



Corley Centre

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body every four years *unless circumstances dictate that it should be reviewed sooner.*

The policy was last updated and agreed by the Governing Body Spring 2015.

It is due for review Spring Term 2019.

Policy Reviewed / updated	March 2014
Policy Updated Authorised Absence – new bullet/paragraph added with reference to FGM on Page 3.	March 2015
Next Review	Spring 2019

Rationale

The school aims to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality amongst the student body as a whole and to eliminate all but the most necessary and legitimate absences and/or episodes of lateness in individual students.

Excellent attendance, as measured against national norms, is a pre-requisite for successful learning and good progress. Personal qualities, such as reliability, that are inferred by excellent attendance at school are amongst those most prized in society in general. The promotion of excellent attendance is, therefore, a primary objective which all staff must place at the forefront of every element of their professional activity. This includes the communication and explanation of this policy to students and parents at the beginning of their relationship with the school, and regularly throughout that relationship.

Corley Centre is committed to a working partnership with parents, carers and the Local Authority in achieving these aims.

Parents / carers are requested to note that the attendance and punctuality of their child at school is the parent's / carer's legal responsibility.

From September 2013, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have removed the power of Headteachers to authorise family leave of absence for up to ten school days and to grant periods of extended leave.

The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may grant 'leave of absence' during term time if there are exceptional circumstances. There is no definitive list of what are exceptional circumstances and Headteachers must use their professional judgement when authorising any leave of absence.

Headteachers must determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Also, for parents / carers information, from September 2013, the Department for Education has amended the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 so that any parent / carer who receives a Penalty Notice for taking their child out of school during term time will have to pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

Previously, parents / carers had 28 days to pay £60 and 42 days to pay £120.

Note: for the purpose of this policy the term 'attendance' refers to the attendance of students at Mentor Time at the beginning of each day and at all six lessons throughout the remainder of each day. Full attendance at school is from 8.45am to 3.15pm and 3.05pm on Fridays.

Attendance Targets

Each year, Corley Centre sets an aspirational target of 100% attendance for each student. We realise that this may be affected by legitimate reasons for absence for some students.

We believe that the students can be encouraged to aspire to targets in excess of the current national norm. These targets and other attendance-related news and advice will feature regularly in home-school communications, such as the Headteacher's Monthly Information sheets, the school newsletters and our website.

Authorised Absence

Only members of the school staff, as designated by the Headteacher, may authorise the absence of a student.

The authorisation of absence is not the prerogative of parents or carers.

Any members of staff other than the student's Senior Link who authorises the absence of a student must inform their Senior Link that they have done so and must explain why.

A student's absence may be recorded as authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the absence has been received from the parent or carer, except where any of the following apply:

- A student whose case has been referred to Children and Family First Worker, unless the absence has been certified as necessary by a medical practitioner.
- A student whose parent or carer has removed them from school in order to attend a leave of absence, unless the school has accepted that there are **exceptional circumstances**, leading to authorisation of the absence on the basis of compassion.
- A student whose parent or carer has been notified in writing by the school that their attendance record is causing concern. In this case the Deputy Headteacher must decide whether to authorise or defer authorisation pending an immediate referral to the school's Children and Family First.
- A student who has been absent without the parent's or carer's knowledge, or where the parent or carer has chosen to claim otherwise and there is a suspicion of deception.
- If a student has to be absent for part of a session, either at the beginning of the day or through leaving the school site during the course of the day, in order to attend a medical or dental appointment, the school will request that a parental note is provided or the parent/carer inform school in person, in order that Reception staff can sign the student out.
- If the student is female and from a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practising or affected community then the Deputy Headteacher will use direct questioning to ascertain whether "cutting" of the girl will be undertaken during the holiday/absence. The Deputy Headteacher will then take the information from this meeting and make a decision on whether to refer to the Local Authority, Designated Safeguarding Officer or Police.

Unauthorised Absence

A student's absence must be recorded as unauthorised if no satisfactory explanation is received, or if the absence has occurred in circumstances outlined above.

Students taking leave of absence during term time

- The school will not authorise the absence of students during term time, unless it has accepted that there are exceptional circumstances and that leave of absence is appropriate.
- The school will respond in writing to any reference made either by letter or through a telephone call to any proposal from a parent or carer that a student be absent from school in order to take a leave of absence and will also respond in writing to any reference to a leave of absence either being taken or having been taken during term time. The aim of such responses will be to ensure that parents or carers are aware of the school's attendance policy and/or to clarify the reasons for absence.
- In such cases, it is the responsibility of the parent or carer to outline, in writing, the circumstances

which they believe warrant the authorisation of a leave of absence at least ten school days before the leave of absence is to begin and to address it to the Headteacher or whoever the Headteacher has nominated to deputise in such matters.

- The Headteacher or nominated Deputy Headteacher will assess the factors referred to in the written request and decide whether to authorise or not. In the event of a decision not to authorise the parent or carer may appeal, in writing, to the Chair of the Governing Body at the school.
- Any appeal must be received within 10 school days of the date on the letter informing them that the leave of absence will not be authorised.

In cases where the school is aware that a student has taken a leave of absence from school without the school's authorisation, the school will inform The Children and Family First Worker with the intention that the imposition of a Penalty Notice on the parents or carer be considered.

Responsibilities and Processes

Governing Body

- The Governing Body will review the Attendance Policy as required in order to re-approve or amend and approve. In so doing, governors will have regard to the various contexts affecting the school, both nationally and locally, taking account of guidance and policy from central government. The governing body will support the work of the school in fostering excellent attendance, as advised by the Headteacher.
- The governing body will scrutinise the impact of attendance policy upon student attendance rates and punctuality.

Headteacher

- The Headteacher will recommend the Attendance Policy to the Governing Body and agree appropriate strategies. The Headteacher will assign responsibility for the implementation of those strategies to the Deputy Headteacher designated as Attendance Leader.

Deputy Headteacher

- The Deputy Headteacher responsible for leading the implementation of the Attendance Policy will oversee the work of Mentors in relation to student attendance. The Deputy Headteacher will also oversee the work of the Family Support Worker who will oversee attendance and communication with parents.

Mentors

- As a matter of student safeguarding, Mentors are responsible for encouraging their students to arrive punctually at morning registration sessions.
- It is the responsibility of Mentors to initiate and lead any intervention necessary to ensure that students attend morning Mentor Time and weekly assemblies.
- Whilst there is no expectation that Mentors will 'chase' issues of attendance where their earlier interventions have not had an impact, this policy recognises the position of Mentors as integral to the regular attendance and well-being of our students. It is the responsibility of Mentors, therefore, to build positive relationships with their students through well-planned, stimulating activities during each Mentor Time.

- Mentors are responsible for the maintenance of an accurate register. In order to do this, Mentors must monitor their students' attendance on a weekly basis as a minimum.
- Mentors who are concerned about the attendance record and/or poor progress of a student to the extent that the student-focused actions they have taken have not had a positive impact, must raise the issue speedily with their Senior Link. It is the joint responsibility of both parties to agree actions that they believe will affect a remedy to the problem. These actions must be shared with staff at Pastoral Support Meetings.

The Family Support Worker will also provide weekly attendance posters for each Mentor Group in order to assist Mentors in their duty to monitor their students' attendance.

Teaching staff without mentoring responsibilities

All teaching staff who do not have a Mentor Group are responsible for contributing to the smooth running of the morning attendance registration process.

Family Support Worker

- The school office staff and the Family Support Worker are the principal point of contact for parents / carers wishing to report their child's absence or query their attendance. As such, the school office staff and the Family Support Worker are responsible for recording absences as authorised if a telephone message has been received and if none of the exceptions referred to above apply.
- The school office staff and the Family Support Worker are responsible for maintaining up-to-date school attendance records, and for producing and distributing the reports referred to above in addition to such reports as are requested by the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher responsible for the implementation of attendance strategy.

In General

All members of staff who undertake work with students have a specific responsibility to ensure that the attendance of all students is accurately recorded on the occasion of each meeting and to ensure that any absence is beyond suspicion. This applies to all circumstances, but particularly those in which a student or students have been removed from their normal timetabled lessons, for whatever reason.