to better understand the nature and pattern of the absence. This evidence could be in the form of a doctor's note, hospital letter, copy of a prescription, appointment card or medicinal packaging. Due to the level of absence at that point the College will not be able to authorise any further absences which are not supported by medical evidence.

If a pupil's attendance remains at this level and absences are not supported by evidence then the parent or carer will be invited into the College to meet with the pupil's Head of

House and a member of the College Leadership Team. At this meeting the College may put the pupil on an Attendance Contract, with a target aimed at reducing the level of absence. Failure to achieve this target may result in a referral to ESBAS being made and a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

Child Missing from Education

If a child leaves the College and is not enrolled at another school within the required period a CME notification is made. This notification may be made at an earlier point if there are Child Protection or Safeguarding concerns.

Punctuality

It is important that pupils are in school in good time to be ready for the start of the College day. Good habits formed in College will stand the pupil in good stead in the work place.

Pupils are met by senior staff on the school gate every morning.

Pupils are considered to be late if they arrive at the College after the start of morning registration, 8.55am. At 8.55am pupils should be outside their classroom awaiting registration. Pupils arriving late should sign in at reception.

If a pupil is late twice during a two week period, without an acceptable reason, then they will be issued with an afterschool detention. Please note Battle is notorious for poor traffic flow, so parents should allow extra time for the journey to school. Heavy traffic is not an excuse for being late.

If a pupil is persistently late during a term, (over 4 times) then they will be issued with an afterschool detention each time that they are late.

If a pupil is on this automatic after school list they will also have to attend a break time detention on each morning that they are late. If the pupil persists in being late despite these sanctions then they will also have to attend break and lunchtime detention as well as an after school detention.

Please note this does not apply when a pupil has caught a designated school bus which subsequently arrives late. Pupils will need to sign in at reception using a late bus slip. Failure to do so will result in a late mark.

If a pupil is late to a lesson then the teacher for that class will issue a sanction in order that the pupil makes up the time and work missed. If a pupil is persistently late to lessons then the Head of House for that pupil will issue a sanction.

Timings of the College day:

Timings	Period
8.55am – 9.15 am	Registration (AM Registration)
9.15am – 10.05am	Period 1
10.05am – 10.55am	Period 2
10.55am – 11.15am	Break
11.15am – 12.05pm	Period 3

12.05pm – 12.55pm	Period 4
12.55pm – 1.40pm	Lunch
1.40pm – 2.30pm	Period 5 (PM Registration)
2.30pm – 3.20pm	Period 6

Rewarding Good Attendance

Good attendance is acknowledged in form tutor periods, assemblies and via contact with home. Attendance is monitored weekly. The College's rewards system recognises termly & yearly 100% attendance. Letters and/or certificates are issued each term to students achieving above 97% attendance. We are also keen to acknowledge the support of parents/carers in working with us to maximise outcomes for our young people.

Claverham Community College acknowledges 100% attendance in the following ways:

- Classcharts points and certificates

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- recognition in assemblies

School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90% these privileges may be taken away.

Attendance at the Year 11 Prom is by invitation only, and a student's attendance record will be taken into account.

Those persons responsible for attendance matters at the College are:

Form Tutor

The Form tutor will:

- Take the register in morning tutor time.
- Encourage all pupils in their form to maintain excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Have conversations with all pupils regarding their attendance if it starts to fall.
- Direct any correspondence from parents/carers with regard to absences to House of House
- Keep an overview of students' attendance.
- Liaise with the Pastoral Support or Heads of House to pass on concerns about individual students.
- Inform pupils of the need to complete a leave of absence form prior to a planned absence.

Subject Teachers

- Subject teachers will:
Take an electronic register at the start of each lesson. (Within the first 10 minutes)
- Pass on any concerns about absentees from lessons to the Attendance Assistant as soon as possible.
- Use SIMS to record any issues with punctuality and pass on any concerns to the appropriate Pastoral Support.

Trips or exams Subject teachers will:

- If taking students out of College for any reason, supply the Attendance office with a list of names and inform the appropriate Pastoral Assistant, Head of Year and teaching staff in advance of the trip. The trip leader, having taken the register, must leave a copy with Reception.
- Inform colleagues of any students taking part in events in or out of College that require students to be off timetable via staff briefings or the staff noticeboard.

Attendance

Attendance will:

- Compile all attendance data and information for relevant staff.
- Make contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence for all pupils where the reason for absence is unknown. This will involve telephoning or emailing all parents/carers when contact has not been made. Until contact is made, absence will remain as an 'N' code (unauthorised).
- Make contact with parents/carers via email on subsequent absent days confirming absence. Phone contact will be made again on the 3rd day of absence.
- Inform the Pastoral Assistant should any student leave the site without permission.
- Work closely with the Pastoral Assistants and Heads of House to monitor students, who present concerns.

Pastoral Assistant / Heads of House

Heads of House will:

- Oversee and monitor attendance and punctuality for their year groups.
- Liaise with form tutors and highlight problems that require action.
- Confirm which absences should be coded as unauthorised
- Liaise with the Assistant Principal where there are concerns about individual pupils.
- Act on information from staff concerning student absences or habitual lateness.
- Inform parents of any pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality are a cause for concern by following the College's attendance and monitoring procedure.
- Intervene early to arrange and attend meetings with parents and relevant staff where there are attendance issues.
- Promote excellent attendance through assemblies, rewards and or certificates.
- Offer support and work closely with the parents/carers of pupils who are persistent absentees or at risk of becoming so.

Education Welfare Officer:

- Oversee and monitor attendance and punctuality for their open cases
- Liaise with Heads of House to devise any necessary reintegration programmes for pupils who are persistent absentees (PA) or at risk of long term absence
- Liaise with parents/carers who children are persistent absentees (PA) or at risk of long term absence
- Intervene early to arrange and attend meetings with parents and relevant staff where there are attendance issues.
- Act in accordance of the law when applying for prosecution for nonattendance of a pupil after every option of intervention and support has been exhausted.

Assistant Principal

Assistant Principal will:

- Oversee and monitor whole College attendance and punctuality, initiating whole College policies as required. This will be achieved by liaison with the Senior Leadership Team and other relevant members of the Pastoral, Inclusion and Learning Support Teams.
- Support the Heads of House, Form Tutors and teaching staff in promoting excellent attendance and punctuality. Initiate the production of attendance certificates to reward attendance above 96%
- Liaise with external agencies and Heads of House to devise any necessary reintegration programmes for pupils who are persistent absentees (PA) or at risk of long term absence.
- In consultation with the Headteacher, consider the 'exceptional leave requests.

Deputy Principal (Behaviour, Attendance and Welfare) for monitoring targets and meeting with Assistant Principals & Heads of House to discuss progress towards those targets.

Deputy Principal (Behaviour, Attendance and Welfare) for the correct maintenance of the attendance registers.

Summary

The College has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. The members of staff at the College are committed to working closely with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.