

Herne Bay High School/Coastal Alliance

Attendance Policy

Principles

The aim of the Attendance Policy is to establish an approach that will support and encourage pupils to attend school regularly in order to maximise their personal achievement. Schools within the Coastal Alliance therefore expect pupils to maintain an exemplary attendance record in order to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It can also place children at risk and in some instances result in patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Schools within the Coastal Alliance place high priority on the establishment of strategies to improve attendance and we believe that the goal of regular attendance should be pursued both in relation to individual pupils and individual schools within the Coastal Alliance. In pursuing this goal we work closely with parents/carers who are ultimately responsible for securing that their children attend school regularly and punctually.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. There is a requirement that an entry should be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age.

From September 2008 the DCSF reviewed its strategy for improving attendance and the focus is now on dealing with persistent absentees who have 90% attendance or less throughout a school year.

There have also been amendments to the government's attendance regulations which took effect from September 2013. Headteachers and Principals may no longer grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open and where there are more than 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a 50 day period, the school may request a penalty notice. Any holidays taken during term time will be unauthorised and subject to a penalty notice issued by the Local Authority. From April 2005, Kent Local Authority introduced penalty notices for any unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a 50 day period. Payment of a Penalty Notice within 28 days is £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice may result in prosecution.

Changes have also been made to the statutory guidance on absence for medical appointments. Missing morning or afternoon registration for a GP, consultant or dental appointment will be considered an absence. Parents/carers are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours and, where this is not possible, to ensure that pupils are only out of school for the minimum amount of time.

Responsibilities

A. Individual schools within the Coastal Alliance

Each school will ensure that:

- Pupils are registered accurately twice daily.
- Pupils arriving after the morning registration period will be marked as late after the register has closed (U) and this will be a missed session. However this will be authorised if it is an appointment agreed in advance.
- Parents/carers will be contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or the level of attendance is unacceptable.
- A pupil's attendance and lateness, the latter constitutes an unauthorised absence if it is persistent, will be measured and contact made with parents/carers as appropriate.
- School attendance statistics will be reported to governors at their regular meetings and to the Coastal Alliance.
- Vulnerable pupils with specific problems that may affect attendance are supported.
- Appropriate resources are committed to ensure the policy is implemented.

B. Pupils

Pupils will be encouraged to attend regularly and punctually.

C. Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will:

- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance. It must be noted that requests for holidays during term time can no longer be granted by the school except in exceptional circumstances and as agreed by the Coastal Alliance schools.
- During lengthy absences, maintain regular contact with the school to assist with the monitoring of the student and the provision of work where appropriate

- Provide medical evidence if the absence is for 5 days or longer. This can be in the form of a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of prescription.
- Arrange appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays where at all possible.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

The Coastal Alliance will review the policy regularly and assess its implementation and effectiveness across individual schools.

Implementation

A. Communicating the Policy

Schools within the Coastal Alliance will keep parents/carers informed of how this policy operates as follows:

- Through information shared with parents/carers when a child starts at any school within the Coastal Alliance.
- In the discussions which take place with every parent/carer during their induction interview and at parents' evenings and consultation days.
- Via the school website.
- Through regular newsletters and other communication from individual schools.
- Through individual school prospectuses which carry the following statement:

“Parents/carers are responsible for registering their child at a school and ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and punctually and that they will inform the school of reasons when this is not possible. This school has the responsibility to monitor pupil's attendance and, as part of the Coastal Alliance, will work with the local authority when it is deemed necessary to serve a penalty notice or pursue prosecution when a parent fails in their responsibility to ensure regular or punctual attendance.”

B. Procedures Related to Poor Attendance

All schools within the Coastal Alliance expect all pupils to have a minimum attendance of 95%. As such, these schools do not recognise that a pupil's attendance below 95% is

acceptable unless there are very specific reasons (usually medical) and these pupils will receive interventions coordinated by the school.

□ **If a child is absent for 5 or more consecutive school days**

Parent/Carer is expected to produce medical evidence (this can be in the form of evidence of appointment or evidence of prescription). Failure to do so results in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

□ **If a parent/carer requests to take a child on holiday during term time**

Request is denied. The school may only grant permission if there are truly extenuating circumstances. Any authorised cases are reported to Coastal Alliance Attendance Network Group. We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open and where there are more than 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a 50 day period, the school may request a penalty notice

□ **If a parent/carer takes the child on holiday during term time when it has not been authorised**

This information is reported to the Coastal Alliance Attendance Network Group. The school may request that a penalty notice be issued by the Local Authority which will result in an immediate fine to the parents/carers

□ **If a child is persistently late to school after the register closes**

This becomes unauthorised absence which can result in a penalty notice being issued

□ **If the attendance of a child of statutory school age falls below 95% (i.e. has accumulated more than 10 days absence in a year)** A letter is sent to the parents/carers informing them that the child's attendance is causing concern and requesting that all future absence be supported by medical evidence in order to authorise. Failure to provide medical evidence results in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

□ **If the child's attendance does not improve**

Parents/carers are sent a second letter.

Additional support and intervention are put in place in order to raise attendance.

This may consider a referral to Early Help or the School Nursing Service.

Consideration is then given after this to refer to the School Liason Officer or request a Penalty Notice.

□ **If the child's attendance still does not improve and is not supported by evidence such that the absence is unauthorised**

A first penalty warning letter will be sent informing parents/carers that a penalty notice will be requested from the Local Authority if 10 unauthorised absences are accumulated or of the attendance of a child of statutory school age falls below 95%.

□ **If 10 unauthorised absences are accumulated**

The school will request a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority who will place the child into a monitoring period. The parent/carer will be informed of these dates.

□ **If the child's attendance does not improve during the Local Authority monitoring period or if the child has accumulated more than 10 unauthorised absences in one term**

The school requests that a penalty notice be issued by the Local Authority.

□ **If there is still no improvement after penalty notice intervention**

Consideration will be made for the following interventions:

- Referral to the School Liason Officer, Attendance Service, Kent County Council
- Completion of Early Help Request Form