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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Person(s) Responsible:	Mr J Cleary
Governors' Committee:	Student Welfare & Community Committee
Last Review Date:	Summer 2024 (updated Autumn 2024)
Next Review Date:	Summer 2025
Status:	Recommended

## Commitment to Attendance

The staff and the Governors of Collingwood College, in partnership with parents/carers, students and the Local Authority, are committed to the further development of the College as a high performing school, which serves the community.

Research has shown that, for all students, regular attendance at school is the key to an individual's social, emotional and educational progress and attainment. At Collingwood we expect parents/carers to ensure that their children achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Full attendance secures for children their entitlement to be safe, to enjoy their education, to achieve their potential, to be healthy, to participate fully in their community and to achieve long term economic well-being.

## Expectations

All students will:

- Attend College 100% of the time, unless there are extenuating circumstances for absence such as authorised illness etc, approved by the Principal;
- Attend College punctually;
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day;
- Discuss promptly with their form tutor/class teacher or Year Manager, any problems that may affect their College attendance.
- Sign in/out if they arrive after 8.50am and leave before 3.05pm (only with authorisation).

All Parents / Carers will:

- Fulfil their legal responsibility to encourage their child to attend College regularly and punctually. The Law relating to attendance Section 7 of the Education Act states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.
- Support students to achieve 100% attendance;
- Ensure that their child arrives at College punctually and prepared for the College day;
- Contact the College before 8.25 am using Edulink (preferred method) or the 24-hour Absence Line (01276 457650) on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence (or when they know in advance that the child will be absent);
- Respond to the Absence Management Communication if they have been contacted;
- Provide the College with current contact details (addresses/contact telephone numbers);
- Inform the College immediately of any changes in contact details;
- Notify the Attendance Manager of any home circumstances that might affect the attendance of their child.

The College will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of and monitor registration, punctuality and lesson attendance using the current coding system as per Appendix 1.
- Contact parents/carers using Absence Call or same-day calling via Year Manager or Pastoral Assistant when a student fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from students/parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the College can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, medical evidence, verifications from the GP or other relevant body may be requested;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of recognition;
- Meet regularly with the Inclusion Officer to monitor and support key students' attendance and punctuality;
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service using referral criteria provided by the Local Authority. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by College and the Inclusion Officer may result in legal action by the Local Authority.
- Ensure that, whenever possible, students are included in all the decisions that relate to them.
- Implement appropriate strategies such as Family/College link work, home visits, Notices to Improve, attendance panels or sending of attendance letters when attendance or punctuality is poor.

### **Students Leaving During the College Day**

- Students are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the College;
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside College time;
- Parents are requested to confirm the reason for any planned absence during the College day including the time of leaving, the expected return time and whether the student is being collected or will make their own way to their destination;
- Students must sign out on leaving the College and sign back in on their return;
- Where a student is being collected from the College, parents are requested to report to the College office before the student is allowed to leave the site;
- If a student leaves the College site without permission parents/carers will be contacted as soon as the College becomes aware. Should the College be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the police to register the student as a missing person;
- Students wishing to have lunch at home must obtain prior permission from the College each term. Students will be issued with a laminated 'home to lunch' pass which will include their photograph.

### **Punctuality / Lateness**

Punctual arrival at College is crucial, and registration at the beginning of the day with a student's tutor is one of the most important periods in the day. Late arrival at College

causes disruption to an individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is essential, therefore, that all students arrive at College on time.

- Registration period begins at 8.25 am and students who arrive in their form room after 8.30 am. will be recorded as late to College;
- Statutory Registration closes at 8.55 am. After this time, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless a satisfactory reason is provided. If students are persistently late parents can be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority;
- Should a student leave home to arrive at College but not attend, parents will become aware through the usual procedures (Truancy Call). Once it becomes apparent it will become the parent's responsibility to report their child as missing to the Police after exhausting all possible explanations, which the College will support in every way it can.

## Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school, they inform Collingwood College as soon as possible. A student will not be removed from the College roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The dates the student will be leaving the College and starting at the new school;
- The address of the new school;
- A new home address, if appropriate.

The student's College records will be sent to the new school.

In the event that a student fails to attend regularly and the College has not been informed of any reasonable explanation, the family will be referred to Local Authority Tracking Officer and the Inclusion Service.

## Leave of absence

Taking students out of College during term-time is a major source of concern due to the inevitable disruption caused to students' learning and progress. Therefore, **we treat leave of absence in term-time as unauthorised absences, except in exceptional circumstances.** If a leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation by the College, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the Local Authority's Inclusion Service will be notified.

- The law clearly states that no parent can demand, as a right, leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday.
- While family holidays are enriching experiences, the school year is designed to give families the opportunity for these breaks without having to disrupt their children's education. College holiday dates, external exam dates and INSET days are published a year in advance. This information is also available from the College's website.

- In exceptional circumstances, parents can complete a leave of absence request form, which is available from the Attendance Manager or reception. Parents should state clearly the exceptional circumstances that would justify taking the student out of College during term time.
- Leave of Absence requests in term time will be discussed with key pastoral staff by the Attendance Manager and Home College Link Worker, one of whom will contact parents with a decision.
- Leave of absence cannot be applied for retrospectively and can only be granted in advance.

### **Taking Students off roll**

The College will never remove a student from its roll without valid reasons. However, the College will remove students from its roll in these circumstances;

- If it is believed the student has moved from the local area into a different authority/region. In such circumstances, after two weeks the student will be reported to the Local Authority as a '*missing pupil in education*'.
- If a student is not attending and lives further than a reasonable commute from the College. The College will seek guidance from the Local Authority and Inclusion Officer (EWO) on this decision when necessary.

### **Penalty Notices**

The 'Working together to Improve School Attendance 2024' guidance states that "Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted". A holiday is not deemed exceptional circumstances.

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from College and this requires the recipient to pay a fixed penalty.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may consider prosecuting the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued**

- A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to ensure their child's College attendance is 100% and where it falls below this, are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the College or Inclusion Officer.

- The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### Penalty Notice relating to Suspensions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during College hours when they are suspended from College. This duty applies to the first five days of each suspension. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any suspension and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

### Appendix 1

<b>Attendance Codes</b>	
/ \	Present AM/PM
L	Late arrival after registration (before registers close)
K	Attending education provision provided by the Local Authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip (must be supervised by school staff)
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity (now to be used for taster days at other schools)
D	Dual registered pupils
<b>Absent Codes (authorised)</b>	
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad eg. Panto, acting etc
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

M	Medical or dental appointments
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school – only to be used for part-time non SSA
<b>Absent Codes (other authorised)</b>	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes (check T code criteria before coding)
R	Religious observance
I	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
<b>Absent Codes - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available (eg. LA provided taxi)
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed (eg. Snow day)
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
<b>Absent - unauthorised</b>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived after close of registration
<b>Administrative Codes</b>	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure