

Coombe Secondary Schools Academy Trust

Attendance Policy (CBS)

Equality Analysis Impact

Title of Policy: **Attendance Policy**

Considered at Governors' Committee meeting: **Pastoral Committee November 6th 2012**

Date: **ADOPTED:** November 2012 Amended April 2013

REVIEWED: November 2013, June 2014, November 2016, June 2016, June 2017

Next Review: Summer 2018

Is there relevance to equality?

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | Does the policy have an adverse effect on employees, pupils or the wider community and therefore have a significant effect in terms of equality? If yes, then please answer questions 2 and 3. | No |
| 2 | Does the policy have an adverse effect upon a group with protected characteristics? (Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage/Civil partnership, Pregnancy/ Maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation) | No |
| 3 | Does the policy affect one or more of the equality objectives set by the school? (Please refer to the Equality Policy) | No |

If the answer to question 2 or 3 is yes, a full equality analysis will need to be completed by the SLT Lead before the next committee meeting.

Please detail the objective and explain the relevance of the policy to the objective and protected characteristics below.

COOMBE BOYS' SCHOOL and SIXTH FORM

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2017-18

Coombe Boys' School recognises the strong link between attainment and attendance and the important role parents play in ensuring that it is as high as possible.

A student's progress is severely hampered if he does not regularly attend school. To illustrate:

- 90% attendance is an average of one day out of school per fortnight over a school year.
- 90% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is 1/2 a school year missed.
- 80% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is the same as one whole school year missed.

Coombe Boys' School: Attendance Definitions	
98-100%	Expected
95-97%	Satisfactory
Below 95%, but above 90%	A cause for concern
Below 90%	A serious cause for concern.

It is clearly understood that there are exceptional circumstances when levels of attendance may fall below 98% or even 95% for reasons beyond the student and parents' control. That said, these are very rare exceptions rather than the rule.

Getting Help

It is very important that parents speak with the relevant Head of Year or Assistant Headteacher i/c of the Key Stage at the earliest opportunity if they have any worries at all about ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their son/daughter. However, whilst we will provide support and guidance, it is ultimately the parents' legal responsibility to ensure his/her regular attendance.

1. School attendance is subject to education legislation and this policy is written to reflect the law and the guidance produced by the DfE.
2. Annually the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets.
3. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals as part of the Governor's Pastoral committee agenda.
4. This policy contains the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

5. Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) acting on his behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Punctuality/Lateness

6. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school by 8.20am.
7. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.30am. Students arriving after 08:30am will be registered as late. Any student arriving after this time must register with their tutor but will be marked as late.

8. Students arriving after 8.55am must register in the main reception before going to lessons and will also be marked late.
9. Registers close at 9.30am and, after this, lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence – “U” on the registration certificate – and can be subject to referral to the Education Welfare Officer and possible prosecution by the Local Authority.
10. Persistent lateness to school and lessons will be dealt with through the school’s behaviour policy and detention systems.

Absence from School

11. Parents **must** telephone the school **by 08:20am on the first day** of their son’s/daughter’s absence and **every day thereafter** and follow directions on the answering service to record the absence. Parents must record (i) their son’s/daughter’s name, (ii) his/her form and (iii) the reason for his/her absence. The attendance secretary will transfer this information each day to the registers.

Alternatively, parents may e-mail the school **before 08:20am on the first day** of their son’s/daughters absence and **every day thereafter**:

absence@coombe.org.uk

12. Emails/text messages will be sent, by the attendance officer, on the first morning and subsequent mornings of absence, to the Parents/Carers of all students who are marked absent for registration and for whom a note/phone call has not been received. Phone calls may also be made should absence be of a particular concern.

Continuing Absence

13. Should a student be absent for more than a day without parental contact, this will be treated as a matter of concern and a potential safeguarding issue. Contact will be made by the school and external agencies will be involved where necessary.

Frequent Absence

14. It is the responsibility of the relevant Head of Year, Deputy Head of Year or tutor to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.
15. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absence, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s, but at the same time may have to ask for the provision of medical evidence (e.g. a doctor’s stamp in the student’s planner / a photocopy of a prescription / a medical certificate) or indeed contact the GP’s surgery ourselves. The assistance of external agencies may also be required and used, or in rare cases, legal measures might have to be taken. See Appendix 2 for further details.

Attendance Panels

16. In order to alert parents formally of the school’s concern regarding attendance parents/carers may be invited to attend an attendance panel to discuss the issues and plan for improvement. This will be undertaken before the issue is referred to Education Welfare (apart from taking unauthorised Holiday absence). A parent/carer’s absence from/refusal to attend the meeting will not be seen as an excuse to delay any further formal proceedings.

School Refusal

17. The relevant Head of Year or the Assistant Headteacher of the Key Stage oversees all cases of school refusal. With the support of parents, relevant Head of Year, and outside agencies

where appropriate, a programme of re-admittance will be set up for the student. This could involve a range of strategies depending on the needs of the individual such as:

- Reduced Part Time timetable
- Home school support
- Mentoring
- Off site tuition

A Welcome Back

18. It is important that on return from an extended period of unavoidable absence the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students. The relevant Head of Year or Deputy Head of Year will oversee this process.

Absence Requests

19. Absence requests are rarely granted and almost never to those whose attendance is below 98%. Therefore, requests for all forms of absence (including medical appointments) must be made in advance and in writing. Parents must complete the necessary pro forma and return it to the school; **we ask for a month's notice**. The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will then make a decision as to whether the absence is approved or not and this decision is final. Any absence taken without authorization, without suitable notice, or taken after the school has refused permission, will be treated as unauthorized. A pattern of such absence, or a one off absence of more than one day, will trigger further intervention. The school will always inform the appropriate staff at the Local Authority about any unauthorized absences.

Promoting attendance

20. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The school has systems to reward excellent attendance.

Holidays in term time

21. Holidays in term time **will not** be authorized. Parents of students who take holiday in term time may be subject to a fixed penalty notice (see Appendix 2).

Sixth Form

22. An absolute minimum of 95% attendance for each subject is required by all students to guarantee entry to the relevant examinations. The school reserves the right not to enter students who fall below this level of attendance.

Registration Procedures for Teachers

23. It is the responsibility of Form Tutors to take the session register each morning and afternoon. **NB Under no circumstances should students or prefects be allowed to mark the register.**

24. All classes must be registered using PARS and marked with one of 3 codes ONLY:

Codes:	“ / “	present
	“N”	absent
	“L”	late

This advice summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011; and
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Potential Safeguarding Concerns Related to Attendance

Female Genital Mutation (FGM)

25. Year teams and associated staff have an awareness of FGM and the potential attendance indicators associated with it. These are likely to present themselves through non-attendance or parental Leave of Absence requests at the end of the summer term. Where a student has been subject to FGM, they may also suffer irregular attendance through ill health at the start of the autumn term. Where suspicions arise, the school will investigate thoroughly and inform the relevant services immediately.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

26. Sporadic attendance is often an indicator of possible CSE, particularly amongst vulnerable students. It is important that we liaise with the agencies which support vulnerable students.

Children Missing in Education

27. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff members will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. If a child fails to attend school for 5 school days or more without permission and there has been no contact from parents/carers, the school will notify the Education Welfare Service and contact the relevant local authority children's social care. The school will make reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child during this period.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
 - [b] To any special needs he may have.
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Student Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

2 Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. NB Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities

- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

APPENDIX 2

Actions under the Education Act

Poor attendance at Coombe Boys' School is rare. However, where it does occur, we are not only keen, but also obliged to engage with students and their parents in order to bring about improvement.

Ultimately this may necessitate the exercising of our statutory powers as defined by law. The school will never take such action lightly.

Parents commit an offence if their son/daughter fails to attend the School regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the School cannot, or has not, given permission). Such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Fixed Penalty Notice issued by the school is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court, but which seeks to secure an improvement in a student's attendance. Full payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice discharges parents/carers of any further liability for the period stated on the Notice.

When would a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued?

Coombe Boys' School considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance, that Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued by the Head, Deputy Head or Assistant Head in a range of situations:

- A student's attendance is below 90%
- A student is absent for a reason which is not regarded by the school as legitimate.
- A student is absent without permission.
- A student is absent after permission to be absent has been refused.
- Student absence is not explained.
- A student takes a holiday in term time (*parents should note that amendments to the 2006 regulations coming into force in September 2013 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that the Head may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances*).
- Any other circumstance deemed as inappropriate by the Head.

Is a warning given?

When attendance falls below 90%, contact will be made by the school and this constitutes the warning.

Some Frequently Asked Questions about Penalty Notices:

What are the costs?

Payment within 21 days of receipt of a Fixed Penalty Notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this, but within 28 days.

How are they issued?

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by first class post to the home address.

Who will they be issued to?

A Fixed Penalty Notice is issued to each parent in respect of each student not attending School. This includes partners who are not married but who live with one of the parents.

Appeal

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Fixed Penalty Notice has been issued.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Fixed Penalty Notice. Payment in part, or by instalment, is not an option with Fixed Penalty Notices. It must be paid in full.

What happens if I do not pay?

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice in full. After this time, the school is required, in accordance with the Act, to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. If found guilty, parents/carers can be fined up to £1,000 each. The Magistrates Court is also able to impose other sanctions such as Parenting Orders.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Fixed Penalty Notice but my child is still missing School?

Not for the period included in the Fixed Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. However, it may be the case that a prosecution be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Fixed Penalty Notice.