



Clacton County High School

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Higher Expectations, Raising Aspirations

Attendance Policy 2020-21

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Clacton County High School

Attendance Policy for Parents

Mission Statement

Clacton County High School aims to provide a caring environment where individuals develop their full potential and their achievement is celebrated. It is our expectation that all students attend school every day when the school is open.

What the Law Says

- All children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education. The school leaving age is the last Friday in June of the same academic year in which the child reaches their 16th birthday, or 17th Birthday, if born after September 1996, or 18th Birthday, if born after September 1997 (*Education Act 1996*).
- The parent/carer is legally responsible for ensuring that their child receives a suitable education. (*Education Act 1996*)
- Local Education Authorities are required by law to enforce school attendance. They usually do so through the Education Welfare Service, or as it is known now, the Attendance Compliance team.
- Failure to ensure that your child attends school, may lead to legal action being taken against the parent. This could result in **each** parent/carer receiving a fine of up to £2,500 for each time, or up to 3 months' imprisonment.
- According to the Education Act (1996), Section 444A and Section 444B, authorised personnel are able to issue penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444 and this enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction by paying a penalty. The current penalty prescribed for each parent is £60, if paid within a 21-day period on receipt of the notice, rising to £120, if paid after 21 days, but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period the Attendance Compliance team will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice. This will be a joint decision between Essex Attendance Compliance and the school.
- In line with the current code of conduct 2017, Penalty notices may be issued where there have been at least ten unauthorised sessions of absences, during a period of ten school weeks. Attendance Compliance will also issue penalty notices for unauthorised term time holidays of 5 days (10 sessions) or more, and a penalty notice may be issued if there are 6 or more unauthorised sessions, due to holiday taken during the first two weeks of September. (Essex Code of Conduct 2017 October 1st)
- Attendance Compliance officers, can also use court proceedings to seek an Education Supervision Order or Attendance Order on the child.
- During these court proceedings, the magistrates may consider issuing a Parenting Order, which would include parents attending parenting skills sessions.
- By law, only the school can approve absence, not the parent, once the school has received a reason from the parent and in some cases, this may require medical evidence.
- The absence of a student without an established acceptable reason, or where no reason has been provided by the parent/carer, should be recorded as unauthorised.

What the Local Authority Compliance Team (Essex County Council) states

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress.

'Having a good education will help give your child the best possible start in life. If your child does not attend school, he/she will not be able to keep up with the work. Employers will want to be sure that the people they are thinking of taking on are reliable. Therefore, children who have not attended their school for no good reason are at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse. They may also be drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour.'

What the DFE says as part of the Reopening of schools September 2020

In March, when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, it was made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school. Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom, risks students falling behind and therefore, school attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term 2020. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly, where the child is a registered student at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up on absence, the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with the local authority's codes of conduct.

Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1st August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of students who will remain on the shielded patient list, can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Read the [current advice on shielding](#).

If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and **that area only**, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore, they may be temporarily absent. (More guidance will be provided to schools in the event of this happening, through the Local authority Health Protection Team - schools will provide support for these students.) Some students no longer required to shield, but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional, may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people](#).

What CCHS says for September 2020

- Attendance at CCHS is a whole school responsibility and it is our expectation that children attend school every day when the school is open.
- Children are expected to attend school, arrive on time and attend all lessons.

- If your child is ill, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the school on the first day of absence and each day after, as long as the absence continues. (*Telephone the school before 8.45am, if possible, on the 'Student Absence Line' on 01255 424266.*)
- The school will attempt to contact the parent/carer of any student whose absence has not been established by previous contact via the 'Student Absence Line'.
- When a child returns to school following a period of absence, he/she must provide the Attendance Team with written confirmation of the reasons for the absence, signed by their parent/carer, even after a telephone call. Medical evidence may be required in certain circumstances.
- If your child starts missing school, help the school to put things right. Make sure your child understands that you do not approve!
- Medical or similar appointments for your child should, wherever possible be made outside of school hours. If this is impossible, written notification must be sent into the Attendance Team, who will make arrangements for your child to sign out at the Attendance Office and provide a green 'Permission to be Out of School' slip. He/she must sign back into school at the same office, upon return. This is vital in the event of an evacuation.

For some students attendance in September 2020 will be difficult, for example, if they are having to self-isolate, have had a positive test result, or because they are in close contact with someone who has coronavirus (COVID 19). For these students, a bespoke programme will be discussed with parents/carers based on needs.

CCHS understands that there will be concerns for students, parents and households, who may be reluctant or anxious about returning in the autumn term, in light of the Covid Pandemic. For example, this may include students who have themselves been shielding previously, but have been advised that this is no longer necessary; those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable; or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds; or for those who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes. If parents of students with significant risk factors are concerned, parents/carers need to discuss their concerns with the relevant Year Leader/pastoral team, or the attendance team and the school will provide support, but the message is equally applied and will be based on government guidance that students of compulsory school age, must be in school, unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the student has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).

Contacts

Attendance Contacts:

Absence Line: - 01255 424266

Miss E Clay - Attendance Officer

Miss N Nundy- Attendance Administrator

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Parents or carers are expected to phone the school on the first day of their child's absence on the Student Absence Line 01255 424266.
- In cases where a student's attendance rate falls and parents are involved in a school Attendance *support* Meeting (SAM) or school Attendance Meeting/phone call (SAMP), parents are expected to provide medical evidence in order for the school to authorise absences. If this is not provided, absences are unauthorised, which could lead to further attendance actions.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed, in order to help identify patterns, set targets and support students.
- Our Attendance Team, together with Year Leaders/Pastoral Leaders, will monitor and review these targets on a regular basis.
- Students who are absent through sickness for a long period of time and have valid medical evidence, may have work sent home for them and will be re-integrated back into school on their return. Please contact the Pastoral Hub to organise this.
- Pastoral Hub staff/Year Leaders will, when appropriate, liaise with outside agencies – Education Psychology Service, Social Care and any others – who may serve to support and assist students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Year Leaders meet weekly with the Attendance Officers, in order to identify and support those students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Attendance Officer may visit/contact parents, to support them in trying to improve attendance when required.
- Year Leader/Attendance Officer may speak with students without informing parents/carers, who are experiencing difficulties attending school, during the school day, as part of a SAP (school Attendance Plan), to create a support plan in order to improve attendance.
- Attendance Solutions Essex Ltd, are a private company used by the school to help raise attainment. They, and/or the Attendance Officer, will intervene if no improvement is made following a SAP and will run a SAM, a SAMP, carry out home visits and have the legal power to issue Penalty Notices for Essex County Council.
- The school also use the Local Authority Education Compliance team for certain cases and they may contact parents/carers, and/or make home visits.
- The Attendance Compliance Team, or Attendance Solutions Essex Ltd, in conjunction with the school, may on selected days, visit the homes of students when no reason has been provided to the school for a child's absence.
- Punctuality is regarded as very important and if a student arrives at school after the registers close at 9am, they can be marked as an unauthorised late, which is treated the same as an unauthorised absence. Students that are continually late may be referred to the Local Authority Compliance team.
- Ultimately, the Local Authority may take parents to court for the non-attendance of their children at school.

Punctuality

DAILY: Morning Registration – (punctuality is key and compulsory; students must be at their bases at the beginning of registration or in assembly).

- If students are late to form between 8.45am -8.50am, students will be given a 'late' on the register and then logged as a C2 under the **Disruptive Behaviour** tab and marked as 'late' on register – C2 written on the mini whiteboard. Any student arriving after 8.50am to form will be issued with a C3. The students will serve a C3 in D2 the next day. There will be some students who have legitimate reasons for being late to form or other lessons throughout the day and these students need to sign in **at the Year Leaders office** and will be given a green slip to excuse their lateness. No sanctions will result if the lateness has been corroborated by parents/medical slips. If students arrive with a green slip and it has been validated, a present mark is put into the register.
- **A student who is late after 8.50am and does not have a valid reason, should go straight to their form room and not attendance** and will be issued with a C3 under the late tab.
- Any student who arrives after 9.00am, should go to the Year Leader office first, to collect a green slip and the Year Leader will tick whether the lateness is genuine on the green slip and class teacher simply marks them present when they arrive. If it is not considered genuine, the student will be issued with a C3 by the Year Leader. **Any student that does not sign in with Year Leader when arriving after 9.00am, will be sanctioned with a C380 and issued with this by the end of the day by the Year Leader.**
- Lates to form and lessons are monitored and if students are late for more than 3 times in a week, students will receive a C3 after school on a Tuesday.
- If a student does not turn up for lessons, but is in school, they will be deemed as truanting and a RESET will be set for the following day.

DAILY: Lessons 1-4 All students should arrive promptly and if students do not, a C2 will be issued. The C2 is marked on mini-whiteboard and if, at the end of the lesson, there have been no further consequences, the C2 will be served at the end of the lesson. If further behaviour concerns occur, the C2 for being late will be upgraded as per the Behaviour for Learning Policy (BfL).

Persistent Absence Plan

- Students with persistent absence, will be intervened through a variety of the above actions and follow the flowchart at the end of this document, but there will be targeted intervention depending on what the school knows about these students, in terms of their previous attendance and family circumstances. Some of the students who are regular non-attenders each year, will not start at the beginning of this flowchart, but will often be contacted early in the year by the attendance team and meetings will be set up with parents. Each half term, the school will target a number of students who are considered to be in danger of being in the 'persistent absence category'. Each week form tutors and Year Leaders/Attendance officer will target these students through mentoring. For example, in Half Term 6, the focus will start on those between 28-32 sessions of absence, as the threshold for Persistent Absence (PA) at the end of the school year is 37 sessions.

Attendance Rewards

- Students will be provided with termly prizes, alongside the PROUD classroom reward system that is new September 2020 and there will also be recognition for those students who have made significant improvements from one term to the next.
- Students with 100% attendance for each term will be entered on a roll of honour, to be published in the school's Weekly News and will also be celebrated in year assemblies.
- Students with 100% attendance for the year will be entered on a roll of honour, to be published in the first newsletter of the following academic year.
- Each week there is a draw from all 100% attendees, picked at random, for a £5 reward.
- There is also a chance to win the Golden Ticket each week, whereby a student is able to 'jump the queue' to go to the front, in Clouds, with a friend.
- The form group within each year group, with the highest number of students with 100% attendance for each month, will receive a 'hamper' reward.
- The Attendance Officer will present monthly attendance percentages for each form and publish league tables.
- Alongside the Student Attendance Prize, the Attendance team also provide regular PROUD points for 100% attendance each week, through a draw system. (One person from each form will receive these points.)

Monitoring Attendance

- The Form Tutor will discuss any developing attendance problems with the student.
- The Form Tutor will monitor any developing attendance situations and discuss the issues with the Pastoral Team/Attendance team.
- The Attendance Officer will provide percentage attendance information to Form Tutors and the Pastoral Team on a weekly basis, with identification of students who are likely to fall into the 'Persistent Absentees' category. There will be weekly mentoring of these students throughout the year.
- The Attendance Manager will discuss strategies with Form Tutors and the Pastoral Hub to support students with attendance difficulties, with a particular focus on those who are likely to be in the 'Persistent Absentees' category.
- If appropriate, letters, visits, or phone calls, will be made to the parents/carers of students who are experiencing attendance difficulties, informing them of the attendance record of their child.
- A school Attendance Plan may be discussed with the student in a meeting.
- A school Attendance Meeting (SAM)/(SAMP) with Attendance Solutions and Attendance Officers may be arranged.
- When a student is absent from school and parents have not contacted the school Sick Line, a text message will automatically be generated to alert parents/carers. The text will request parents to contact the school urgently regarding their child's absence.
- Where parents/carers have not contacted the school within 5 days of a student's absence, the Local Authority will be informed, who may decide to take further action.

Children Missing from Education, and Deletions from Roll

If a child is absent from school without reason and we are unable to contact parents, or establish your child's whereabouts, the school will contact the police after 5 days and they will carry out checks. After 10 days, the Local Authority will be informed – this is called a 'Child Missing from Education' (CME). The Local Authority will then carry out checks, including with the Police and Social Care where appropriate, to determine the wellbeing and safety of the child. In certain circumstances, the school may remove the child's name from roll, for example, if the child is enrolled with another school. The school will always attempt to make contact prior to this happening and will act only within the legal guidelines set out regarding these processes. It is therefore important that parents inform the school if they know that their child will not be returning to the school and provide the school with details such as your new address, the name of the child's new school, the date of the move and so on.

Leave of Absence

- Leave of absence should only be taken in term time in 'exceptional circumstances', as outlined by the DfE and the Attendance Compliance team, on behalf of Essex Local Authority, e.g. where a parent is classed as Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- In exceptional circumstances and if it is absolutely necessary to take your child out of school during term time, parents/carers must request a 'Leave of Absence Form' from the school.
- A request must be made in advance using the school's application form, which can be obtained from the Attendance Office. When completed and returned to the school, it should be accompanied by a letter of explanation.
- Where the school/head of school considers that the application has not justified 'Exceptional Circumstances', approval will not be given. This is a school decision.
- If the holiday is then taken with disregard to the outcome of the application, the school may seek to apply for a Penalty Notice in accordance with Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2004.

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. Unacceptable reasons for absence may include:

- Visiting relatives
- Haircuts
- Shopping
- Transport difficulties
- Birthdays
- Sleeping late
- Looking after siblings
- Minding the house
- Truancy
- Unapproved holidays
- Arriving at school too late to get a mark

Note: the school authorises/unauthorises absence – not the parent/carers. An absence remains unauthorised, until the school receives information about the reasons for the absence and a decision is made as to whether this is authorised.

How Non-Attendance Can Affect Your Child's Education

If you raise a child's attendance, you raise their academic chances:

- 90% attendance = half a day missed every week.
- One school year at 90% attendance = four whole weeks of lessons missed.
- 90% attendance over five years of secondary school = half a school year *missed!!*

What is the impact?

- Research suggests that seventeen *missed school days a year* = a GCSE grade DROP in achievement.
- If your child's attendance improves by 1%, they will see a 5% improvement in attainment.
- The greater the attendance, the greater the achievement.

ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART

