

Attendance Policy

Camborne Science and International Academy



Approved by:	Governors' Policy Committee	Date: 9 July 2021
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Last reviewed on:	4 December 2020
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Next review due by:	July 2021
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All CSIA policies are reviewed by the Governors' Policy Committee (which meets termly), according to a fixed schedule. On extremely rare occasions, there may be circumstances where an event (for example, a change in legislation/national guidance), necessitates a policy being amended immediately, outside of this schedule. Where this is necessary, the Principal will seek permission from the Chair of the Governors' Policy Committee, to amend the policy immediately. The Principal will then confirm details of any amendments with all members of the committee by email and the policy will be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting of the committee.

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

Introduction

School Attendance (DfE May 2019):

‘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, governors, 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. Without it the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory. Irregular attendance leads to students missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential.

Attendance is a national priority and all schools have to submit data electronically (both in an aggregated form and on an individual student basis) every term. 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.

‘Back to school’ interview – less than 95% attendance

We actively encourage students to aim for 100% attendance. If a student’s attendance drops below 95% then a ‘Back to school’ interview will take place for identified students, based on their individual circumstances, with a member of the Year team, which includes form tutors. The interview will explore the reasons for the absence, consider lessons missed, encourage catch-up on work missed



and offer support where needed, including liaising with subject teachers. We do not want students to fall behind on class work due to absence and we will support them to fulfil their academic and personal potential.

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, in the final analysis, 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 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 is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child – at the Principal'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 a Principal is satisfied that here is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Principal may use his/her 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 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 is issued a 45 min SLT detention after school. Failure to attend an after school sanction will result in a 1 day Internal Exclusion.



For VI Form students see VI Form Attendance policy.

Punctuality letters will be issued to parents after their child has been late over 5 times in an academic year.

Lateness to tutorial and lessons

If a student is late to tutorial or a lesson, and a genuine and supported reason is not provided, then the teacher will place the student in a 45 minute detention for the next day.

Teachers will record students as late at the following times: Tutorial 8.30am; Period 1 9.00am; Period 2 10.20am (Years 7, 9 and 11) and 10.40am (Years 8 and 10); Period 3 11.55am (Years 7, 9 and 11) and 12.25pm (Years 8 and 10); and Period 4 1.40pm.

For Sixth 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 8.55am.
- 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:

- Attempt telephone contact home on day 1 of absence for all students, where no contact has already been received. An automated truancy call is sent out to any absent students, where telephone contact has not been made. Any student on the Child Protection register will be contacted by manual phone call by 9.30am and a Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed of the outcome.
- Follow up with a welfare check at home on day 3 of an absence if no contact from home (then every 3 days after). A Visit may happen on day 6 even if contact is made from home for a welfare check. A visit may be made on the first day of absence for any student on the Child Protection register. We will also do home visits for regular non-attendees every 3 days.
- Follow up where a lesson has been missed without authorisation. If a student has been present during the school day but is absent from the subsequent lesson without reason, their teacher will send a truancy email informing the Year Team of this absence. The Year Team and



Attendance Officer will seek to establish the whereabouts of the child and contact will be made home when appropriate.

- 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 need to 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 unsatisfactory attendance

If attendance becomes a concern the school's Education Welfare Officer and a member of the Year Team will start proceedings to address the concerns through a parent contract meeting (PCM) to help address concerns that may be impacting on the student's attendance in school. The PCM may be held in school or over the telephone.

If a student has an attendance of less than 90% then parents are invited into school for a PCM. An Early Help assessment (EHA) may be offered at this point. A target of 97% over the next 10 weeks is set (there is a review at week 5). If the target is met then attendance continues to be reviewed closely for 4 weeks. If the attendance does not show signs of hitting the 97% target then the case will be escalated formally.

In order to try and avoid the PCM process, parents/carers will be invited for at least one formal meeting or telephone call to ascertain what support can be offered to improve their child's attendance.

The school's Education Welfare Officer will liaise with the Local Authority regarding irregular attendance, children missing from education, requests from parents/carers to electively home



educate (EHE) and unauthorised holidays. The Academy works closely with the Local Authority regarding students who are giving a cause for concern.

In extreme cases the Education Welfare Service can also initiate legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their legal responsibility of getting their child consistently to school. Parents 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. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec.444(1) and 444(1A).

'If any child of compulsory school age is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence'

Roles and Responsibilities

High attendance levels are achieved as a result of staff working closely together and knowing where their responsibilities lie. It is important that all members of staff are aware that a robust system is dependent upon everyone playing his/her part.

Staff responsible for attendance at CSIA are:

- Form Tutors
- Education Welfare Officer
- Assistant Principals
- Director of Year
- Pastoral Leaders/Pastoral Care Officers
- Vice Principals

