

CLAVERHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

September 2017

Approved:

Date:

Reviewed:

CLAVERHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 he or she misses not only the teaching provided on the days when absent, but is also less prepared for the lessons building on that when returning. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which Headteachers, parents and carers would all wish to avoid.

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.

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

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:

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

Heads of House, assisted by House Tutors, for the attendance of individual pupils.

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

Attendance Officer for the administration of attendance registers and contacting parents where notification of absence has not been received.

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.

The Attendance policy and procedure for Claverham Community College will be reviewed once per year.