



Clacton County High School

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Attendance Policy

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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 MECES (Missing Education and Child Employment Service).
- 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 Essex EWS will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice. This will be a joint decision between Essex EWS 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. Missing Education and Child Employment Service 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)
- Education Welfare 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 Education Welfare Services of Essex County Council says

- 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 CCHS Says

- 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'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, option 1.*)
- 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.

Contacts:

Absence Line:	- 01255 424266 (option 1)
Miss E Clay	- Attendance Officer
Miss N O'Shea	- 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, option 1.
- 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 to authorise absences.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed, in order to help identify patterns, set targets and support students.
- Our Attendance Team, together with Pastoral Leaders, will monitor and review these targets on a regular basis.
- Students who are absent through sickness for a long period of time, 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/Academic Key Workers will, when appropriate, liaise with outside agencies – Education Psychology Service, Social Care and any others – when this may serve to support and assist students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Academic Key Workers meet weekly with the Attendance Officers, in order to identify and support those students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Attendance Officers may visit/contact parents to support them in trying to improve attendance when required.
- Academic Key Workers/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 (School Attendance *support* Meeting), a SAMP (School Attendance Meeting/phone call), 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 Welfare Service for certain cases and they may contact parents/carers, and/or make home visits.
- The Education Welfare Service, 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 9.00am, 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 Education Welfare Officer.
- Ultimately, an Education Welfare Officer may take parents to court for the non-attendance of their children at school.

Punctuality Policy

- Punctuality is regarded as very important and if a student arrives at school after 8.45am, they are marked as a 'Late to Form' (L Code) and logged on SIMS as 'C2 Late to Registration' by form teachers. This also applies to assembly days. Students who receive multiple (2+) C2's for lates to registration/assembly across the week, will receive a C3 on the following Monday. If students turn up once the registers close at 9.00am, they are expected to sign in the book at the attendance office and are marked as late by the attendance team. This is then recorded on SIMS, again as an L and then followed up with a C3 (a detention after school the next school day), unless there is a legitimate reason. More details regarding 'punctuality' can be found in the Behaviour for Learning Policy (BfL).
- If students arrive after 9.30am, they will be marked for am registration as an unauthorised absence and issued a C3 unless there is a legitimate reason. Regular lateness of this kind will be followed up with parents by the attendance team.

Persistence Absence Plan

- Students will be intervened through a variety of the above actions and follow the flow chart at the end of this document, but there will be targeted intervention depending on what the school knows about the 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 flow chart, 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 Academic key workers will target these students through mentoring. For example, during half term 6, the focus will start on those between 28-32, as the threshold for PA at the end of the school year is 37 sessions.

Attendance Rewards

- Students will be provided with prizes for 97% attendance each term 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 Parent 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 breakfast reward.
- The Attendance Officer will present monthly attendance percentages for each form and publish league tables.

Monitoring Attendance

- Students' attendance will be recorded at least twice each day (session 1 and session 2).
- 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.
- The Attendance Officer will provide percentage attendance information to Form Tutors and the Pastoral Teams 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 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 the Attendance Solutions/Attendance Officers may be arranged.
- When a student is absent from school and parents have not contacted the school attendance team, 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 Education Welfare Officer will be informed, who may decide to take further action.

Children Missing from Education, and Deletions from Roll

If your child is absent from school without reason and we are unable to contact you, or establish your child's whereabouts, we may refer your child to the Local Authority as 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 your child. In certain circumstances, we may remove your child's name from our school roll, for example, when your child is enrolled with another school. We will always attempt to make contact with you, prior to this happening and will act only within the legal guidelines set out regarding these processes. Please therefore inform the school if you know that your child will not be returning to us and provide us with details such as your new address, the name of your child's new school, the date of your 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 Education Welfare Service, 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/Principal 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
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Looking after siblings
- Truancy
- Arriving at school too late to get a mark
- Haircuts
- Transport difficulties
- Sleeping late
- Minding the house
- Unapproved holidays

Note: the school authorises/unauthorises absence – not the parent/carer. 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



