



CHESHIRE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

1.2 CAPS believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 CAPS values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families and home schools / referrers to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

1.4 CAPS recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. 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 inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

2. Legal Framework

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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 then again during the afternoon session.

2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:

Present;

Absent;

Present at approved educational activity; or

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

2.6 The following codes will be used in completing registers:

I	Attended (9.30am-10am)
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
E	Excluded
H	Holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (9.30am-9.45am)
M	Medical/Dental Appointment
N	No reason for absence provided yet
O	Unauthorised absence
R	Religious Observance
U	Late (after 9.45am)
V	Educational Trip/Visit
W	Work experience
Y	Partial or Forced Closure

3. Categorising Absence

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

3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the head teacher, home schools and referrers 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.



3.3 Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate.

3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

3.5 Illness Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the head teacher to authorise absence where attendance falls below 95%. Absence notes can be in the form of prescriptions, medication boxes and/or appointment cards. Medical evidence must contain the pupil's full name. Medical evidence will also be requested if an absence exceeds three days.

3.5.1 For prolonged absences exceeding five days Cheshire Alternative Provision School, home schools and referrers may request additional medical evidence in the form of a Doctor's Note explaining the exact reason for absence and recommended period of absence from school. In some cases, home schools and referrers may refer to the School Health Service for additional advice and support.

3.6 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. If a pupil is absent for a full day to attend a medical appointment then the pupil will incur half a day unauthorised absence.

3.7 Other Authorised Circumstances. This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances. If a pupil is persistently absent due to unauthorised circumstances then CAPS, home schools and referrers may seek to obtain further evidence of this.

3.8 Excluded. Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.

3.9 Leave of Absence During Term Time. Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time must contact CAPS, home schools or referrers. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In line with government guidance, CAPS do not authorise leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

3.9.1 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing.

3.9.2 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, CAPS will inform home schools and referrers.

3.9.3 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 home schools and referrers may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

3.9.4 A parent may make an application for their child to undertake juvenile employment. Each absence will be considered. CAPS, home schools and referrers will not authorise leave of absence during term time for any pupil if their attendance is below 95%.

3.10 Religious Observance. Cheshire Alternative Provision School, host school and referrers 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.

3.11 Study Leave. Study leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations this will be in consultation with home schools and referrers but should not be seen as agreed unless written notification is given.

3.12 Traveller Absence. The aim for the attendance of children within travelling families, in common with all other children, is to attend CAPS as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

3.13 Late Arrival Registration begins at 09:45am; pupils are expected to be on site at CAPS from 09:15am. Pupils arriving after 09:45am will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 10:00am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as unauthorised (U) and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate. Parents or carers must inform CAPS by 9.15am to report their child's absence. All attendance information is shared with home schools and referrers.

3.13.1 On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the attendance officer to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

3.13.2 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. Medical evidence will be requested to support the claim.



3.13.3 The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

3.14 Unauthorised absences. Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the head teacher. If a pupil's attendance falls below 95% the absence will remain unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided to CAPS.

3.14.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

A pupil's/family member's birthday

Shopping for clothes

Visiting the hair dressers or rectifying hair cut/colours at home.

Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes

"Couldn't get up"

Pupil's refusal to attend school

Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school

Family holidays

Staying at home to care for siblings/parents

Attendance appointments which are not for the pupil

3.15 The Head teacher, host school and referrers may unauthorise a pupil's absence if:

- a parent/carer has not provided any or enough information
- The reason(s) that are given do not fall within those categories defined by the Education Act 1996 as legally permissible
- The reason(s) given would not normally involve an absence of that length.
- There is doubt that the information has come from a parent/carer or from someone unauthorised to act on their behalf.
- Your child's attendance is below 95%

3.16 Members of staff from Cheshire Alternative Provision School, home schools or referrers may visit your home if your child is absent regardless of whether a reason for absence has been received.

3.17 Members of staff from CAPS will contact home schools, referrers and after relevant consultation the police force if they are concerned for Pupils welfare.

4.0 CAPS will only delete a child from the register after consolation form home schools or referrer, for example the end of a Childs placement.

5.0 CAPS believe 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.

The Governing Body will:

Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents

Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy

Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters

Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with

Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through reporting at Governing Body Meetings



Ensure that attendance data is reported to the home schools, referrers, Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time

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

5.1 CAPS 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; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve

Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually

Ensure that all staff is aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues

Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with

Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time

Report the school's attendance and related issues through 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

Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families

Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Report and support home schools and referrers to improve attendance.

5.2 CAPS will:

Contact the parents/carers of pupils who are absent (1day of absence). This will include both telephone calls and home visits where necessary and in consultation with home schools or referrers.

Request to see your child if a home visit is carried out. If the child is not seen at the property this information may be passed to the Safeguarding Officer at CAPS and home schools or referrers. If a child has not been seen in education for 4 days with any evidence either to CAPS or home schools / referrers. Home schools or referrers will be notified and the child will reported missing from education.

5.3 Request that Parents will:

Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. 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. Contact is required on each day of absence. Parents should let the school know the reason why their child is absent 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 get 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 and homework.

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 Teacher, school or referrers.

6. Using Attendance Data

6.1 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

6.2 CAPS will share attendance data with the Department for Education. The local authority, referring schools and external agencies (i.e. YOT) as required.

6.3 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

7. Support Systems

7.1 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 and these will be shared with home schools and referrers.

7.2 CAPS also recognise 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, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

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

Discussion with parents and pupils

Referrals to support agencies

Learning mentors

Friendship groups

PSHE

Reward systems

Supportive Timetables

Additional learning support

Behaviour support

Reintegration support packages

7.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils after consulting with home schools and referrers.

7.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, CAPS will inform home schools or referrers who may take legal action.

8. Legal Sanctions that may be pursued by home schools or referrers

8.1 Prosecution

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution



under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

8.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

8.1.2 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

8.1.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

8.2 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.

8.2.1 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

8.2.2 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

8.2.3 Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with the Local Authorities Parenting Contract Protocol.

8.3 Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school

A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence following written warning to improve.

8.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.

8.3.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

8.3.3 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with the Local Authorities Penalty Notice Protocol.

8.3.4 Prosecution may occur if parents/carers regularly remove their child from school for the purpose of unauthorised leave of absence.

References

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006-

Legislation.gov.uk

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents/made>