



Cornwallis Academy

Ambitions for All

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Attendance Policy

1. Aims

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. At Cornwallis Academy, we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play an integral part in making our school so successful. Regular attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our students and use a variety of awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting, among parents and students, a high level of awareness of the need for regular attendance to make outstanding progress
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Setting out a system of rewards which actively encourage and promote high levels of consistent attendance at the School
- Working closely, in an effective partnership with KCC PIAS (PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service) regarding all attendance and punctuality problems
- We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.25am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at the start of lesson 4 (12.15pm or 12.55pm, depending on the year group).

3.2 Unplanned absence

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to notify the school on **every day** of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – **by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible** (see also section 6), by calling **01622 743152 Ext 1** or emailing attendance@cornwallisacademy.com. When notifying the school of absence ensure you provide the following information:

- Student's name
- Year group
- Name of caller and relationship to the student
- Reason for absence – with as much detail as possible ('ill' or 'unwell' will not be accepted as authorised absence)

This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that the young person is safe.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents must provide evidence of the appointment through an appointment card or scan of prescribed medications individual prescription labels.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Between 8.30am and 8.55am, students arriving late must go directly to their form room to inform their form tutor. After 8.55am, they must sign in at main reception, on arrival if they are late, providing a reason for their lateness or absence. A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. This may not be authorised and will count as an absence for the school session. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided; for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause.

Parents/carers of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If the lateness persists, parents/carers will be invited to attend the school to discuss the problem and offered support. If the support is ineffective, not appropriate or declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 100 possible school sessions, may provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness – Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council’s Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016.

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions (these do not need to be consecutive) for a Penalty Notice Warning letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

- Parents are asked to contact the school before 8.30am to explain any absence. There is a dedicated extension to report absences.
- Cornwallis Academy operates a system which texts parents directly if a child is marked absent to school if we have not previously been made aware of the absence. This is to ensure the safety of your child and alert you if your child is not in school when they should be. The system is updated throughout the day from individual lessons. The system contacts priority 1 mobile numbers and emails of parents/guardians.
- When a parent/carer fails to report an absence two days in a row, and staff are unable to make contact on the phone, a home visit is carried out, where possible.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is when the school has given approval for a student to be out of school or has accepted and explanation/reason for the student’s subsequent absence. The Headteacher is **not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation**. A letter, telephone message or visit from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Absences can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by the parent. Evidence of medical appointments or sick notifications from GPs or other medical practitioners may be required.

Long term medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence (either a letter from a consultant doctor or photocopy of medical prescriptions)) where appropriate.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' as situation which are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence. The following examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student’s previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions.

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or termination of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of an immediate or close member of the family.
- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher’s discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational

purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

From September 2013, the Department of Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteachers' ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. Leave of absence or holiday will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parents must submit written requests for leave of absence/holidays during term time, to the Headteacher. Each case will be judged on its merits and the headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the can may be referred to KCC PIAS who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- With leave (the school has given permission)
- Due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- Religious observance
- Failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

4.3 Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and KCC PIAS when appropriate. Please see circumstances below:

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (Student file) has been requested by another school

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

As you know, Cornwallis Academy have very high expectation of students' learning and attendance at school. It is important for students to take ownership and be aware of their attendance. We use a variety of awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. This supports all our students and parents; those who come to school every day regardless of circumstances.

- Students will receive an attendance ticket for each week they have 100% attendance and will be entered into a weekly raffle for a chance to win a prize. The attendance tickets can be redeemed at the attendance shop which is open at the end of each term.
- Students who achieve good attendance by the end of the term have a letter of congratulations sent home.
- Students who attendance is improving will have a letter sent home with an attendance printout.
- Forms with the best weekly attendance receive a free drink from Café Wallis
- Forms with the best termly attendance receive a reward trip such as Bowling/Gravity.
- Students who achieve 100% attendance for the term is reported in the termly newsletter.

6. Attendance monitoring

Students are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best discussed with the school, the parents and the child. If a student 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 impressions that attendance does not matter, and may make things worse. Contact your child's Wellbeing team and/or the Attendance team to openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for any number of reasons, such as difficulties with school work. Bullying, friendship problems and family difficulties. It is important we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

The attendance officer monitors student absence on a weekly basis. As a result,

- Students will be spoken to about their attendance by their form tutor, ICM, Wellbeing Lead or Attendance officer.
- Students who do not achieve good attendance by the end of the term have a letter sent home with an attendance printout.
- If attendance continues to fall, the school will send a letter home inviting parents/carer for an Attendance Improvement Meeting, may conduct home visits and liaise with other external agencies.
- In severe cases of persistent unauthorised absence, this may result in a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution to support the family to improve attendance.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to call the school **each day** of absence

If a student's attendance falls below 95% we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a student's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving the family liaison officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall attendance rate is equal to or less than 90% or has more than 10 unauthorised absences within a cycle of 100 sessions, then the student will be classified as a 'persistent absentee' (DfE 2015).

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Students attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a students' attendance is a cause for concern. Attendance data will be provided to relevant teachers such as form tutors, Wellbeing Lead and ICM.

7. Roles and responsibilities

At Cornwallis Academy attendance is every ones' business. There is a whole school response and responsibility for the attendance of all students.

Note: Where confidential information regarding absence is provided it will be shared only with relevant staff on a carefully monitored 'need to know' basis.

7.1 The role of the Parent:

- To ensure that their child attends daily and on time
- To contact the school, either by telephone or email, before 8.30am to explain any absence
- To make medical appointments out of school time as far as possible
- To avoid holidays during term time

7.2 The role of the Form Tutor:

- Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).
- Complete morning and afternoon formal registration within the first five minutes of each registration time (A.M 8.30am, PM 12.15pm or 12.55pm depending on year group). They mark a student as present or absent and update the register if the student arrives late, with the number of minutes they are late.

- Deliver the Wellbeing programme which addresses health and wellbeing, personal safety and the importance and understanding of attendance.
- Meet and discuss a student's absence following their return to school.
- Monitor's student attendance feeding back concerns to the relevant Wellbeing lead.
- To organise and oversee the support for students who have been on long term absence in conjunction with Wellbeing Lead and ICM.
- First point of contact made with parents regarding attendance

7.3 The role of the Subject Teacher:

- Complete a register within the first five minutes of each lesson and update it with late arrivals. They mark a student as present, absent or late – adding the time of the late arrival.
- To inform attendance@cornwallisacademy.com if any student, who has previously been marked present, is missing from lesson and mark the absence in SIMs.
- Monitor the attendance rate of students in their subject, in conjunction with their subject leader, and set work to be caught up when a student is absent.
- Raise attendance concerns with the student's tutor, the attendance team and subject leader to ensure that all parties are aware of absence and patterns can be seen.

7.4 The role of the Wellbeing Lead and ICM:

- Leading on attendance messages and wellbeing programme
- Review the attendance of their year group weekly
- Review the persistent absence list weekly and take action as appropriate to improve attendance.
- Work closely with the attendance team and FLO.
- To ensure letters are sent home where there are attendance concerns.
- Meeting parents and students to work with them on improving attendance.
- Identifying barriers to attendance and referring to other agencies as needed e.g. school SEN, Outreach, CAMHs.
- Meetings with the Local Authority attendance teams, school attendance team and parents and students where required.

7.5 The role of the Attendance Team and Family Liaison Officer (FLO):

- Monitor and maintain all registers – entry of all absence information received.
- Send 'first day' text messages informing parents of student absence and requesting reason for absence (if not already received).
- Refer errors in registers to school leadership team.
- Extract attendance and lateness data for analysis.
- Issue formal letters at each stage of attendance concerns. 90-94% - first letter of concern. 80 - 90% - medical evidence request letter and/or notice of referral to Local Authority Attendance Liaison Officer.
- Conduct home visits if there is no parental contact within two days and/or as required.
- Refer to Early Help where appropriate.
- Refer to Local Authority Attendance team – penalty notices.
- Liaise with the Local Authority Attendance Liaison Officer.
- Manage incentives and rewards for attendance.
- Support individual students and families with attendance and referrals.
- In conjunction with wellbeing team and SLT making reasonable adjustment to curriculum / school day when appropriate.

7.6 The role of the School Leadership Team:

- Lead on strategies to improve attendance.
- Raise awareness of the attendance strategy amongst parents, staff, students and governors.
- Monitor and respond to errors by teachers in completion of registers promptly and accurately. Followed by staff referral to the Future Schools Trust HR department where necessary.
- Monitor patterns and analysis of attendance and lateness data and adapting strategies as needed.
- Manage the weekly and termly rewards structure.

- Attend monitoring and penalty notice meetings with parents, students, attendance team and Local Authority attendance team where necessary.

7.6 The roles of the Governors:

- Ratifying and reviewing the Academy Attendance Policy
- Monitoring and reviewing attendance and punctuality data

8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

