

## Attendance Policy

**It is the responsibility of all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers to familiarise themselves with the contents of all Trust policies and any amendments hereafter.**

### Policy history

1. Taken to the Cathedral School Trust board December 2017
2. Approved by Cathedral Schools Trust board 4th December 2017

<b>VERSION</b>	<b>Final</b>	
<b>APPROVED</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> December 2017</b>	
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## 1. Introduction

Cathedral Schools Trust (CST) aims to work with parents/carers to ensure the highest levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils within its academies/free school; this is with the intention of enabling all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

By law, all children of a compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education; parents have a legal responsibility to ensure this happens.

## 2. Aims of the policy

- To increase the overall attendance to comply with the Government's recommended guidelines
- To reduce unauthorised absences and reduce the level of persistent absence (attendance below 90%).
- To raise/emphasise the importance of high level attendance to pupils, parents/carers and staff
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absence are recorded promptly and consistently
- To reduce lateness
- To implement attendance intervention strategies when required, including home visits
- To reward pupils with good or improved attendance
- To make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

## 3. Registering of pupils

By law all schools are required to complete an attendance register twice a day, once at the beginning of the morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session to confirm whether a pupil is present, absent, engaged in an approved off-site educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## 4. Lateness

Punctuality is a very important and it is something CST try to encourage all pupils to take seriously so they develop good habits for future employment. Research shows that there are two negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late. These are:

- The loss of education suffered by the pupil, which over a year, can add up to a significant proportion of their time at school. Just 5 minutes per day equates to 3 whole days lost.
- The disruption to other pupils in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task at hand.

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## 5. Authorised/unauthorised absence

All absences must be explained by a parent/carer; the academy/free school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence.

Acceptable reasons for the authorisation of absences are:

- Illness (**5.1**)
- Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement
- Days of religious observance
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (**5.2**) – the Trust would expect medical and dental appointments to be outside of school hours in the majority of cases.

### 5.1 Illness

Absence will usually be authorised when a parent/carer reports that their child is ill. Medical evidence may be requested where a pupil has been absent for more than 4 school days due to illness OR where a pupil's attendance is below 90% and/or is regularly away from school due to illness.

Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised.

### 5.2 Unavoidable medical/dental appointments

All routine (non-emergency) appointments should be made, whenever possible, outside of school hours. Should a pupil need to have an appointment during school hours, evidence of this appointment may need to be provided. Failure to provide evidence may result in the academy/free school not authorising the absence. It would normally be expected that parents do not take their son/daughter out of school for a whole day for a medical/dental appointment.

## 6. Term time leave of absence

From the 1st September 2013 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force.

The amendments make clear that the headteacher/principal or their representative may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The headteacher/principal should determine the number of school days a child can be away from the academy/free school if the leave is granted.

Requesting the absence:

Wherever possible, all requests for a pupil to be absent from school during term time must be made in accordance with the academy/free school's procedures.

The request will be dealt with using the academy/free school's procedures.

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## **7. Improving school attendance**

Each academy/free school has a range of strategies available to support parents/carers and pupils in getting into school and improving school attendance.

## **8. Parenting improvement plans**

Each academy/free school will try and engage parents into promoting good attendance.

## **9. Penalty notices**

When the decision has been made not to authorise a request for leave of absence, parents/carers will be informed in line with the academy/free school absence procedures. The academy/free school may send in a request to the local authority for the consideration of a penalty notice, who will then make the final decision about whether a penalty notice will be issued.

## **10. Education supervision orders**

An academy or free/school, in conjunction with Bristol City Council, may consider applying to the courts for an education supervision order when a parent/carer fails to ensure their child has regular school attendance.

The academy/free school will inform the parent/carer that they are considering this option prior to the application.

## **11. Prosecutions**

When an education supervision order fails or the application is deemed inappropriate, the academy/free school may apply to the local authority for a prosecution where attendance continues to be poor and when no improvement is seen.

If a parent/carer does not co-operate with the Education Supervision Order (ESO) the parent/carer could be referred back to the court for a potential breach of the Order.

The local authority may prosecute a parent/carer, this could result in a more severe penalty including a fine of up to £2500, a Community Order or, in extreme cases a prison sentence of up to three months.

## **12. Taking pupils off roll/children missing education (CME)**

Should a pupil transfer to another school, the academy/free school will continue to have the pupils name on roll until he/she has been placed on the roll of his/her new school. If a pupil appears not to be attending the school for a 10 day period of time and no contact can be made, the academy/free school will complete a child missing education form (CME) and submit this to the local authority. This may be completed after the young person has been missing from school as unauthorised absence for 10 consecutive days.

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## **13. Persistently sick pupils**

If a pupil is suffering from a long-term illness or on-going medical problem parents will be asked to provide medical evidence from the hospital/G.P or CAMHS. A referral to the Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) Service maybe appropriate, this will be discussed with the parents/carers.

## **14. Roles and responsibilities**

The Trust:

All staff should be aware that it is a statutory obligation to keep accurate records of all pupils' attendance and punctuality; Form tutors/class teachers will register all pupils during am and pm registration.

Staff should be aware that they have a professional obligation to keep accurate attendance records; incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable.

Registers provide a daily record of attendance which may be required in a court of law.

The academy/free school will ensure that attendance information is regularly communicated to parents.

The academy/free school will accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness.

The academy/free school will have clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness, allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities.

The Trust will review the attendance policy and associated procedures annually.

Board of Trustees:

The Trust has a responsibility for monitoring school attendance and should be familiar with the current legislation and be clear about the procedures for monitoring of attendance in the academy/free school. Regular reports on attendance will be closely monitored by the board of trustees and the policy evaluated.

Parents/carers:

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends the school at which they are registered. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the local authority taking legal action.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a healthy condition to learn.

Parents/carers are responsible for immediately informing the academy/free school of the reason for any absence by phone call on the first morning of any absence and each day thereafter.

Parents/carers should not take their child out of school during term time and are to be made aware of the potential consequences of a penalty notice being issued or subsequent prosecution of doing so without the school's prior written permission.

## Pupils:

Every pupil should aim to have 100% attendance; if a pupil is late for morning registration they should report to the school Office upon arrival to ensure that they have a registration mark.