

# Attendance Policy

Camborne Science and International Academy



<b>Approved by:</b>	The Principal	<b>Date:</b> 17 July 2023
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	1 July 2022	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	July 2024	

### **Meeting your communication needs:**

We want to ensure that your needs are met. If you would like this information in braille, large print, any other format or interpreted in a language other than English, please contact the HR office, telephone: 01209 712280 or email: [enquiries@cambornescience.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cambornescience.co.uk)

## Introduction

School Attendance (DfE September 2022):

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.’

## Aims of the policy

- To emphasise the importance of, and secure from students, a high level of attendance and punctuality at CSIA to enable them to take full advantage of their educational opportunities.
- To make explicit to all relevant parties CSIA’s expectations over attendance and punctuality expectations.
- To promote a consistent approach across the school to all matters relating to attendance.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- To communicate to all relevant parties (staff, trustees, parents, students) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed ‘authorised’.
- To stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

Regular attendance to CSIA is vital. Irregular attendance leads to students missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential.

Attendance is a priority and national data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and high examination performance.

Our policy supports our Character Values: Ambition; Respect; Resilience; Altruism; and Integrity.

## What is an acceptable attendance rate?

CSIA has an expectation that students attend school every day and we actively encourage students to aim for 100% attendance. Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period, what we look at are unbroken weeks (i.e. those where the student is not marked present on all 10 sessions). Students should not have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of the academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school.

## Authorised Absences

The Department for Education (DfE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention.
- Days of religious observance notified in advance.



- Absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).

There are other absences, such as 'Approved Sporting Activity' that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school and professional discretion will need to be used in these cases about whether the absence can be authorised. This will be at the discretion of the Principal, or a nominated Vice Principal.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum: routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.

### Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those where:

- No letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/ carers.
- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

The DfE guidelines state that the following activities would classify as unauthorised:

- minding the house
- caring for relatives
- awaiting repair people
- shopping
- a birthday or family celebration
- unauthorised holiday
- parental illness
- excessive illness without a medical reason

The DfE's guidelines look at the area of 'Special Occasions' and make clear that only truly exceptional occasions should be classified as authorised. This will be decided at the discretion of the Principal, or a nominated Vice Principal.

We ask parents to notify the school well in advance (preferably 4 weeks notice) of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not.

The DfE's guidelines make it plain that it is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not. A note from home therefore does not automatically make an absence valid/justified/authorised.

Example of 'exceptional circumstances' include:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – the Principal, or nominated Vice Principal should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled.



- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence - up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if the Principal, or nominated Vice Principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child – at the school’s discretion.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement.
- Time-off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to the receipt of official documentation.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”.
- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however, we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when the Principal/ a Vice Principal is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the school may use their discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulty if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the overall welfare of the child.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitment.
- To care for other family members
- Birthdays
- To interpret for other family members
- No school uniform/shoes
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice
- Learning difficulties
- Family holiday
- Family Anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Travel problems



- School refusal

## Holidays

The Law states that requests for leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and family holidays do not fall into this category. Any requests for leave must also be made to CSIA in advance, as the guidance from Department for Education (DfE) is schools cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

Learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. The saving you will make by taking a holiday in term time is offset by the cost to your child's education.

CSIA asks parents who feel it is absolutely unavoidable to take their annual holiday in term time to write explaining the circumstances to the Principal, or nominated Vice Principal at least 4 weeks in advance.

However, CSIA does not authorise absence during term time as per Government Legislation explained above. Any requests for term time holidays will not be authorised, and you may be made subject to a fixed penalty notice of £60 per parent per child payable within 21 days, then £120 per parent per child if paid after this date. Failure to pay within 28 days may result in a court summons. Exceptional circumstances may be authorised if provided in writing to the Principal, but please note it should not be assumed that the exceptional circumstance will be granted.

## Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Vital information is given out during tutor time and your child will be at a disadvantage because of this. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons during the day.

How we manage lateness to school and lessons:

### Lateness to school

Any student arriving at the front gate after 8.30am will read in Reflection for the remainder of the tutorial and will be issued with a same day lunchtime detention. Failure to attend the detention will result in Reflection for two lessons and a break or lunch.

For VI Form students see VI Form Attendance policy.

Students with persistently poor punctuality will be escalated robustly by the Year Team.

### Lateness to tutorial and lessons

There is 5 minutes movement time between every lesson. If a student arrives more than 2 minutes late to their lesson they will work in Reflection for two lessons and a break or lunch.

If a student arrives in reception after 8.55am the Attendance Officer will check the reason for lateness. If the student has a genuine reason for arriving late they will be escorted to their lesson. If the reason for the lateness is not valid, the student will work in Reflection for two lessons and a break or lunch.



For VI Form, please refer to the Student Handbook.

Parents can be prosecuted if their child persistently arrives late after the register has officially closed. We will monitor persistent late comers and action will be taken.

### Home/School Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. To this end, we ask parents to:

- Do all they can to ensure that their child arrives for 8.25am in good time for tutorial at 8.30am. The first lesson commences at 9am.
- If their child is ill, notify the school on the first day with an estimation of the likely length of absence and a full explanation of the illness.
- Ensure that the school is kept informed regarding their child's absence and the return.
- Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attendance and attitude to school.

In return the school will:

- Contact parents and carers by telephone and/or text to follow up student absence, where no contact has already been received.
- Visit homes for a welfare check for regular non-attendees and for those students considered to be vulnerable. Home visits also for students absent and where no contact has been made with the school.
- Follow up where a lesson has been missed without authorisation.
- Respond if a student 'disappears' without warning, and contact with the parent or new education provider cannot be established. The school will notify the County Children Missing Education Officer within a maximum of 20 school days of the disappearance. If there are any safeguarding concerns, ie. due to past history, the school will immediately notify Social Care and/ or Police before doing anything else.
- Follow up absence for Children in Care. In the event that a Child in Care is absent for 3 days (for both authorised and unauthorised reasons), a DSL or member of the Year Team will contact their social worker by email or phone.
- Follow up promptly any concerns that parents' pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in school.
- Contact home over any unexplained absences.
- If necessary, involve the school pastoral team to help students re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances.



- Regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Reward good or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.
- Ensure that tracking systems are in place to identify and monitor student attendance across the year.
- Have regular attendance meetings in school to identify, monitor and support key students.

## CSIA response to student absence

### Stage 1

A letter will be sent to the parent of any student whose attendance falls below 95%; this will be accompanied by a phone call by a member of staff to offer support to improve attendance. This is monitored for a period of 2 weeks.

### Stage 2

If there is no marked improvement, parents will receive Letter 2 and be invited in for a meeting with a member of staff. An Attendance Support Plan will be agreed to address any issues preventing a child from attending school.

### Stage 3

If no improvement is seen within a further 2 weeks, a letter informing parents that any further absence will require medical evidence will be issued. This letter will explain that any absences following Stage 2 will require medical evidence, otherwise it will be unauthorised absence.

### Stage 4

At this point an Attendance Action Plan meeting will take place with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and other relevant staff. If parents miss the first meeting it will be rearranged, if they miss the second it will take place even if they choose not to attend. If no improvement is seen in attendance, the case is referred to Cornwall Council Education Welfare Service to begin legal proceedings.

Continued failure to contact the school to report a child's absence may result in a referral to the school's safeguarding team, the MARU or the police for a welfare check.

Failure to comply with the expectations set by the school may result in further action, by either a referral to appear before the Trustee's Attendance Panel, issue of a Penalty Notice, an application for an Education Supervision Order or court prosecution.

At any stage of absenteeism, CSIA will involve our pastoral team and education welfare. This involvement will be most supportive and pronounced for children at risk of persistent absence or currently persistently absent (i.e. below attendance below 90%).



## The Legal Framework

Regular school attendance of children of compulsory school age is the responsibility of the parent and is a legal requirement in accordance with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Parents are committing an offence if they fail to comply with this legislation and legal action can be instigated.

Penalty Notices are not the only means of disposal for these offences. Depending on the circumstances of each case, the Local Authority may alternatively decide to issue a caution, or to prosecute the offence in a magistrates' court, or to take no further action.

Penalty Notices for offences under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 must be issued by an authorised officer in accordance with Section 444A of the Education Act 1996. The practice is for all Penalty Notices to be issued by the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority under any of the following circumstances:

- An excluded pupil found in a public place
- Unauthorised holiday during term time
- Persistent lateness after registers have closed



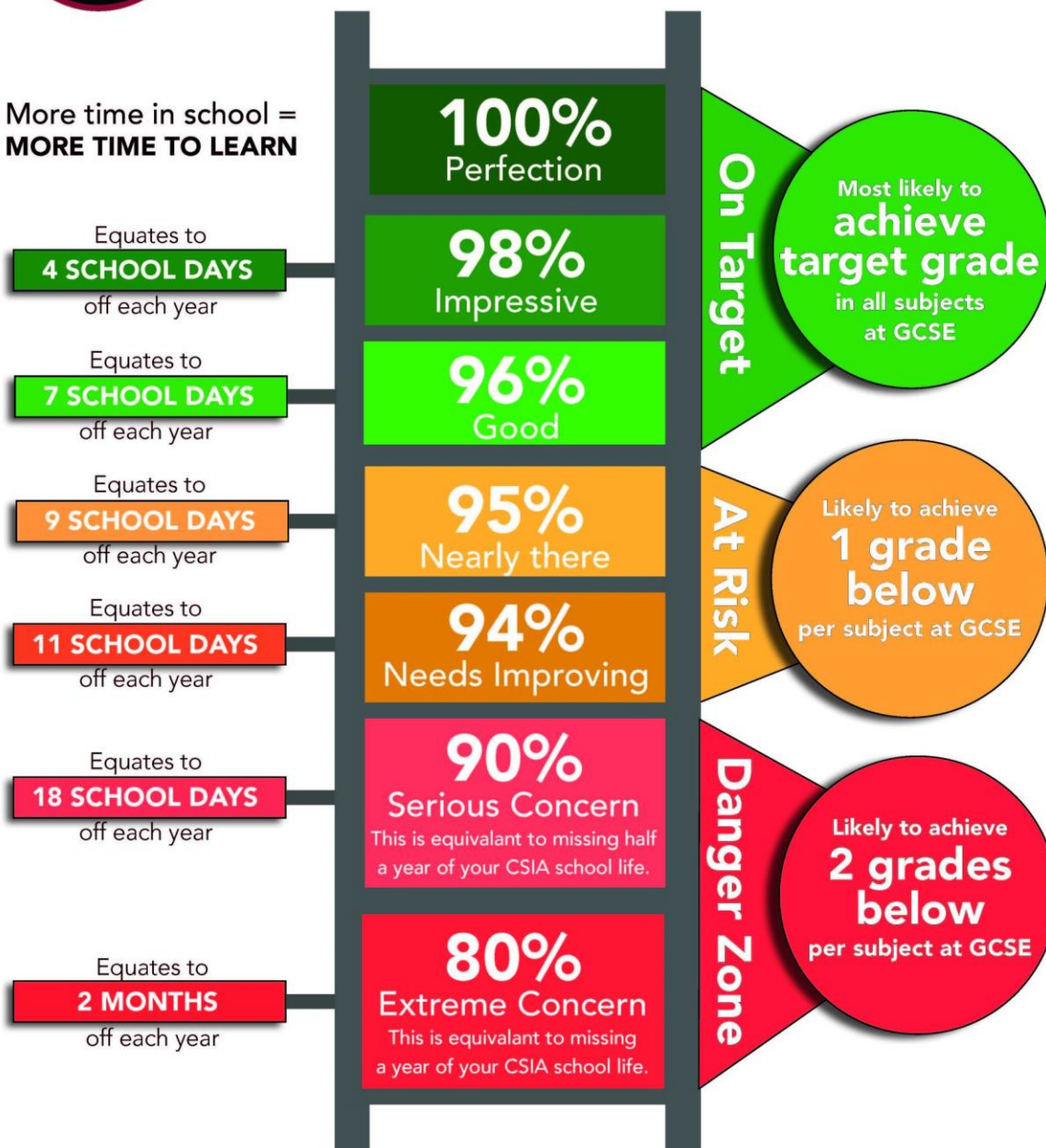




# Attendance Ladder

How close is your child to reaching the top?

More time in school =  
**MORE TIME TO LEARN**



For every day your child is absent from school  
**over 6 hours** of instruction time is lost

