



Camden Centre  
for Learning

# School Attendance Policy

Name of policy	Attendance Policy
Date reviewed	November 2016
Staff member Responsible	Kate Churley
Governor Responsible	Curriculum, Pastoral, School Improvement Committee
Date signed off by Governors	November 2016
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**Challenge Yourself, Celebrate Achievement, Focus on Success, Learn  
for Life**

## Overview

At Camden Centre for Learning we believe that good attendance at school is important for every young person as it contributes to good learning and progress, prepares them for adulthood and is a prerequisite for social inclusion. By attending school regularly and on time, it helps our young people to become organised, reliable and to develop a positive work ethos; qualities which are valued by employers. Young people who are on our roll and who fail to attend are placing themselves at greater risk of either offending or of becoming the victims of offending; moreover, school is where they learn and where they are safe.

We provide high quality teaching and learning experiences in our determination to help all students reach their full potential both academically and emotionally. Our curriculum is planned on the basis that our students will be at school every day and on time, so that they are able to get the most out of what is on offer and make the most progress possible.

CCfL is therefore committed to improving levels of school attendance and punctuality. It aims to do this by promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance and reducing all forms of unjustified absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism.

A child is classified as being a persistent absentee if he/she has an absence rate of 10% or more.

## The School's Expectations

All young people of compulsory school age are required to receive an education. CCfL expects that all our students will attend school every weekday and will arrive on time, appropriately dressed, well rested and ready for the school day. This will enable them to have a calm and settled start to the day and set the tone for their day's learning. We expect that parents/carers will ensure that their children attend school unless there is a legitimate reason for their absence. Parents/carers should also ensure that their child is appropriately dressed and that they arrive in school well prepared for the school day, which includes having appropriate clothing for any timetabled activities, e.g. swimming kit or change of clothing for water based activities.

If a young person is unable to attend school, parents/carers must contact the school office between 8.30 & 09.00. If this is not possible, a letter explaining the absence must be provided to the school. If the reason provided is acceptable, then the school will authorise this absence.

### Expected attendance level

Camden Local Authority expects all students to achieve an attendance level of at least 95 per cent in every school year. The school encourages students to have attendance as close to 100% as possible, taking into consideration rare occasions when a young person is too ill and unfit to come to school.

Attendance %	How well are you doing?	Absent number of days	Learning hours lost
100%	Excellent	0	0
98%		2	10
98%	Very Good	4	20
97%		6	30

96%		7.5	37.5
95%	satisfactory	9.5	47.5
90%	Cause for concern	19	95
89%		21	105
88%		23	115
87%		25	125
86%	Unsatisfactory	27	135
85%	Serious cause for concern	28.5	142
84%		30.5	152
83%		32	160
82%		34	170
81%		36	180
Below			

## Positive Measures to Encourage Good Attendance

It is the school's aim to work with our families to ensure that students have very good attendance; if there are any issues that may be a barrier to this, we will deal with these swiftly, sensitively and in a supportive manner. We target the use of our Behaviour and Pastoral Support Managers (BPSM) and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to meet these aims so that the best interest of the young person is always achieved and students do not lose out on their education.

As a school we will do the following:

- Maintain an attendance register to accurately record attendance and punctuality and monitor absenteeism and lateness
- Monitor and make effective use of attendance and punctuality data through the pastoral team, led by the BPSM; identify any concerns where action needs to be taken
- Provide clear guidance to staff on the practice of registration and the appropriate categorisation of absence and ensure clear procedures are in place to follow up absence and lateness
- Contact parents/carers each day if a student fails to attend school and no contact has been made by a parent/carer to explain absence
- Contact parent/carers promptly when a student fails to attend without good reason and there is a pattern of absences or an excessive number of absences or lateness
- Take immediate action on any problems related to attendance notified to us by parents/ carers which will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence
- Organise meetings between parents/carers the BPSM/other designated staff and the Education Welfare Officer where attendance falls below acceptable rates (below 95%)
- Provide support and mentoring for individuals who experience difficulties in attending school regularly
- support students in their reintegration to school after absence
- Provide support to parents to ensure that they are able to meet their legal responsibilities with regard to school attendance
- Develop effective multi-agency working practices in order to facilitate early intervention
- Focus resources we have available to where there are clearly identifiable needs
- Work closely with Camden Safeguarding and Educational Welfare Service to deal with relevant concerns that arise
- Ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents/carers through the school website, newsletters and progress review meetings

- Ensure we recognise and reward students for excellent attendance and punctuality, and also students who make good progress
- Attendance incentive schemes are in place:
  - Students are rewarded weekly in assembly with certificates or vouchers
  - Students are rewarded termly with a reward trip
  - Students are rewarded annually with a reward trip
  - Attendance displays are in place to ensure that students and staff are aware of attendance
- Comply with all statutory requirements relating to attendance, including submitting termly absence returns and publishing information relating to attendance as required

## Responsibilities of Parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. Parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered. CCfL asks parents/carers to support our expectations of attendance by signing an attendance contract when their child comes on our roll. Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children, by:

- taking an active interest in their child's school life and work
- attend progress review days and other parents' meetings
- ensuring that their child goes to bed at an appropriate time
- being aware of letters from school which their child brings home
- ensuring that their child arrives at school on time each day
- ensuring that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance
- always notifying the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence and confirming this in writing when the child returns to school
- avoiding booking family holidays during term-time
- talking to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

A Parent means:

- all birth parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who has responsibility for a child or young person, and,
- any person who has care for a child or young person, i.e. lives and looks after the child or young person.

It is also important to note that a parent who may not live in the same home as the child or young person is still responsible for ensuring that the child or young person attends school every day.

## Parental Requests for Leave During Term Time

Thirteen weeks of school holidays a year is deemed more than sufficient to make trips abroad or take holidays. The school will not grant permission for family holidays in term time. Leave during term time can only be granted at the discretion of the headteacher in the most exceptional circumstances where:

- The leave is important for the well-being and cohesion of the family, e.g. following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events
- There is an exceptional circumstance that requires a family to be away for an emergency that cannot be managed otherwise and alternative child care arrangements cannot be made.

When decisions are being made regarding authorisation of extended leave, the school will consider the nature of the emergency, whether there are already concerns regarding the young person's attendance or concerns about their learning and progress.

Where holidays or leave are taken without permission from the school, because a request has not been made or has been denied, these will be recorded on the young person's attendance record as "unauthorised absence" or "unauthorised holiday". If a parent/carer is granted leave and the young person does not return on the specified return date, subsequent absences will be marked as unauthorised. In these cases the school may refer you to the Education Welfare Service and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

## **Illness and Medical Appointments**

Parents and carers are expected to make appointments outside of the school day where possible. If this is not possible and the young person misses more than half the morning or afternoon because of a medical appointment this will be recorded as "authorised absence" in the register. You will need to provide evidence to the school office for these appointments.

If your child is absent on the day/s just before or after a school holiday period, you may be required to provide medical evidence to prove they were ill. If your child is persistently absent due to illness, following a meeting with the school/Education Welfare Officer, you may be required to provide medical evidence for further absence due to illness or your child's absence will not be authorised.

## **Responding to Non-Attendance**

If no letter or telephone call is received from parents/carers, the school will make contact. If there is no response a letter will be sent from the school or a telephone enquiry will be made. Where attendance is causing concern, a letter will be sent informing the parent of the current level of attendance, requesting improvement. Meetings will be called between parents/carers and the BPSM to agree next steps, offer support as appropriate and to set targets. If non-attendance continues and falls below 85%, parents/carers will be required to meet with the BPSM and EWO to agree ways in which attendance should be improved. These cases will be closely monitored to ensure improvement occurs. In all cases where there is a serious concern, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer and home visits will be carried out. Legal action may be taken against you.

## **Punctuality/ Lateness**

It is very important that students arrive to school on time. This ensures students have a good start to the day and also shows consideration for every one else in the class, avoiding disruption to their learning. Attendance registers:

- Students who arrive in school after 9am will be marked late
- Students who arrive after the registers have been closed for the morning session (at 9.45am) will be marked absent for the morning session.

- KS4 students who are allowed off the school premises at lunch time will be marked late if they arrive back on site after 1.30pm
- Students who arrive after the registers have been closed for the afternoon session will be marked absent for the afternoon session

Students who return to school late after lunch will not be allowed out of school the next day. If they are persistently late back then they are liable to lose the privilege being allowed out at lunch time.

If your child is persistently late for school, the Local Authority may require you to attend a Court Panel Meeting with the Court Officer or they may decide to take legal action against you.

## Educational Welfare Officer Responsibilities

The fundamental purpose of the EWO is to maximise attendance rates for individual students and CCfL as a whole, and to discharge the council's legal duty to ensure that all students of compulsory school age are in receipt of suitable education. The EWO will also assist in removing barriers which may prevent a child receiving education. The EWO monitors attendance through the regular inspection of registers; liaises with school staff; undertakes individual casework with non-attending pupils and their parents/carers; offers strategic advice, support and challenge to CCfL to help us develop and improve our systems and practices for managing attendance.

## Penalty Notices and Prosecution

As a part of the government's drive to tackle poor school attendance, fixed penalty notices have been introduced. Under current legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are unauthorised; a penalty notice aims to improve a child's attendance at school. Together with the EWO and Local Authority, a school will consider making a penalty notice request for the following reasons:

- Your child's attendance drops below 90%
- Your child takes a holiday/exceptional leave during term time without permission from the headteacher
- Your child has 10 unauthorised late arrivals to school within a ten week period
- Your child is stopped by the truancy patrol within the first 5 days of any exclusion period. You have a duty to ensure that your child is not present in a public place during the first 5 school days of this exclusion, unless there is reasonable justification for this. You are warned that you may receive a fixed penalty notice from the local authority if your child is found in a public place in the first 5 days of exclusion without reasonable justification.

A fixed penalty notice is a fine which, when issued, is payable at £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between days 21-28. If the fixed penalty notice is not paid, depending on circumstances parents/carers may be prosecuted in the local magistrate's court; this can attract a fine of up to £1,000. Parents who are found guilty of the offence will be given a criminal record.

Penalty Notices should be paid by phone, online or by post as listed in the Notice. If a parent/carer has received a Penalty Notice and would like to query or find out how to pay it, they should contact the Local Authority. Penalty Notices should not be paid at the school.

If attempts by the EWO and the school fail to ensure that a student returns to regular attendance the EWO, on behalf of Camden Council, will, unless there are mitigating circumstances, consider taking legal action by issuing a summons against the parents/carers to appear before the magistrates court. In deciding whether or not to take legal action, the EWO must be satisfied that

- there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction; it must consider what the defence case may be and how this is likely to affect the prosecution case
- it is in the Public Interest to prosecute; in cases of any seriousness, a prosecution will usually take place unless there are Public Interest factors pointing against prosecution, which clearly outweigh those in favour
- any action which it takes complies with the terms of the Human Rights Act.

If the student still fails to attend school regularly after legal action has been taken, the EWO will, if deemed appropriate, take further legal action after a three month period.

CCfL has a legal responsibility to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly. Our staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure high levels of attendance. Your continued support in this matter is essential; please work with us.