

The Corsham School Attendance Policy

part of

The Corsham School Care and Guidance Policy

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Rationale

At The Corsham School we firmly believe that all students benefit from excellent school attendance. To this end, we will do all we can to ensure that our students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly. In order for a student's attendance record to be deemed very good, it must be 97% or above:

100% - Excellent attendance

97% - Very Good attendance

94% - Good attendance

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Raise student awareness of the importance of punctuality and uninterrupted attendance.
- Celebrate excellent school attendance
- Support students and families who experience difficulties maintaining good school attendance.

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.

Expectations

We expect that all students will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually – i.e. on time
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers who have a day to day responsibility for their children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities:

- Ensure that their child/ren in their care arrive at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Contact the school before 8.30 on the morning of each day of the student's absence

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 2022 [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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [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.

Regular school attendance of children of compulsory school age is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and is a legal requirement in accordance with section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. Parents/Guardians are committing an offence if they fail to comply with this legislation and legal action can be instigated.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers/form tutors

- Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for accurately recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- Assist the Attendance Officer in following up any unexplained absences upon the student's return to school;

- Informing the Pastoral Team/Safeguarding team of concerns and being aware that early signs of disaffection can culminate in non-attendance.

3.5 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system by informing the Attendance Officer.

3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time. They can support their children by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times to provide sufficient sleep
- Ensuring students set alarm times or give wake-up calls in plenty of time for students to have a healthy breakfast before school
- Encouraging students to have uniform and school equipment ready the night before
- Where possible, arranging routine medical appointments outside of school hours
- Reporting any concerns promptly to school and retaining open and honest communications with school
- Being positive about education

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40 and will be kept open until 9.10. The register for the second session will be taken at 14.00 and will be kept open until 14.30

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

This should be via a phone call to 01249 702086 or a free text to 01249 400019 or email attendance@corsham.wilts.sch.uk or the School Gateway parent App.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

For periods of absence from school for four days or more we will require medical evidence to be provided.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/Carers will need to complete an absence request form which can be found [here](#)

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Punctuality is checked daily and there will be interventions for students who fail to meet our expectations of arriving to school and lessons on time.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers will be notified of attendance via three interim reports during the academic year. Parents/carers can also check attendance of their child(ren) on the school gateway.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Absences that the school is unable to authorise:

- Holidays during term time
- Arrivals after the registers close at 9.10 without prior notification
- Shopping trips, even if this is for school uniform
- Birthday celebrations
- Looking after relatives/pets
- Tiredness due to extra-curricular activities
- All unexplained absences.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

The Corsham School is committed to reducing persistent absence. To this end contact home will be made initially by the Attendance Officer. Meetings with Pastoral Staff including tutors, Pastoral Leaders, Support Staff, Educational Welfare Officer and Deputy Headteacher Pastoral will follow.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 pupil 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 or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The Corsham School has a positive ethos which continuously highlights and promotes good attendance. Positive acknowledgement and praise for children who improve their attendance works.

Attendance is one of the most important Corsham Standards and this shows the whole school community how highly attendance is valued and can demonstrate to pupils and their families that the school values and appreciates their efforts. This is shared with all stakeholders.

Promoting good school attendance should be the responsibility of not just the school's pastoral staff but the whole staff team.

Excellent and improved attendance will be acknowledged by a number of ways. It will also acknowledge pupils who are excellent attendees (individually or as a Year group) in line with the 'Gold' strand of The Corsham Standard.

Assemblies and tutor times will focus on the importance of high attendance. Students will be rewarded for outstanding attendance.

We also regularly check the DfE website for ideas and strategies here: [DfE's guidance](#).

7. Attendance Monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily/weekly/monthly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 4 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

The Corsham School uses the table below to intervene with attendance concerns:

Less than 97%	Monitor letter 1	Tutor Monitor – 4 weeks
No improvement In 4 weeks	Monitor letter 2	Attendance officer monitor – 4 weeks
No improvement In 4 weeks	Monitor letter 3	SAM (school attendance meeting) meeting with Head of House. Formal Support Plan
No improvement In 4 weeks	LAAM invite letter	With DHT Pastoral, Pastoral Leader and EWO (Education Welfare Officer)

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Students who become persistent absentees will be referred to the EWO appropriately.

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

The Corsham School collects and stores attendance data to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence

G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Promoting good school attendance