



**CORNFIELD
SCHOOL**

Attendance (Student) Policy

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Approved by:	The Governing Board
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Policy Type:	School

Aims

This policy aims to demonstrate the commitment of Cornfield school in meeting our obligations to students with regards to student attendance. This includes those set out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on

[working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#),

through our school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and wholly deserve
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families and working in partnership with them to make sure students have the support in place to attend school

The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations, systems and processes
- Having a robust understanding of absence data and analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Ensuring strategic overview for; communications with students, parents/carers and external agencies; attendance analysis interventions
- Home visits

Parents/carers

In order to work alongside Cornfield School staff, we require parents/carers to

- Make sure your young person attends school every day and that they are prepared for the day
- Keep the school updated on any absences by **8.15am** each day
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Support your young person by working with the school when plans have been agreed
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting your young person's tutor in the first instance

Unplanned absence

Please notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence **by 8.15am** or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school on **01903 731277**.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness **as authorised**, unless the

school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded **as unauthorised**.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted **as authorised** if the students' parent or carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment by contacting the school. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The students' parent or carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will adopt a stepped approach starting with support:

- Call the students' parent or carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to find out the reason
- If the school cannot reach any of the students' emergency contacts, the school may refer this to wider partners for additional support
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to any other services involved with the students' family
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents or carers to improve attendance
- Identify whether the student needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Call the parent or carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, we will consider involving the Pupil Entitlement team at West Sussex County Council and if required may make a referral to Integrated Front Door (IFD) for West Sussex Children's Services
- Our last approach, where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with; issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow students to be absent from school for certain educational activities, or to attend other colleges or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a student during term time if the request is recognised as exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

Below are a few examples of where exceptional circumstances may be considered. These are unique to each family. Decisions must not be discussed or shared. Failure to adhere to confidentiality may result in decisions being voided at governor level. Examples are: (not exhaustive list)

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family members bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling
- Transport was not provided by the LA when it should have been
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment
- Absence could be authorised for a wedding of an immediate family member and the invitation has been provided as evidence.
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family members graduation ceremony/passing out parade.
- Operations which require recovery time
- Holiday request for child on SEN register with complex needs who may require a quieter time away.
- Break requests for children under social care involvement or those who are looked after or previously looked after
- Religious observance

Whilst a definition of 'exceptional circumstances' is difficult to define, please do contact school as we are here to support families. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed at 9:00am will be marked **as late**, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed at 9:00am will be marked **as absent**, using the appropriate code

Fixed penalty notices

Cornfield school, the local authority or the police can fine parents or carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued. Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student and their family

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Each parent or carer who is liable for the students' offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents or carers do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents or carers a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out by for West Sussex County Council Pupil Entitlement.

Recognising attendance

We believe that all young people deserve the very best education, for this they need to be in school. We recognise our young people and their achievements (including attendance and punctuality) regularly throughout the school weeks, months and years. We do this by:

- Spending time with our young people doing things they enjoy
- Developing positive relationships
- Congratulating them in person and publicly in assemblies
- Certificates and rewards
- Communications home

Cornfield School are here to help and support, if you feel you would like support with your young person attendance or you would like something explained, please contact your young person tutor in the first instance.