



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Staff Responsible:

**Assistant Principal in charge of
Attendance**

**Assistant Principal in charge of
Safeguarding**

PART 1: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PHASES

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Glossary

AO Attendance Officer
AP Assistant Principal
AWA Attendance Welfare Advisor
DfE Department for Education
NCC Northamptonshire County Council
CT Class Teacher
KS-TL Key Stage Team Leader
FT Form Tutor
HoY Head of Year

Introduction and aims of our Attendance Policy

Caroline Chisholm School regards regular attendance and punctuality as crucial to the success of every child. Irregular attendance leads to pupils missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential. It also places children at risk and may result in their being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. It is a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home, means regular attendance at the school.

The aims of this attendance policy are as follows:

- To emphasise the importance of, and secure from our pupils, the attendance in excess of 95% in the school.
- To encourage pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunity.
- To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents, pupils) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised".
- To engage with parents/carers to raise awareness about their legal responsibilities with respect to their child's attendance and punctuality.
- To facilitate communication between home and school to work in close partnership in order to achieve high attendance.

Authorised absences

The Department for Education (DfE) issues guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences as follows:

1. Genuine illness, particularly where there is a risk of infection to others.
2. Absence due to family circumstances (see updated form).

Parents are required to phone the School Office on the first day of a child's absence. When the child's attendance has become a matter of concern, a formal agreement will be entered into, which will require parents to contact the school on every day of the child's absence.

3. Days of religious observance notified in advance.

Holiday: School will not be able to authorise a family holiday any longer, according to the new legislation starting from September 2013.

Caroline Chisholm School expects absence to be kept to a minimum and that routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours where possible.

Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those where:

1. Parents/Carers provide no letter or acceptable explanation.
2. The reason for absence does not fall into the authorised categories, the DfE would classify the following as examples of unauthorised absence:
 - Minding the house
 - Caring for relatives
 - Waiting for a repair man
 - Shopping
 - Holidays
 - Birthdays or personal treats

All schools have to submit attendance figures to the DfE each year giving details of both authorised and unauthorised absences over the year.

Parents should ensure each absence is covered by one of the following; a phone call, a written note or an electronic message upon the child's return to school. Where no form of communication with school is received, the absence will be classified as unauthorised and will count as such in the returns to the DfE. The absence will appear as unauthorised on the child's report. All communication from parents must contain the calendar date(s) for which the student did not attend.

Lateness

Pupils are expected to be on time for the start of the school day at 8.45 am.

All pupils and parents in the secondary phase are informed that a late will be recorded on the register if a child arrives in the classroom after the register has been started this will result in disciplinary action unless a satisfactory explanation is received. They will be marked as late for the morning session if they arrive in their tutor base after 8.45am or for the afternoon session if they arrive after 1.35pm.

Parents of primary phase pupils are informed that a late will be recorded if a child arrives after the register has been started, and parents will, therefore, receive a text message as a reminder of punctuality. If lateness is persistent, parents will receive a

letter informing them of their child's attendance record. This may result in a meeting with a senior member of staff.

Any student in the secondary phase arriving after 8.45 am or 1:35 pm will be marked as late by their teacher. However, if they arrive in the morning after tutor time they will need to sign in at student services to record their time of arrival and reason for absence. Pupils signing in at this time without good reason (i.e. letter from parent regarding a medical or dental appointment) will be recorded with an unauthorised late by the office staff.

Children in primary phase arriving late after 8.45 am should report to the primary office to record their time of arrival and reason for absence.

Leaving school early

Any child needing to leave school early e.g. for a medical appointment etc., **MUST** sign out at either the secondary or the primary phase school office. Secondary phase students will need to present a letter from their parents, counter signed by the child's Form Tutor as to the time of required departure and reason for leaving school. In the primary phase, parents will need to report to the primary office to collect children for appointments.

Forced school closure days

Sometimes severe weather conditions or health and safety concerns prevent the school from opening. These occurrences happen very infrequently, but when they do, the school will endeavour to communicate the closure to parents/carers in the following ways:

School Comms System

(Via text or email)

School Website

www.ccs.northants.sch.uk

The role of the Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer will regularly communicate with parents via text/school coms/e-mail initially, or via phone calls/letters if necessary, to ensure an accurate recording of any unexplained absences. The AO will also liaise with the school nurse as part of the First Aid Team, and support pupils daily as part of a holistic approach to attendance.

Finally, the AO will work with parents, teachers, HoYs/KS Team Leaders, Pastoral or Safeguarding Teams and Assistant Principals to ensure fluid communication in relation to the school attendance in general.

The role of the Class Teacher and the Form Tutor

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The Class Teacher/Form Tutor will be responsible for absence and lateness. If after trying to sort out any issues they feel there is still a problem they will advise the HoY/KS Team Leader who will in turn deal with the situation or seek advice from the senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance.

On the third day of absence in the secondary phase, if there has been no communication from the parents/carers to the School, after the Attendance Personnel have tried to contact them, the FT will need to liaise with the AO who will take further action. If contact cannot be made after reasonable attempts the absence should be reported to the HoY, who will take responsibility for monitoring future attendance.

When the child's attendance has become a matter of concern, a formal agreement will be entered into, which will require parents to contact the school on every day of the child's absence.

The role of the Key Stage Team Leader and Head of Year

It is the responsibility of the Key Stage Team Leaders and Heads of Year to monitor attendance and punctuality for the Year Group and contact parents if there appears to be any problem arising that has not been resolved by the primary Class Teacher or the secondary Form Tutor.

The role of the Senior Person with responsibility for Attendance

The Assistant Principal in charge of attendance in the secondary phase or the Vice Principal in the primary phase, will become involved if there is a situation regarding absence that can not be resolved by the HoY, KS Team Leaders or AP linked to Key Stages. They will liaise with parents, the school pastoral teams or safeguarding team, who may make any referral to the Attendance Welfare Advisor. They will then be the school representative if a formal parenting agreement needs to be drawn up. The senior person will meet with the AO/AWA on a regular basis and discuss any attendance issues.

The role of the Attendance Welfare Advisor

Caroline Chisholm School has been classified with a "Light Touch" attendance policy by the LA and therefore, the Attendance Welfare Advisor will only respond to specific referrals. A student may be referred to the AWA if their attendance is at or below 85% at any point in the school year.

The role of the AWA is to support the pupil to improve their attendance. The AWA will work closely with families to achieve this aim. This support is likely to include

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attendance clinics in school, home visits and Parenting Contracts where necessary. A Parenting Contract makes explicit an expected attendance rate. In some circumstances it will be necessary to initiate legal proceedings where attendance remains a significant concern despite a range of supportive measures being taken. Should this be the case the AWA will work closely with other Education Welfare Officers who form part of NCC's Educational Entitlement Service.

The principle objective of all action is to ensure that pupils attend school on a regular basis.

Rewards for outstanding attendance in the secondary phase

In order to recognise outstanding attendance in the secondary phase, it has been agreed that rewards for attendance should be included in the secondary phase school rewards system. As such, the parents of any secondary pupil who achieves 100% attendance over a term will be sent a text message in recognition of this and receive:

In Years 7 and 8: Congratulations text message awarding 3 Merits. The school reward system allows pupils to exchange certain numbers of Merits for Reward Vouchers that pupils can use in different shops.

In Years 9, 10 and 11: Congratulations text message awarding 2 points towards the Achievement Trip in the summer term for Years 9 and 10. The date for the Year 11 Achievement Trip will depend on every year's exam calendar. Details of exact dates and the selection process will be available from the relevant HoY/AP before the trip.

These percentages will take into account whether time out of school was for a school sporting activity or other school organised trip.

Those receiving 3 text messages in one year will be awarded with an end of year Attendance Certificate presented by the relevant HoY/AP. This is a significant achievement and consequently, pupils will be additionally rewarded with a Reward Voucher in Years 7 and 8; and with an invitation to the Achievement Trip in Years 9, 10 and 11.

PART 2: ATTENDANCE IN THE SIXTH FORM

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Introduction and purposes of our Attendance Policy

The CCS Sixth Form regards consistent and sustained attendance as the foundation of every student's success. Without regular attendance, the opportunity for fruitful completion of A level courses diminishes considerably. The Department for Education suggests that 90% attendance is equivalent to seventeen days off per school year and could account for one full grade's difference in results. They have also indicated that a 1% increase in attendance could amount to a 5/6% improvement in attainment. This evidence is compelling and clear: when students miss school, they miss out.

The purposes of this attendance policy are as follows:

- To ensure the best possible results through consistent lesson attendance.
- To encourage students to engage with school life and the wider school community.
- To create a foundation for the introduction of compulsory post-16 education.
- To enable the staff at CCS to hold students accountable for their own attendance.
- To ensure parents/carers are more regularly informed about student attendance.
- To guarantee the retention of a greater number of students through the two years of sixth form.

In order to ensure students give themselves the best opportunity to succeed in their A level courses, we ask students to maintain attendance in the sixth form of 95% or better. This level of attendance is commensurate with the basic level of attendance required by employers and coincides with the Department for Education's data on student attainment. Irregular attendance leads to students missing crucial lessons and not achieving their potential. It is the desire of the sixth form team to create a stringent policy which places student attendance at the forefront of our A level provision, promoting student responsibility and commitment.

Six week attendance process

It is our expectation that students maintain attendance in the sixth form of 95% or better. In order to ensure this, individual student attendance will be reviewed by the sixth form team every six weeks, as part of the cycle of reporting. If a student falls below 90% overall attendance at any point in the school year (after the first six weeks) a 'caution' letter will be issued. The letter will include a detailed summary of absences and will require a parent/carer signature as acknowledgement.

If a student falls below 85% overall attendance at any point in the school year (after the first six weeks) an 'at risk' letter will be issued and a review meeting with the attendance committee will be required. This meeting will represent the final opportunity for the student to rectify their inconsistent attendance.

If the student's attendance continues to decrease and falls below 80% overall attendance at any point in the school year (after the first six weeks), and no extenuating circumstances exist*, the student will be withdrawn from classes and removed from the register at CCS. They will be asked to return all learning materials such as text books and revisions guides. There may also be a fee for withdrawal from exams.

*The school will consider extenuating circumstances to include the following: bereavement, extended ill health, extraordinary family circumstances or other significant personal events such as leaving home or entering counselling.

Weekly attendance process

Monitoring attendance data: An attendance report will be produced each week. It will detail all unauthorised absences and lates, showing which sessions were missed and on which days, including tutor time and assembly. This report will be forwarded to all Form Tutors on a weekly basis.

1. Using attendance data: A review will be held between form tutors and all students appearing on the attendance report. The 'Attendance Review' form will be filled out by the Form Tutor in conjunction with the student. The student will then have until the end of the weekly attendance cycle to get the 'Attendance Review' form signed by a parent/carer and returned to the sixth form office.
2. Processing attendance data: Once the student has returned the 'Attendance Review' form to the tutor, the tutor will authorise with a signature and pass the form on to the Attendance Officer; the form will be filed and the attendance code for the period of absence adjusted. If the 'Attendance Review' form is not returned or the student fails to appear at the review meeting with their tutor, a phone call home will be made by the form tutor. This phone call may also be coupled or replaced with a "Failure to Complete Attendance Review" letter. This letter will contain information about the period of absence and will require a parent/carer signature. This letter will be returned to the tutor, filed and the attendance code for the period of absence adjusted.

Registration

The school operates a biometric registration system using the student's thumb print. Students must be responsible for using the system punctually and consistently for AM and PM registration.

The school day begins at 8:45AM and students must register by this time or a late mark will be automatically recorded by the biometric registration system. Following registration, students must arrive at their tutor base promptly. The afternoon session begins at 1:35PM and, again, students must register by this time or a late mark will be automatically recorded by the biometric registration system. After this, students must again arrive at their afternoon lessons promptly.

Authorised absences

The Department for Education issues guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences as follows:

- Genuine illness, particularly where there is a risk of infection to others.
- Absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).
- Parents/Carers are required to phone the School Office on the first day of a student's absence. If no contact with the school is made, the absence will be listed on the attendance report and the process described above will be implemented.
- Days of religious observance notified in advance.

Holiday: Family holidays taken during term time particularly in Year 12 – 13 create additional pressures upon students to try to catch up or meet examination deadlines and will therefore not be authorised in accordance with government legislation.

Caroline Chisholm School sixth form expects absence to be kept to a minimum and that routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours where possible.

If students are unwell or away from school for other authorised reasons, a parent/carer must inform the school using the School Absence Line (01604 669200) or the School Comms System* (text: 00447717989975 or email: sc9284005a@schoolcomms.com) by 10AM on the first day of absence.

**Students will need to be set up on the School Comms System to text and email.*

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Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those where:

1. Parents/Carers provide no phone call, letter or acceptable explanation.
2. The reason for absence does not fall into the authorised categories, the Department for Education would classify the following as examples of unauthorised absence:
 - Driving lessons (Driving tests will be authorised)
 - Minding the house
 - Caring for relatives
 - Part or full time work
 - Missing the bus
 - Forgetting to sign in
 - Waiting for a repair man
 - Shopping
 - Birthdays or personal treats
 - Family holiday

Parents/Carers should ensure each absence is covered by a phone call or a note upon the student's return to school. Where no phone call or note is received the absence will be classified as unauthorised and will count as such in the returns to the Department for Education (these figures will be a legal requirement for the sixth form from 2013) and will appear as such on the student's report. All notes must contain the calendar date(s) for which the student did not attend.

Lateness

All students and parents/carers are informed that a late will be recorded on the register if a student arrives in the classroom after the register has been taken. They will be marked as late for the morning session if they arrive in school after 8.45am or for the afternoon session if they arrive back at school after 1.35pm. Any student

arriving after 8.45 am or 1:35 pm will be marked as late automatically by the biometric registration system. The late mark will cause the student to appear on the weekly attendance report and will require an attendance review as outlined above. If a student is late on five or more occasions per half term period, a 'Punctuality Letter' will be sent home by the Head of Year.

Leaving school early

Any student needing to leave school early e.g. for a medical appointment etc., **MUST** sign out at the Sixth Form Office presenting a letter from their parents/carers, a doctor's appointment card or similar. If a student becomes ill during the school day, they must seek permission to leave from a member of the school staff or school nurse. They should also contact a parent/carer. They **MUST** sign out at the Sixth Form Office before leaving the school site. Any students who leave the school site without signing out during the school day (excluding lunch time 12:40-1:35) will be issued with an unauthorised absence from site. Their name will appear on the attendance report and an 'Attendance Review' form will be required for the absence.

The role of the Form Tutor

The Form Tutor will be responsible for absence and lateness. The first obligation of the Form Tutor will be to implement the weekly attendance process, completing the appropriate 'Attendance Review' form for each unauthorised student absence or late. If students do not attend the review meeting within the week, Form Tutors are required to make a phone call or complete a Failure to Complete an Attendance Review Letter. A record must be kept of the contact made and any feedback received.

If a student fails to complete an Attendance Review which necessitates home contact three or more times (contact home being phone calls or 'Failure to Complete Attendance Review' letters) at any point in the school year (after the first six weeks), they will be required to attend a review meeting with the Attendance Committee to discuss the attendance process. This meeting is to be instigated by the Form Tutor but does not necessarily require the Form Tutor's attendance.

Form Tutors should monitor lateness and inform the Head of Year if five lates occur during a half term period.

The role of the Head of Year

It is the responsibility of the Head of Year to monitor attendance and punctuality for the year group. The Head of Year will be responsible for overseeing the assignment

of 'caution', 'at risk' and 'punctuality' letters by assessing individual student attendance. The Head of Year will also be a member of the Attendance Committee.

The role of the Head of Sixth Form

The Head of Sixth Form will be a member of the Attendance Committee and will chair all review meetings for 'at risk' students. The Head of Sixth Form will also initiate the notice of withdrawal if student attendance falls below 80%. They will make decisions regarding extenuating circumstances.

Forced school closure days

Sometimes severe weather conditions or health and safety concerns prevent the school from opening. These occurrences happen very infrequently, but when they do, the school will endeavour to communicate the closure to parents/carers in the following ways:

School Comms System
School Website

(Via text or email)
(www.ccs.northants.sch.uk)

Rewards for consistent attendance

It is important that students who regularly attend school are rewarded for outstanding attendance. In the CCS Sixth Form we will acknowledge those students exceeding our expectation of 95% attendance every twelve weeks as part of our cycle of reporting. As such, any student who achieves 100% attendance over a term will receive a letter of acknowledgment in recognition of this accomplishment.

(These percentages will take into account whether time out of school was for a school sporting activity or other school organised trip.)