



Calday Grange
Grammar School

ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY & ABSENCE POLICY

Reviewed by Curriculum Committee: 11th March 2024
Approved by Full Governing Body: 9th May 2024
Date of next review: March 2025

Aim

To raise levels of achievement and wellbeing by ensuring the highest levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in school life.

Purpose of this policy

- To secure attendance at school unless absence is authorised.
- To identify problem area(s) that would explain non-attendance.
- To work together with parents/ carers, school staff and the Locality Attendance Officer to maintain good attendance thus securing the best help for students with attendance challenges.
- To embed the strategies and practice outlines in the DofE document 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (February 2024).

Strategy

In order to address attendance problems effectively and efficiently and safeguard students, the following strategy will be followed by the school:

1. Registers need to be marked accurately according to guidance issued.
2. Attendance records will be kept for every class from year 7 to 13 and all non-attendance checked against the daily register that will be taken in period 1 (8.40 am). P.M. registration will be taken from the lesson registration for P4. Attendance will be monitored during each lesson using the SIMS system.
3. Parents/ carers are required to inform the school of the absence of a student on the first day of absence, if this is not done, parents will be contacted to confirm the absence.
4. If an absence is known in advance parents are expected to inform the Assistant Headteacher – Senior Pastoral Leader, in writing. A 'Request for Absence' form must be completed and sent to the Assistant Headteacher – Senior Pastoral Leader with supporting evidence if appropriate.
5. If a student is taken ill or, for any other reason, has to go home contact with a responsible adult will be made by the Administration Office prior to the student leaving the premises.
6. No unsupervised child is to remain on site after 17.00.
7. All late arrivals must sign in at reception.

Attendance Data

Student attendance will be monitored by the pastoral team/SLT and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

If attendance falls below 94% without the school being aware of the reason, contact is made with home outlining the importance of good attendance and offering support. If attendance does not improve, the thresholds and actions outlined below are followed:

96%

- Form tutor will meet with the student
- Form tutor will continue to monitor attendance

94%

- Head of Year or Pastoral Associate will contact parent/carer to offer support.
- Head of Year or Pastoral Associate will speak to student to offer support.
- Students may be referred to Learning Mentor or Family Liaison Officer to help monitor and improve attendance & punctuality.

Below 90%

- Assistant Headteacher – Senior Pastoral Leader will send a stage 1 letter to parents/carers.
- If attendance does not improve, a stage 2 letter will be issued and parents/carers will be invited into school to conduct an attendance panel meeting, possibly with the Locality Attendance Officer and set targets as necessary.
- Absences will be analysed and referred through to Wirral Attendance Service where appropriate
- If attendance does not improve, legal action may follow.
- Proof of illness may be required if students fall below 90% - records of doctor's appointments, prescriptions and receipts of medicines purchased are acceptable.

A student will be considered to be persistently absent if they are away 10% of school sessions in an academic year i.e. 90% and below attendance.

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

Calday Grange Grammar School will share attendance data with the Department for Education, and the local authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with GDPR Guidelines and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Parental Responsibilities and Legislation

Calday Grange Grammar School operates a graduated response to non-attendance to try to prevent the eventuality of Education Penalty Notices being issued. As indicated above, parents/carers may receive a variety of communication warning of their child's poor attendance. In some circumstances, an Attendance Panel may be necessary to offer support and implement measures to improve a student's attendance.

Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents/carers who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996). Parents who fail in this duty may be prosecuted via the courts and fined up to £2,500 or, in some cases, imprisoned. Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 states that, as an alternative to prosecution, parents may be issued with an Educational Penalty Notice if their child's absence from school is unauthorised. These may be issued if a student has 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence in any one term. Fixed Educational Notices are £60 (£80 from August 2024) per parent if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent if paid within 28 days.

Education Penalty Notices can be served for punctuality if the student attends after 9.10 am and receives a U in the register (after registers have closed). 10 U's in an academic term may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Request for Absence

The granting of leave rests with the Assistant Headteacher – Senior Pastoral Leader. Family holidays will not be authorised unless there is evidence that students are unable to go on holiday at any other time due to restrictions placed upon parental leave. Evidence will be requested. Permission for taking a student out of school can only be given by the Assistant Headteacher – Senior Pastoral Leader. Parents must complete a 'Request for Absence' form, available online, and return it to the Administrator to Student Support. Leave of absence will only be given subject to the circumstances of the request.

Requests for absence must be submitted on the appropriate form available on the school website and completed at least two weeks in advance of the leave when possible. The 'Request for Absence' form outlines the decision-making process applied to leave requests.

Students needing to leave the site during the day for a previously authorised medical or other appointment should sign out at reception on leaving the site.

Holidays in Term Time

Since 2013 there has been no entitlement for parents to withdraw their children for authorised leave of absence in term time. The school can only grant leave of absence during term-time if there are 'exceptional circumstances' surrounding the request, and parents have made an application in advance. If the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant the granting of leave of absence, the school will then determine the number of school days a child can be away from school. The principles for defining exceptional are: 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short', with 'unavoidable' meaning an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Taking leave of absence in term time does affect a child's educational progress and parents are strongly discouraged from withdrawing their child from school during term time. This is why the school takes a strict line on this. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of the agreed number of days, will be classed as unauthorised absence, and may result in the issue of Education Penalty Notices by the Local Authority. 10 sessions of any unauthorised absence in a term, will result in a fixed penalty notice.

Punctuality

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. When a student arrives late and misses the start of the school day, they can miss work and vital information for the day. Late students also disrupt lessons, and this can be embarrassing and upsetting for the young person. Moreover, lateness can encourage absence, as some pupils would rather not attend school at all than arrive late.

- ✓ Registers are marked by 8.40 a.m. If students arrive in class after this time, they will receive a late mark in the register (code L).
- ✓ In line with recommendations from the Department for Education (DfE), registers will close at 9.10 a.m. If students arrive after this time, they will be recorded as having arrived after closure of registers (code U). This counts as an unauthorised absence for that session. 10 sessions of any unauthorised absence in a term, will result in a fixed penalty notice.
- ✓ Any students arriving late should enter the school through the reception in the main entrance and be signed-in in accordance with the school's procedures after 8.40 am.
- ✓ If lateness becomes a regular occurrence, it will be treated in the same way as unauthorised absence, with parents/carers being contacted and invited into school to discuss the situation.
- ✓ Regular lateness to school or lessons will result in detentions with members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- ✓ Education Penalty Notices can be served for punctuality - see p4 Parental Responsibilities and Legislation

Authorised/Unauthorised absence

Under Section 7 of the Education Act of 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education. It is a further offence for a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly, fails without reasonable justification to cause him or her to attend.

The law requires all schools to indicate in their attendance register whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence means that the school has given approval in advance or the explanation has been accepted as satisfactory (Education Regulations 1995).

Only the school can approve absence.

Authorised absence

- a) Absence is authorised by LAW if:
- i) Attendance is prevented due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause.
 - ii) Religious observance.
 - iii) Lack of suitable transport and the school is not within walking distance.
 - iv) Performance licenses by the LA.
- b) Situation where authorisation might reasonably be given:
- i) Domestic circumstances such as bereavement. These would usually be deemed exceptional circumstances.
 - ii) Exclusion for a fixed period.
 - iii) Attending interviews, e.g. another educational establishment.
 - iv) Medical appointments.
 - v) Approved sporting activity.
 - vi) Study leave.
 - vii) Educational visits.
 - viii) Work experience.
 - ix) Holidays when parents are unable to take leave due to restriction placed upon them by their employer - evidence will be required.

Unauthorised absence

- a) Truancy – absence without parents'/ carers knowledge and approval. This includes those who leave the site after being registered.
- b) Condoned absence – students who are kept home for shopping, child minding etc. – regardless of an explanation being given by a parent/ carer. A note/email giving explanations for absence does not authorise the absence. (The responsibility to authorise lies with the school).
- c) Lateness – as stated on page 4, students arriving at school after registers close (9.10 am) with no valid reason will be marked with a 'U'. This is classed as an unauthorised absence.

All absences must be supported by a written note or email from a parent, carer or guardian. Any failure to present such communication will be followed up by the Pastoral Office. All such notes need to be retained by the Pastoral Office in student files.

Medical Evidence – Medical evidence may be requested this may include copies of prescriptions, appointment cards, receipts for medications, screenshots for telephone consultations etc

10 sessions of any unauthorised absence in a term, will result in a fixed penalty notice.

Procedures Form tutor/school action on attendance

The role of the form tutor is crucial in recording the absences and their significance. They are the first stage in the recognition and recording of concern. Parents/carers need to be encouraged to make contact as soon as possible, not only as to absences but also with regard to other possible causes for concern. Students need to have good attendance reinforced with positive messages. Procedures should be made clear to them.

- Subject tutors should also be vigilant as to absences from their lessons.
- Concerns as to absence need to be communicated to the Head of Year.
- Learning Mentor and support is available for students who are failing to maintain above 90% attendance
- If the efforts of the school are not effective and regular attendance is not achieved, formal referral must be made to the Wirral Attendance Service.
- A Family Liaison Officer is available to support students and their parents/carers in serious cases.

Interpretation of Data

Form tutors should look for unexplained absences and patterns of absence, e.g.

- Regular absences on the same day.
- Frequent absences for short periods.
- Students absent for more than 3 days in any 4 weeks.
- Any group absences.
- Frequent lateness.
- Regular lateness.
- Regular absence from morning/afternoon sessions.
- Sudden onset of absences.
- Frequent illness.
- Frequent absence with permission.

Review

The Senior Leadership Team will keep attendance regularly under review and report to the Governors' each month on the attendance figures and any particular problems.

SIXTH FORM ATTENDANCE

Follows the same procedure as students in Years 7 – 11. Sixth Form students have the opportunity to complete authorised enrichment one morning or afternoon per week and must apply to the Head of Year e.g. driving lessons.

University Open Days

A maximum of two days will be allowed for University Open Day visits. Students are expected to attend at weekends and, if possible, should not request any leave of absence.

Work Experience

There will be a delegated week post Year 12 examinations, for Year 12 students to carry out work experience. If a student needs to complete work experience outside of this week, they need to contact the Head of Sixth Form.

Non-attendance and punctuality

Poor punctuality and persistent absence will result in an attendance contract and ultimately, students with a poor attendance record may be asked to leave if they do not respond to supportive measures to improve their attendance. Future employers often request punctuality and attendance data.

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Note
/	Present (AM)	Present	Student must be present on school site during registration
\	Present (PM)	Present	
B	Off-site educational activity	Present: Approved Educational Activity	Used for a supervised educational activity that has been agreed by the school. School is ultimately responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students educated off-site (not to be used where a student is at home completing schoolwork).
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence	Exceptional individual circumstances
D	Dual Registered – at another educational establishment	Neither absent nor present for statistical purposes	Student scheduled to attend at the other school at which they are registered
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised absence	Alternative provision must be in place from the sixth day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher	Unauthorised Absence	Retrospective approval cannot be given
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence	Exceptional individual circumstances. Application made in advance.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	Authorised absence	Parents/carers should notify school on the first day of absence. School can ask parents to provide medical evidence (e.g. prescription, appointment card) if the authenticity of illness is in doubt.
J	At an interview at another educational establishment or employer	Present	Interview (to transfer to another educational establishment, for example)
L	Late arrival before closure of register	Present	
M	Medical or dental appointments	Authorised absence	
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	Unauthorised absence	Amend once the reason is known. If no reason is provided after two weeks, N should be replaced with code O
O	Absent from school without authorisation	Unauthorised absence	Unacceptable, or no reason provided to account for absence
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity	Present	Approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	The day must be exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. May need to seek confirmation from the religious body
S	Study Leave	Authorised absence	Should be used only sparingly for Year 11 students during public exam periods
T	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller absence	Authorised absence	Family travelling for economic / occupational purposes (and young person not dual registered with a school in a different geographical area)
U	Late arrival after closure of register	Unauthorised absence	

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Note
V	Educational visit or trip	Present	Trips or visits, including residential trips, organised by school or by an organisation approved by school
W	Work experience	Present	Attendance should be tracked and any absence from the work experience placement should be recorded in the register using the appropriate code
X	Not required to be in school (N.B. See covid addendum for wider use of X code)	Attendance not required	When non-compulsory school age young people are not expected to attend. If a young person is expected to attend full time whilst still not of compulsory school age, this code should not be used. Use of this code can potentially hide other safeguarding concerns.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Attendance not required	School site is closed partially or fully due to an unavoidable cause/ transport provided by the school or LA is not available / time of local or national emergency resulting in widespread disruption to travel
Z	Student not on admission register	Attendance not required	Register set up in advance of students joining the school. Schools must put students on the admissions register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend.
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Attendance not required	Holiday periods (including bank holidays), INSET days, and use of school as a polling station. This code should also be used to record different term dates that have been agreed for different year groups (e.g. staggered starts for secondary school year groups in the Autumn Term).