

5 July 2024

Dear parent/carer,

Working together to improve school attendance - changes for September 2024

Working Together to Improve School Attendance states that improving attendance is everyone's business. This means it is the responsibility of everyone involved – parents, carers, schools, and the local authority – to ensure children access the education they're entitled to.

The DfE has published a new version of [Working together to improve school attendance](#). This will become statutory guidance on **19 August 2024**. The current version is non-statutory and remains in effect until then.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education, suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional **legal duty** to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being **too ill to attend** or **being given permission for an absence in advance** from the school. This is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The students with the highest attainment at the end of Year 6 and Year 11 have higher rates of attendance over the year group, compared to those with the lowest attainment.

Nationally in Year 6, students not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths had an overall absence rate of **4.7%**, (attendance of 95.3%) compared to **3.5%** (attendance of 96.5%) among those meeting the expected standard. Likewise, nationally in Year 11, students not achieving grade 9 to 4 (above C) in English and Maths had an overall absence rate of **8.8%**, (attendance 91.2%) compared to **5.2%** (attendance of 94.8%) for those who did.

Secondary: 01604 344744 **Primary:** 01604 272572 **Website:** www.ccs.northants.sch.uk

Principal: David James **Vice Principals:** Andrew Fisher Elizabeth Husband Gary Wakefield

Caroline Chisholm Education Trust is a charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7638756 whose registered office is at:

The Wooldale Centre for Learning, Wootton Fields, Northampton NN4 6TP

The changes below are a mixture of clarification on existing guidance and updates to reflect changes in the law. We've summarised the key things you need to know below:

The guidance has been updated to:

- Be clearer on the link between improving attendance and wider school culture, including the importance of working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance.
- Reflect changes to the law on keeping school attendance and admission registers including a revised set of codes, granting leaves of absence and access to, and sharing of attendance information introduced through the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. (paragraphs 31 to 44)
- Set out the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices and reflect changes to the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. (paragraphs 190 to 194)
- Change 'parenting contracts' for attendance to 'attendance contracts' to better reflect the agreement between parents, schools, and/or local authorities.

The expectations of schools have been updated to:

- This section provides more clarification about where the role of your school starts and ends. It also provides more information about medical evidence, support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and part-time timetables. (paragraphs 53 to 69)
- Explain the new requirements for schools on data sharing introduced through the Education (Information about Individual Students) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with students, parents, and external agencies where needed. (paragraph 25)
- Expect schools to inform a student's youth offending team worker of any unexplained absences where required. (paragraph 52)

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The expectations of local authorities have been updated to:

- Provide further detail to clarify additional attendance services that may be traded with schools, local authority responsibilities in relation to cross-border students, and how to hold effective Targeting Support Meetings.
- Allow flexibility in how local authorities work with independent schools to better suit the needs of different local independent schools.
- Provide further detail on cross partnership ownership of attendance improvement. (paragraphs 84 to 130)

Clearer link between improving attendance and wider school culture

The guidance puts greater emphasis on working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance. (paragraphs 17 to 24)

If you have any questions regarding the changes in the Department for Education policy, please contact me via the school office – office@ccs.northants.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Cheryl Glover
Senior attendance champion
PA to Principal